The Making of the Citizen-Worker

Labour and the Borders of Politics in Post-revolutionary France

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3   Liberalism and the science of society

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In the previous chapter, we saw how the trauma of the cholera pandemic brought about a new understanding of the issues related to emerging industrial and urban pauperism. The present chapter addresses the way in which these new interpretations and representations of the social question were shaped by the rise of the social research activities that have been already introduced by considering the cholera report (§ 2.5) and the reopening of the *Académie des sciences morales et politiques* (ASMP) in the autumn of 1832 (§ 2.6). We will first take a step back to observe the approach to poverty that had developed in the context of post-revolutionary France, so as to single out the turning point marked by the ASMP's research in the 1830s. By observing the evolution of these social enquiries, we will see how they progressively began to identify specific problems and classify different figures within the dark and hazy universe of subaltern subjects – which were initially represented as a single dangerous class through the metaphor of the "new barbarians" (cf. § 1.2). In such a way, the emergent social research gradually brought the condition of wage labour into focus as a field of knowledge, policy-making, and legislation. By following its evolution in post-revolutionary France, this chapter aims to describe how social investigation on poverty contributed – over the course of the 1830s – to reframing the social question as a labour question.

To retrace this development, we will consider a broad and diverse field of investigations in which it is nonetheless possible to detect a common set of problems marking the origin of the modern social sciences. Focusing our gaze on these sources means tracing a minor and less-explored genealogy for sociological knowledge: one centred not on the invention of concepts, models, and theories but rather on the development of forms of empirical enquiry aimed at identifying political and administrative solutions to the most pressing social issues of the time. In this sense, the following pages retrace the genesis of the modern social sciences as both an intellectual and a *political* process, for two reasons. The first is that the emergence of a new form of scientific knowledge about society was driven by the political need to develop solutions for the governance of the 19th-century social body sprung from political revolutions and reshaped by industrialisation processes that had produced new social subjectivities and issues. The second reason is that the enquiries in question fostered new representations of the social fabric that were bearers of significant political effects – as I will discuss in Chapter 4 – since they

were designed to single out pioneering social policies aimed at reducing the risks highlighted by the epidemic crisis. The combination of these elements produced what we might call a process of "objectivation" of wage labour as a field of study and governance, which unfolded in parallel to the process of "subjectivation" that came to be known as the "labour movement" and that will be the focus of the second part of the book (cf. Chapters 5 and 6).

3.1 The development of social research

To appreciate the turning point marked by the social enquiries carried out under the ASMP's aegis in the 1830s, I will set out to outline the background against which they emerged. To this end, we first need to consider the way in which the interpretation and management of poverty had developed since the watershed of 1789 – specifically, since the revolutionary abolition of guilds decreed by the Le Chapelier laws in 1791 to affirm the principle of the free market. Article 4 of these laws stated that all deliberations and agreements between "citizens belonging to the same professions, arts, and crafts" were "unconstitutional, a threat to liberty and the declaration of the rights of man, and *de facto* null." Such citizens were forbidden from taking part in "deliberations pertaining to their shared interests" or to elect representatives of any sort.[1] By abolishing the guild system, these laws also removed all the traditional social safety nets deriving from it. This fostered the spread and exacerbation of new kinds of poverty that stood in contradiction with the values of equality and brotherhood affirmed by the French Revolution. Besides citizens' civil and political equality, the latter recognised the private property as an "inviolable and sacred right of man" and the budding industrialisation process turned out to be a powerful driving force of inequality in such a domain. The advent of an industrial regime of production and commerce created the conditions for almost limitless inequalities of wealth and fostered the rise of new forms of deprivation. Thus, tension emerged between the egalitarian principles established by the revolutionary process in the legal-political sphere and the spread of poverty among those citizens affected by the end of the social protections that the guilds could ensure in the context of the Ancien Régime.

With the abolition of corporations, the benevolent figure of the beggar asking for charity had been progressively replaced by that of the poor individual requiring a form of aid impacting the public budget and that of the threatening vagrant requiring policing measures. Hence, the first decades of the 19th century were marked by the effort to develop strategies to face the problem of poverty in such a way as to limit its disruptive effects, yet without calling the principle of the free market into question, which is to say without challenging State intervention. Poverty relief measures were thus envisaged which would not conform to the British system of "legal charity" by acknowledging an enforceable right to state assistance that would have indefinitely extended the rather limited French public or semi-public poverty relief system. The latter remained voluntary, entrusted to local authorities, and constituted by *bureaux de bienfaisance*, almshouses, hospitals for poor invalids, and by the few orphanages, madhouses, and institutes for the deaf and blind,

while the parish welfare system was equally weak (Castel, 2003; Procacci, 1993). In this context, it was a matter of addressing the problem of poverty while confining it to the moral sphere, so as to limit the consequences of his constant spilling over into the political sphere (Procacci, 1993; Donzelot, 1984).

Classical liberal theory essentially associates poverty with the notions of responsibility, guilt, and individual conduct, thereby ruling out the right to saddle others with the weight of one's existence. In early 19th-century France, the liberal elites' debates on charitable aid reveal an effort to adapt such a theory to a more complex reality and to its concrete challenges. In this regard, Robert Castel speaks of "complex strategies based on the search for non-State answers to the social question," and thus of a *politique sans État* corresponding to the "mobilisation of social elites to exercise a protective power towards those less fortunate and to adopt a charitable function economising on State intervention" (Castel, 2003, p. 374). The proliferation of philanthropic associations constitutes an expression of such policies, which François Guizot (cf. § 1.4) not only theorised but actively championed as president, from 1828, of the *Société de la morale chrétienne*. To grasp the origins of social research on pauperism, we need to set out from these approaches aimed at designing poverty relief measures by ruling out public intervention and confining the question to the moral dimension.

3.1.1 Poverty: work as the limit of charity

> It is charity, in all its various forms, that brings together what chance separates and that, by preserving what is necessary or even useful in inequality, strips it of all that is dangerous and evil within it. Through its peaceful intervention, harmony is maintained. . . . Such is the effect of the benevolent relations that charity introduces; by refining public morals, they consolidate society. . . . The practice of alms-giving creates an art; its theory, a science.
>
> (Tanneguy Duchâtel, 1829, pp. 26–27 and 29)

This interpretation of the practice of charity proposed in 1829 by Tanneguy Duchâtel (who became a member of the ASMP in 1842) reveals a double aim. On the one hand, it expresses the need to stimulate relations and bonds designed to "consolidate society," which is threatened by the problem of poverty. On the other, it confirms the liberal understanding of poverty, but also a tension to lend moral depth to political economy by means of systematic development of the charity. The latter enables philanthropists to reunite what private market and free competition have divided by limiting their more harmful social effects. In this sense, while not bringing the State into play, charity constitutes a kind of *politics* that must be scientifically organised on the basis of "knowledge of the physical and moral laws to which man is subjected" (ibid., p. 18). In this first period, before the activities of the ASMP, social research on poverty is not yet marked by the use of a systematic method, yet reveals a tendency to develop charitable practices as a matter of public interest by not confining them to the individual dimension and furnishing them with an allegedly scientific approach.

The rationale for organising philanthropic practices thus became the object of important debates. A first canonical point of reference in this domain is *Le visiteur du pauvre*, a 1824 text designed to instruct philanthropists as to "the means to recognise true poverty and make alms-giving as useful to the givers as it is to the receivers."[2] The author was Baron Joseph-Marie de Gérando, a linguist, pedagogue, jurist, a member of the ASMP (since its founding) and of the *Société des observateurs de l'homme*, and the founder of the *Société de la morale chrétienne*.[3] Significantly, the aim of his 1824 treatise was to apply to the study of urban poverty the principles developed in 1799, in a pioneering ethnographic text written for the members of a scientific expedition to lands inhabited by "savages" in the Southern Hemisphere (Gérando, 1799). The *charité investigatrice* characterising *l'office du visiteur du pauvre* thus took the form of an "art" but also of a "science," as it consisted in an in-depth ethnographic investigation of the poor people's lives: it "examines before acting; monitors . . .; goes back to the causes, encompassing all circumstances; unites giving with caring, consolation, and advice." It was essentially based on a work of *classement des pauvres*, on a classification designed to avoid any harmful alms-giving directed towards "fake poverty," which deprived the poor and society of the moral and material benefits of work. Philanthropists, therefore, were first to ascertain the existence of one of the three causes of "true" poverty: inability to work, the insufficiency of work's outcomes, or the temporary lack of work. Secondly, they were to study the causes behind such factors to understand what role was played by carelessness, laziness, vices, or dissoluteness. In such a way, charitable aid aimed to deal with poverty not just as a material condition, but also as a *mode of conduct*, and to promote the "treatment of moral illnesses" (Gérando, 1826, pp. 11, 39–40 and 120). The philanthropic activities carried out by literary characters such as Jean Valjean in Hugo's *Les Misérables* and Rudolf of Gerolstein in Sue's *Mysteries of Paris* bear witness to the relevance of such an approach in those years.

Far from confining themselves to alms-giving, philanthropists were expected to develop "exact and in-depth knowledge of the situation of the poor," so as to limit the social costs of fake poverty, which fooled the State and, by promoting idleness, condemned the poor to a future of deprivation. Work, by contrast, promotes "order, perseverance, and temperance; it is a kind of moral gymnastics; it makes each creature used to meekly following the paths laid out by the Creator" (Gérando, 1826, p. 105). Like Tanneguy Duchâtel (1829, p. 18) – who reserved charity for those "wretches who cannot offer anything in return, not even the labour of their arms" – Gerando understands and defines the sphere of work by exclusive opposition to poverty, as the limit and the solution to charitable aid. The latter only comes into play when labour is absent or falls short. In relation to the treatises of these years, Michelle Perrot notes a "difficulty in grasping the specific nature of the problem," in defining the object. Hence the often encyclopaedic character of books on poverty, which invoke and discuss all social ills: the destitute, beggars, orphans, prostitutes, invalids, prisoners, the sick, and madmen. These are the "classical chapters" in a sort of "handicapology" which bases the analysis of poverty on the *incapacity to work* (Perrot, 1972; Leclerc, 1979).

Despite this short-sightedness with regard to the emerging condition of the industrial working poor, the real novelty in these philanthropic treatises is to be found in the tendency to direct traditional alms-giving practices towards the rational planning of "real and active" measures to protect the poor, who "in many respects are like children" (Gérando, 1826, p. 14). Just as with minors, there was a *duty* to help the poor which did not pertain to the sphere of legal relations, but rather to that of morality, and which needed to be somehow institutionalised to re-establish and consolidate social bonds. Society, Gérando writes, "is morally constituted like the family . . . poverty is to wealth what childhood is to adult age": hence, philanthropists need to provide "a kind of adoption" (ibid., p. 9). What we have is the idea of a kind of guardianship agreement, or informal protection contract, that transposes onto the social field of poverty the capacitarian theories that doctrinaire liberalism was advancing in the political field – as described in the first chapter (cf. § 1.4). This is also a kind of *patronage* displayed by the philanthropist towards the poor that foreshadows the patronage of employers towards their workers that we shall see later on (cf. § 3.2.2).

In such a way, philanthropic practices were designed to operate between the individual and the State. This was a space that the French Revolution had deliberately left empty, smooth, and homogeneous, but which actually over the course of the 19th century proved to be filled with subjectivities and problems that needed to be constantly managed to prevent social disorder. Opposition to the extension of State prerogatives was therefore not confined to the adherence to *laissez-faire* theories of economic liberalism. Rather, it also encompassed the development of measures capable of "forging society," of ordering it so as to govern it through the promotion of principles of public morality. The social question was thus essentially understood and represented as a *moral question*. Up until the early 1830s, the liberal approach to it consisted in the effort to push charity beyond the exclusively religious and individual sphere so as to scientifically structure it as a sort of policy, yet one pertaining not to the State sphere but only to the moral one. A drive to rationalise and scientifically organise philanthropic activities already shaped these debates on indigence, in which the sphere of work was nonetheless still only understood as the limit and outer boundary of poverty relief measures.

3.1.2 Pauperism and the British hell

The French intellectual environment and debates we are considering are marked by constant and almost obsessive attention to the British social landscape. This was regarded as the most advanced level of industrialisation and hence as foreshadowing a destiny for France as likely and imminent as it was disquieting. From the 1820s onwards, the immorality of Britain's brand of liberalism, influenced by Malthusian theories, the ineffectiveness and costliness of its welfare system, and the disruptive social effects of its industrialisation became an object of widespread criticism.

"Britain, inflated by trade and all kinds of big industry, has acquired immense treasures; yet these treasures, crammed at the top, have left nothing but the ghastliest poverty for three-quarters of the population, reduced to living off public alms," Baron Bigot de Morogues writes in *De la Misère des ouvriers et de la marche à*

suivre pour y remédier (1832, p. 2). From the link between industrialisation and the spread of a new and dreadful kind of poverty, this philanthropist inferred the need for a powerful relaunching of the rural economy, craftsmanship, and family business to oppose the industrial regime and the physical and moral unwholesomeness of the urban environment. His argument rests on an "evident mathematical demonstration" of the connection between property crimes and the development of urban factories to the detriment of the agricultural economy. The extensive and comparative use of statistics on the population, wages, prices, rents, and crime across various geographical areas made this treatise stand out – earning its author a post as an ASMP correspondent. Moreover, it is remarkable that this was one of the first publications to feature the topic of workers' poverty (*la misère des ouvriers*) in its very title. The specific nature of the industrial labour question thus began to emerge through the distinction between rural and urban poverty, along with an effort to bring the relationship between the latter and the phenomenon of crime into focus. These innovations aside, however, Morogues' social research is not yet structured in a systematic way and remains framed within a moral rejection of industrialisation: the author criticises mechanisation, supports protectionism, and does not go beyond a vindication of the countryside's virtues against the new urban industries (Bigot de Morogues, 1832, 1834). "Not only does their method seem questionable or uncertain – Francis Démier (1989, p. 37) writes with regard to treatises of this kind – but the very object they study is viewed within an all too traditional set of problems."

Morogues' contribution must be understood in conjunction with his political effort as a member of the Chamber of Peers (upper house) to promote primary education and his philanthropic work through the *Société des établissement charitables*. He established this society in 1828 together with Alban de Villeneuve-Bargemont, whose *Économie politique chrétienne* (1834) offers the most noteworthy synthesis of the approach under consideration. The author's lengthy career as a prefect in various departments provides the empirical material informing this treatise, which advances a political interpretation of poverty inspired by an Ancien Régime administrative culture shaping an aristocratic criticism of the political economy and of a kind of liberalism that has become divorced from morality. The French labour tradition, rooted in long-standing forms of guild solidarity and centred on agriculture, is thus envisaged as the basis of a paternalistic and charitable economy to be set in contrast with the "baleful influence that the industrial and political system of England" was allegedly exercising throughout the world. Yet, this outlook worthy of a prominent aristocrat is combined with the author's keen awareness of the irreversible transformations triggered by industrialisation. The new forms of poverty engendered by the latter are described by Bargemont through the English term *pauperism*. The latter was first adopted in the French debate in the early 1820s and its uses encapsulated the fear that a similar kind of industrialisation might take hold across the Channel:

> If indigence under the new and unfortunately vigorous name of *pauperism* is spreading across entire classes . . . if it is no longer an accident, but the condition into which most members of the population are forced, then we cannot

fail to identify these markers of widespread suffering . . . as a close indicator of the most serious and baleful distress.

(Villeneuve-Bargemont, 1834, p. 28)[4]

The gradual semantic shift from *indigence* to *misère*, and finally *paupérisme*, reveals a transformation in the understanding of the experience of poverty. It illustrates how the latter became a social question through an increasingly clear awareness of its relation to industrialisation processes, from which the centrality of the issue of wage labour was to emerge. As we read in the *Dictionnaire d'économie politique*, "pauperism" refers to the "collective, amplified, and general kind of poverty which reduces whole categories of individuals to the condition of indigents in need of aid, as opposed to the accidental kind of poverty deriving from temporary causes or striking, in an isolated way, individuals belonging to entirely different social categories" (Cherbuliez, 1873, p. 574; cf. also Chevallier, 1893). This neologism expresses a mature awareness of the relationship between a series of socio-historical transformations underway and a peculiar condition of indigence affecting growing sections of the population as wealth and technological development increase. Its use reflects a turning point in the investigation of poverty, based on the adoption of a new focus on the way in which industry and wage labour are organised and can foster new forms of deprivation.

Pauperism "does not stand in contrast to wealth, like poverty, but to society, and this gives it a destabilising form" (Procacci, 1993, p. 168). It gives inequalities "physical and moral form," and brings out indigence as a "social question," because – by encompassing whole segments of the population – it raises radical questions about the very permanence of that human form of association we call "society" to designate the social order shaped by the modern political and industrial revolutions. "Today it is no longer a matter of political order, but of the existence of society as a whole," Bargemont writes (1834, p. 2). His words highlight the problem of a kind of poverty which is no longer an individual and contingent destiny, but an enduring, permanent, epidemic, and hereditary condition that exists not at the margins of society, but at its very centre: for it appears to be complementary to the development of civilisation's wealth and progress. This issue thus becomes the focus of new intellectual efforts to develop scientific investigations on society aimed at elaborating strategies to immunise the social body against the risk of its dissolution raised by the spread of industrial pauperism. These philanthropists' treatises are still remote from what will be the method and epistemology of the modern social sciences, yet they already reveal a remarkable tendency towards the definition of their specific object of investigation through the measurement of human phenomena. In doing so, they pave the way for an appreciation of the labour question's importance by establishing a first and crucial distinction between the new, urban form of poverty and the traditional rural one.

3.1.3 *Tocqueville and the new "industrial class"*

"Villeneuve-Bargemont was the first to raise the labour problem, in all of its complexity, in the French Chamber of Deputies" (Dumont, 2002, p. 116). In the lower

house, this author (elected a member of the ASMP in 1845) played a leading role in promoting the 1841 law on child labour, which was to represent the first significant legal-political outcome of the intellectual developments we are retracing (cf. § 4.2). His thought encapsulates the French current known as *économie politique charitable*, which aimed to include the problem of poverty within the scope of political economics by striking a balance between Christian morality and political liberalism. Bargemont's outlook as a noble Legitimist conscious of the irreversible nature of the social transformations underway also made him an influential point of reference for Alexis de Tocqueville's intellectual development, in connection not just to the question of pauperism but also to an Ancien Régime administrative culture (Chignola, 2004, p. 473). This is evident in the *Mémoire sur le paupérisme* of 1835, in which Tocqueville (who was elected a member of the ASMP three years later) engages with the paradox of the exponential growth of both wealth and poverty in modern industrial societies.

This author regards 19th-century poverty as the bitter fruit of the "progress of civilisation," which has brought about a broadening of tastes, needs, requirements, and desires. The emergence of "secondary needs," Tocqueville states, has spawned a stream of new goods, whose production has led to the rise of a *new class* of non-agricultural labourers entrusted with the "special and dangerous mission of securing the material well-being of all others (i.e. all other classes) by its risks and dangers" (Tocqueville, 1997, p. 23). It is the development of civilisation that has created the *ouvriers* (workers) of the "industrial class," making them naturally exposed to the risk of poverty, since the goods they produce are subject to the laws of the market and of competition, and to contingent needs (ibid., pp. 22–24). Hence, the advent of an industrial regime of production and commerce in modern societies is described as having had the following effects: "when one crosses the various countries of Europe, one is struck by a very extraordinary and apparently inexplicable sight . . . on the one hand the number of those living in comfort, and, on the other, the number of those who need public funds to live, growing proportionately" (ibid, pp. 17–18).

These ambivalent social effects of industrialisation especially struck Tocqueville during his journeys to Manchester. The cradle of the Industrial Revolution is described by this author as a "foul drain" from which "the greatest stream of human industry flows out to fertilise the whole world." This "filthy sewer" reveals that modern industrial progress is intrinsically marked by deeply ambivalent features: the simultaneous and unprecedented, parallel and antithetical growth of both wealth and poverty, prosperity and misery, emancipation and subjugation. "Here humanity attains its most complete development and its most brutish; here civilisation works its miracles, and civilised man is turned back almost into a savage" (Tocqueville, 1958, pp. 107–108). Yet, Tocqueville recognises this contradiction as the inevitable consequence of a broader historical development. He understands industrialisation as an effect of the civilisational progress related to the historical movement of equality and sees a "close bond and a necessary connection" among liberty, industry, and commerce (Storey, 2013). Like the egalitarian movement of democracy, industrialisation appears to be a distinctive feature of modern societies, in which the development of commerce and industry has fostered the overcoming of the old hierarchies and structures based on status. Hence, the inexorable and

epoch-making march of democracy and that of the Industrial Revolution appear to be linked, although in a way that produces contradictory effects, including the spread of new conditions of deprivation so obscure as to evoke ancient times of wilderness and savagery.

In this reading – influenced by Guizot's courses on the "history of civilisation" (cf. § 1.3) – we come across the Tocquevillian motif of the irreversibility of the new "social condition of the world." This is based on an interpretation that, without praising the new situation, proves its ineluctability, dismissing the prospect of any return to the agricultural, family-based, and traditional past. Although Tocqueville's analysis of pauperism does not draw on statistics, or present any data or empirical survey, it bears witness and actively contributes to the theoretical shift I am here attempting to outline. Based on his direct observations of the British and American industrial contexts, this thinker clearly indicates modern poverty as an issue to be addressed by looking at the labour conditions resulting from both the technological movement of industrialisation and the political developments that had determined the dissolution of long-standing forms of guild solidarity. This corresponds to a shift that, from philanthropic approaches seeking to assess and alleviate the causes preventing the poor from supporting themselves through work, leads to new interpretations of poverty that frame industrial wage labour conditions as the key aspect of the problem of pauperism.

3.1.4 Work as punishment and reward

Tocqueville's understanding of pauperism reflects his concern for the disruptive risks and tendencies towards disintegration underlying the post-revolutionary society, which had been individualised through the unstoppable movement towards equality that marks modern societies. However, he staunchly refuses to entrust State intervention with resolving this problem. Tocqueville firmly opposes the system of public welfare by which "in America, as in England, any man in need has an open right against the State," so that "charity has become a political institution" that shelters "indigents who cannot and those who do not want to profit their life by honest work" (Tocqueville, 1997, p. 36).[5] This principled opposition to the acknowledgement of any "right to welfare" rests on the idea that it would discourage indigents from working, thereby undermining the only virtuous aspect of the growing condition of industrial poverty, which lies precisely in the widespread establishment of the discipline of wage labour as a material necessity. This is a sort of "ethics of work" that shapes Tocqueville's social theory as a whole, including his analysis of punishment. By considering how this author conceptualised the latter in relation to labour and the criminal question, it is possible to introduce a second crucial distinction that was about to be established within the blurred universe of the subaltern classes – in addition to the juxtaposition between rural-agricultural and urban-industrial poverty – and which played a crucial role in the emergence of the modern idea of the working class. This is the distinction between "labouring" and "dangerous" subjectivities.

In April 1831, together with Gustave de Beaumont, Tocqueville was sent on a government mission to conduct a study of the penitentiary system in the USA, the country which had been the first to apply the modern principle of the sheer deprivation of freedom as a general form of punishment. In the report resulting from this nine-month journey – *Du système pénitentiaire aux États-Unis et de son application en France* (Tocqueville & Beaumont, 1833) – the two young magistrates compared the solitary confinement of the "Philadelphia system" with the more "communitarian" one of Auburn. In the name of a "scientific" perspective intended to ensure the "defense" of society against the soft approach distinguishing the "false philanthropy" of authors such as Charles Lucas, Tocqueville and Beaumont endorsed the solitary confinement model. In their view, the latter sets the inmate "alone against society as a whole," making him yearn for work, and projecting its effects of control and prevention onto the entire social body. This issue continued to be present and relevant in Tocqueville's thought at least until 1843, when, as an advocate for the law on solitary confinement, he stressed the need for – and the benefits of – labour among prisoners (see Tocqueville, 1884b). "What leads almost all men to crime is laziness. There aren't many thieves among good workers," Tocqueville writes (1884a, p. 97), arguing for a model of imprisonment in which the loneliness that comes with solitary cell-confinement has the advantage of "making prisoners eager" to work, producing a disciplining of their conduct. Thus, a work ethic is forcibly promoted within prison walls, while outside fear is instilled in potential criminals and rigorous punishment is ensured for the benefit of honest citizens (ibid.). "Imprisonment," states Pellegrino Rossi (1829, p. 169), the leading juridical champion of doctrinaire liberalism, "is punishment par excellence in civilised societies. It has a moralising influence, since it is accompanied by the obligation to work." We can thus recognise an emerging tendency to attribute a strong moral value to the discipline of wage labour, a value that is defined by opposition to the conducts and circumstances that lead deprived individuals towards criminal activities.

In the debate on the prison system and the criminal question we come across several topics and categories that are also central to the debate on the social question. The reason for this is that these two topics intertwine in relation to the emergent distinction between "labouring classes" and "dangerous classes." This is an opposition between workers and criminals – between poor yet honest labourers and the kind of delinquent marginal subjects that prison was expected to reform through the disciplines of the cell and of work – that began to emerge in the judicial and penitentiary spheres, and soon produced a deep influence on the analyses and representations of the social question. Such a distinction constitutes a key turning point in the process investigated in this chapter and was the focus of one of the first competitions launched by the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences (AMPS) in 1833 – as we will see soon (§ 3.2). This was the moment "in which the opposition between the worker and the delinquent was beginning to crystallize," Michel Foucault writes, identifying in the process of reform of punishment and of the prison system an effort to isolate the phenomenon of "delinquency" as a specific

field of knowledge-power. Hence, he indicates the rise of a "strategic opposition" between "illegalities and delinquency" that made it possible to erect a "barrier to separate delinquents from all the lower strata of the population" (Foucault, 1995, pp. 277, 285).[6]

The creation of this specific distinction/opposition between the labour world and the marginal/criminal one probably constitutes the most delicate and crucial step in the process of production of the notion of "working class" I aim to retrace – that is to say, in the progressive transformation of those representations of the radical otherness of the subaltern classes which I set out from by examining the metaphor of new barbarians. As we have seen, the philanthropic treatises carried out by the *économie politique charitable* partly laid the foundations for this transition, insofar as they singled out one first and crucial distinction between traditional rural poverty and that emerging in cities affected by industrialisation and the urban crime that came with it. Based on this distinction, an awareness gradually took root – crystallising into the category of pauperism – that urban poverty was no longer to be viewed in an exclusive and oppositional relation with the domain of work. Instead, its new, major, and growing form was to be grasped in conjunction with industrial labour conditions, which thus needed to be included at the very heart of any analysis of the social question. Another crucial distinction that was subsequently to emerge is the one between male factory work and female workers' conditions, which we will consider by addressing the early development of the French labour movement and the gendered character of the "making of the French working class" (cf. § 6.3 and Scott, 1988). Based on the scenario retraced so far, I can now introduce the social research activities carried out under the ASMP's aegis to further delve into the dialectical opposition between dangerous classes and the labour world to which social and intellectual historians have quite rightly assigned considerable importance in studies on the genesis of the French working class.

3.2 The dangerous class and the working one: producing a labour force

The whole course of the July monarchy was marked by punishment-related debates and initiatives that intertwined the "criminal question" with the social one – including the debates on prison labour, which throughout the 1840s drew opposition from workers' associations. During the epidemic outbreak, Parliament was busy discussing a reform of the penal and criminal procedure code that represents one of Orléanism's major legislative measures. It envisaged detention as a general punishment for all crimes not entailing a death sentence, removed the latter from nine instances of crime, and abolished corporal punishment. This was consistent with the measure which – again in 1832 – removed the guillotine from the Place de Grève, where public executions had been staged for the previous five centuries. Moreover, the reform introduced the crucial institution of extenuating circumstances, which allowed judges to arbitrarily reduce a sentence based on elements such as the defendant's life, profile, motives, and conduct. This regulation made it possible to judge the subject even before and apart from his crime by considering his habits

and attitudes – starting from his willingness to work – to assess his profile as a
"delinquent" and evaluate it within the framework of emergent knowledge about
the criminal world.[7] It is therefore unsurprising that one of the first competitions
launched by the AMPS shortly after its reopening was devoted to research aimed at

> identifying . . . the elements that make up . . . that part of the population
> which constitutes a *dangerous class* in terms of its vices, ignorance, and
> poverty; and to identify the means which the government, wealthy or well-
> to-do men, and intelligent and industrious workers could use to improve this
> dangerous and depraved class.[8]

Announced in 1833, the award was assigned five years later to a civil servant from
the Seine prefecture, Honoré-Antoine Frégier, for a treatise that was then published
in 1840 and is usually credited with having defined the expression *classes dangere-
uses* and introduced it into the 19th-century debate.

3.2.1 Separating the wheat from the chaff

"To govern the social body, it is necessary to know it, and to know it, it is necessary
to study it as a whole and in its parts, to learn what role each part plays in relation
to the whole," writes Frégier (1840, p. 370). The author is here enunciating the idea
that the government must promote social research practices capable of establish-
ing an "alliance between power and science" based on an organicist conception of
society. The chief instrument for this alliance is identified as a "statistical descrip-
tion of administrative facts" that is made increasingly detailed through the devel-
opment of those "records of administrative power" represented by police archives
(ibid., p. 6). These offer the quantitative documentary basis for the author's treatise,
which intertwines it with the qualitative empirical material deriving from conver-
sations and interviews with prefects and police commissioners. The first part of
*Des classes dangereuses de la population dans les grandes villes, et des moyens
de les rendre meilleures* is thus devoted to "annotated statistics" pertaining to the
population segment under consideration: a numerical and sociological estimate of
the "dangerous class" present in the French capital. This effort to statistically define
the object of the research, while at the same time discussing the criteria and pro-
cedures for such a classification and definition, illustrates the methodological turn
marked by the enquiries conducted under the aegis of the ASMP. This turn consists
in the systematic and unprecedented use of statistics and, more broadly, in the ten-
dency to establish a scientific approach capable of giving these surveys a normative
character. Such features supported the transposition of the research findings into
administrative and legislative measures: an outcome already implicit in the way
these public competitions were framed and promoted.

Frégier describes his treatise as "an administrative and moral work": while the
first term confirms its ambition to intertwine social science and governance prac-
tices, the reference to morality embodies what still distinguishes these enquiries
from the epistemology of the modern social sciences. The political sciences of

the ASMP were always – and primarily – *moral* sciences because the spirit of the Academy conformed not so much to 18th-century Enlightenment ideas as to Guizot's formula of the *gouvernement des esprits* – which typically represents this climate marked by the attempt to graft morality onto politics so as to free it from the passions unleashed by the paradigms of popular sovereignty and general will (cf. § 1.2). Researches conducted on popular strata were thus increasingly designed to assess their "moral" as well as "physical" conditions. Hence, Frégier advances a taxonomy of the dangerous class that is based first of all on the moral dimension of "vice" and includes gamblers, drunks, *maîtresses*, prostitutes and their clients, vagabonds, ex-convicts, swindlers, thieves, receivers of illicit goods, and a whole range of "idle and vagrant" individuals who, in the urban environment, constantly "reached out to the corrupt part of the working class" (ibid., pp. 1–17). Idleness is envisaged as the other side of vice, "since the poor, when given over to bad passions, stop working and establish themselves as the enemy of society, since they disavow its highest law, which is work." Addressing this problem thus means first of all developing and organising the distinction and opposition between "the class of poor yet honest and industrious workers" and "the vicious, depraved, and dangerous class." Therefore, this treatise appears to be designed not so much to define the "dangerous" segment of society as to build, develop, and spell out the criteria for this distinction between the bad social conduct of the immoral and idle classes and the humble yet honest poverty of "intelligent and industrious workers" (to quote the words used in the very call by the ASMP). Once he has identified the "alliance between vice and poverty" as the heart of the problem – according to the hypothesis that the "suspect and dangerous" class is almost entirely sprung out of the "poor and depraved part of the working classes" – Frégier focuses on the quantitative and qualitative definition of the Parisian *working classes* to single out the depraved segment that is susceptible to becoming dangerous.[9]

Upon closer scrutiny, then, this treatise on the *classe dangereuse* actually seems destined to bring out the specific figure of the *classe laborieuse* by distinguishing it from the threatening and nebulous range of subjects and problems in which it is immersed in the social descriptions and representations of the 1830s.[10] It is precisely this magmatic combination that we find in Victor Hugo, Eugène Sue, and the great popular novels of French Romanticism. By contrast, the term *Lumpenproletariat* used by Marx to describe the 1848 revolution bears witness to the established *partage* between working classes and dangerous ones (cf. Conclusion). This distinction emerged both through that process of subjectivation of labour embodied by the "workers' movement" (cf. Chapters 5 and 6), and through this sticky process of "objectivation" of the wage worker as a focus of knowledge and administration that we are describing here and by which the nascent social sciences began to develop their method.

3.2.2 From charity to patronage

The first factor capable of "re-establishing moral conditions" was identified by Frégier in the "human virtue" of work. Much of his text is thus devoted to the

preservatifs that make it possible to "prevent and banish poverty through work," which is not "a purely material agent," but a real "virtue" capable of "preventing bad passions" (Frégier, 1840, pp. 278–281). Hence, the core of this treatise on the "dangerous classes" ultimately turns out to be a broad reflection on the organisation of labour and its transformations. "The manufacturing industry exercises a powerful influence over the urban population, the study of which is the object of our research," writes Frégier (1840, p. 288), who significantly was later to specifically focus his attention on the working class' conditions (see Frégier, 1851).

We find some classic ingredients of philanthropic treatises – such as the need to promote Christian morality among workers, of supporting the education of subaltern classes, and of rationally organising charitable aid – along with other elements that mark a substantial discontinuity with previous treatises – and sometimes even foreshadow the labour movement's claims. First of all, an effort is made to define an "equitable salary" and fair factory rules. Second, the author voices his support for popular savings banks and even praises mutual aid societies, which were the main form of workers' organisation in these years – yet on condition that they do not advance any claims but simply provide assistance, accepting the involvement of bourgeois philanthropists. These views mark a turning-point with respect to the previous distrust of manufacturing (cf. § 3.1), which Frégier instead describes as "the most fruitful, rich, and varied form of labour," the organisation of which must however be redefined also "for the benefit of the material advantage and morality of the industrious classes." Against any form of agricultural nostalgia, "the strong and regular organisation of industry" is presented as a solution to existing social problems as long as that solidarity and commonality of interest between employers and workers is ensured – as it is in the administration and the army – that is already intrinsic to the mechanisms of market competition.[11] "This system can be called *patronage*," which is the system best-suited to "promote a taste for work, order, frugality, and good manners" by combining the material support and moral education of workers (Frégier, 1840, pp. 288–311). Such a focus on patronage as an avenue to rethink the organisation of industrial work is the hallmark of this treatise on the dangerous classes, which actually takes the form of an enquiry into the labour world that even delves into the professional relationship between employers and workers within factories.

Through the idea of patronage, Frégier reframes the perspective of the philanthropists' protection of the poor – typical of treatises on *charité investigatrice* (cf. § 3.1.1) – within the labour relationship between the employer (no longer *maître* but *patron*) and the worker. The aim of patronage is to lead the worker to adhere to, identify with, and be incorporated into a business through a guarantee of *social protection*. The latter consists of the employer's willingness to take charge of his employee's socio-biological needs both within and without the business. This system is based on an exchange between the worker's loyalty, regularity, and devotion and the employer's willingness to take on the cost of the latter's social reproduction as manpower: support in the event of illness, attention towards the conditions of the whole family unit (including in the event of pregnancies), willingness to take on workers' children as apprentices in view of generational continuity within the

business, assistance to elderly workers with no sons to care for them, and so on. Such is the fundamental logic underlying that "informal protection contract" that takes the name of employers' *patronage*. It embodies a social integration strategy that is based on the centrality of wage labour, is envisaged as independent from State intervention and anticipates the translation of certain aspects of this informal duty to protect into laws via the juridical codification of labour relations.

> My sole aim is to develop and extend patronage. . . . Those who have under-taken a careful study of workers' habits do not hesitate to think and say that the prospect of reforming them largely depends on entrepreneurs' actions. . . . I would be wonderfully repaid for my research . . . if this work contributed to a reform of industry capable of ensuring a less turbulent, less precarious, and sweeter condition for the industrious classes.
>
> (ibid., pp. 296, 309 and 347)

Thus writes Frégier, illustrating the paradox of a demand for social reform coming from the liberal camp in an effort to develop strategies to deal with the social question that is driven by the conservative ambition to "defend society" and "moralise" the subaltern classes. Whereas in *Organisation du travail* Louis Blanc (1840) proposed a State-led social reform, these liberal milieus promoted business organisation as the driving force for a "reform of the mores" of the popular classes led by entrepreneurs. Patronage practices thus encouraged employers to take responsibility for their workers, establishing this principle on the political-moral level before the emergence of labour law started enshrining it on the juridical level through the codification of wage labour relations. This perspective found its fullest formulation in Frédéric Le Play's work *Les ouvriers européens* (1855), which marked a new turning point in the history of labour studies as the first real sociology of work treatise.[12] Moreover, it was in the strongholds of employers' patronage that, from the 1860s, the great workers' strikes were to break out (Castel, 2003, pp. 417 ff.).

By encouraging workers to remain with a business so as to promote the inter-twining of factory life and everyday life, the principles of patronage played a significant role in the establishment of the modern system of employment in France. They constitute a first attempt to attack the condition of job insecurity and instability characterising the new labour market as a result of the abolition of guilds and the increasing intervention of private capital. They contributed to overcoming the widespread distrust of large manufactures which marked the dawn of industrialisation in France and the first enquiries on pauperism. "Manufacturing discipline" thus began to be regarded as the primary means to accomplish a "pacification" of the subaltern classes through the "wage regularity it enables, the fixing of the population, and the possibility to easily assess sanitary conditions" (Donzelot, 1977, p. 71). While large productive units continued to be portrayed as receptacles of promiscuousness, poverty, and hence social hazards, the enactment of supervision, moralisation, protection, and control measures by entrepreneurs began to emerge as an antidote to the constant mobility of people searching for work and higher wages that characterised the traditions and practices of *compagnonage* (cf. § 5.2).

The *nomadism* associated with small trades, seasonal labour, and precarious occupations was increasingly perceived as a key problem related to the new industrial poverty, which needed to be addressed by ensuring job security and stability to consolidate the border separating the working and the dangerous class. Indeed, nomadism constituted the main link between the metaphor of barbarism and the 19th-century proletarians who were immigrating into manufacturing cities en masse. Limiting this pervasive nomadic condition paved the way towards new social representations, including the representation of what came to be known as the "working class" (in the singular). The patronage system interpreted this logic by fostering conditions of compatibility between the ways of life of wage workers and the new production regime that was emerging through the increasing economic power and pervasiveness of private capital. Such a logic consisted of promoting the establishment of a segment of the subaltern classes as *workforce* through their attachment to individual businesses and manufacturers. In other words, it was a matter of *turning the barbarian into a worker* by getting him to submit to the discipline and benefits of modern wage labour. Frégier provided a contribution in this direction by developing a representation that made it possible to "sift out" of the farrago of the social question a working class that clearly distinguished itself from the ways of life typical of the dangerous classes. This crucial distinction was thus added to that between traditional or rural poverty and modern industrial pauperism laid out in the previously considered treatises (cf. § 3.1). As illustrated in Chapter 6, the distinction between male and female labour conditions was to become a further element in this process of definition – or "objectivation" – of the modern working class.

3.3 Doctor Villermé and the epistemology of the social sciences

In November 1834, the political economy branch of the ASMP promoted and funded a major enquiry into France's biggest manufacturers to evaluate "the physical and moral conditions of the working classes in the most exact possible way." This was an internal direct appointment, entrusted to Louis-François Benoiston de Châteauneuf – an economist and social demographer who had been in charge of the official report on cholera – and Louis-René Villermé – a physician who had been a leading voice in the debates on the epidemic and a member of the official committee of enquiry on cholera (cf. § 2.5). While the former studied the west and rural areas, the latter focused on more industrialised textile regions, carrying out a broad investigation that marked an important turning point in the developments we are exploring and in the process of redefining the social question as a specific labour question. Villermé's *Tableau de l'état physique et moral des ouvriers* (1840) offers an unprecedented description of industrial work conditions as the central challenge that post-revolutionary 19th-century society had to face to ensure its very destiny. It is worth considering the whole intellectual path that led this author to publish the *Tableau*, as his trajectory crosses the entire range of topics we have considered so far and, in the next chapter, will allow us to set these topics in relation to the history of administration and legislation.

3.3.1 The public health movement and the "work" of cholera

Villermé began his career as a military surgeon, serving in Napoleon's army for a decade. His interest then turned to public health, particularly in relation to criminal and incarceration issues. In 1820, he embarked on a study of "prisons in relation to hygiene, morality, and political economy," which was based on visits to gaols, as well as on quantitative evaluations, and earned him a place at the Academy of Medicine. He then focused his work on the causal patterns emerging from an analysis of death rates, first in prisons and later within the French population as a whole (Villermé, 1820, 1828, 1830, 1831). Villermé concluded that social conditions had to be recognised as a crucial variable in such an analysis and this triggered his interest in those poor classes that consistently displayed significantly higher mortality rates. The way in which this physician formulated the problems at issue, his concern with ensuring salubrious conditions, and his systematic use of statistics in relation to medicine immediately place his work in that strand of medical science which in those years was emerging with the name of "public health movement" or, in French, "*hygiénisme*" (Coleman, 1982; La Berge, 1989, 1992). His intellectual connection with Adolphe Quételet further contributed to fuelling his interest in statistics, which makes Villermé one of the founders of social demography in view of his constant efforts to intertwine medicine and the investigation of population data (Mireaux, 1962; Lecuyer, 2000; Julia & Valleron, 2011).

In 1828 he founded the *Annales d'hygiène publique et de medicine légale* together with the anatomopathologist Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet, another hygienist and pioneering social investigator who authored a famous enquiry into prostitution in Paris and a treatise on public sanitation in relation to the various professions (Parent-Duchâtelet, 1836, 1838). The main feature of this journal was an unprecedented effort to institutionalise a form of scientific knowledge intertwining the systematic use of statistics, the medical study of hygiene, and the analysis of the social realm. In the *Preamble* to the first issue of *Annales* (vol. I, 1828, p. 2), we read:

> The medical tendency is the necessary complement to the industrial tendency, since the influence which the latter has exerted on salubriousness is unquestionable in the sense that it has multiplied the hazards to which industrial populations are generally far more exposed than agricultural populations.

The main aim of this approach was therefore to develop social immunisation strategies against the multiplication of hazards that marked emergent industrial societies. The public health movement presented itself as the "art of preserving the health of men gathered in a society" through a redefinition of medicine's epistemological framework in the industrial age, starting from a new understanding of sanitary issues based on the use of population statistics. This "party of public health" (Coleman, 1982) explicitly aimed to inform government measures and public policies by establishing an "association" with "philosophy and legislation" to fight "social pathologies" (Villermé, 1830, p. 294). Through the notions of "milieu" and of the

"social environment," and an organicist conception of society, the hygienist perspective oriented the development of the epistemological framework of the budding social sciences, directing its research practices towards the "evaluation of the physical and moral conditions" of the urban subaltern classes. "By developing a *physiological approach* to the study of society centred on social pathology," understood as the negative side capable of revealing the positive side of possible administrative and legislative initiatives, hygienists promoted "a kind of medicine which, on account of its empirical and methodological bases, aspired to become a social science" (Procacci, 1993, pp. 156–157). The trauma of the 1832 epidemic stimulated and justified the penetration of this approach into public debate, political discourse, and social research practices. We have already seen how the difficulties in coming up with a diagnosis and treatment for cholera made the latter an obscure and protean object, just like the social question: the strength of the public health movement lay precisely in its capacity to connect these two elements – epidemic risks and pauperism as a social pathology – by promoting a form of medical knowledge that was structurally intertwined with a scientific look at society and an analysis of the "social body."

It is therefore evident that the cholera outbreak immediately established Villermé at the centre of public debate, not least because the epidemic's dynamics evoked the contents of his research on unequal mortality rates across social classes. In opposition to the theories of cholera as a contagious disease, which emphasised the need for isolation, he endorsed "health measures" that envisaged the social environment as the strategic sphere for preventing the epidemic's spread. He thus promoted hygienic-sanitary interventions in those urban milieus where the infection was likely to emerge (Villermé, 1833). Villermé then joined the public committee of enquiry on the epidemic led by Châteauneuf, which adopted the method of the hygienic-sanitary assessment of places deemed insalubrious, emphasising the problem of the subaltern classes' conditions (cf. § 2.5). For the first time, the urban social milieu was approached as an object that could be systematically investigated to promote welfare practices for the safeguarding of the social body. In such a way, the pandemic experience pushed the empirical method of medicine beyond its boundaries and – through the public health movement – projected it towards a new and broader subject: the scientific analysis of industrial society. This overlap between medicine and social investigation enabled hygienists to establish their own perspective within the epistemological framework of the budding social sciences. The latter came to envisage pauperism as the primary object for testing an empirical method for the scientific analysis of society that would appear to have been largely borrowed from medicine. These developments sketch out a kind of "minor history" of the origins of the social sciences which intertwines the traditional history of ideas – the construction of concepts and paradigms which in those years gained traction through the work of authors such as Saint-Simon and Comte – with the invention and implementation of social research *practices*. Adopting this lens allows us to appreciate the political dimension of the genesis of modern sociology, since the rise of these research practices was driven by the urge to find responses to pressing social events. Besides, this perspective also reveals

the diverse roots of sociological knowledge, resulting from the contingent combination of approaches and personalities from the fields of medicine, anthropology, governance, law, and political economy. Thus, the treatises we are considering may be regarded as an "impure archive" of the modern social sciences, understood as a sphere of empirical investigation practices in which different disciplines became intertwined in relation to a key issue, the social question of urban pauperism, turning it into a scientific object to develop social security and risk reduction policies.

Starting from "a biological-ecological model drawing on physiology and anatomy for its concepts," Villermé was "seeking to develop an understanding of society as a whole composed of interrelated and interrelating functional parts" (Rabinow, 1995, p. 61). Hence, this author "was led to approach the social sciences because of his experience as a physician" (Démier, 1989, p. 37). His career illustrates the crystallising of a political-intellectual approach that interpreted the trauma of cholera as proof of the need to scientifically organise knowledge of the urban social strata deemed responsible for the disease's spread. Hence, the urgency to articulate political responses to the range of problems most dramatically epitomised by the pandemic made the morass of pauperism the object of an increasingly organised method of observation, which primarily pursued its *classification*. The newly reopened AMPS offered one of the most striking examples of this political-intellectual rationale (cf. § 2.6). Thanks to his leading role in the debates on the disease, Villermé was immediately elected as one of its members, drafted its first *Mémoire* – concerning the French population's composition (Villermé, 1837) – and became its president in 1849, not least by virtue of the success of his *Tableau de l'état physique et moral des ouvriers employés dans les manufactures de coton, de laine et de soie*, published in 1840 and destined to set the standard for all labour enquiries to come.

3.3.2 The "physical and moral conditions" of the working class

The 4,000-franc grant offered by the ASMP in 1834 to "evaluate the physical and moral condition of the working classes" reflects the progressive focusing of the analysis of the social question on industrial labour conditions, and the way in which the latter had been gradually assumed as a general perspective to understand and manage the problem of pauperism. In turn, the intellectual path that led Villermé from the study of public health in relation to the subaltern classes' conditions to the investigation of the organisation of labour in large factories exemplifies the way in which wage work was established as a central subject of knowledge and administration. In February 1835, in the Lyon region, this physician began the investigation he was to complete in the northern departments two years later:

> I followed the workman from his workshop to his home. I walked in with him, and studied him within his family; I attended his meals. I did even more: I saw him in his labour and in his household; I wanted to see him in his pleasures, observe him in his social activities. There, listening to his conversations, sometimes participating, I became, without his direct assent, a

confidant of his joys, his pains, his regrets, and his hopes, and a witness to his vices and virtues.

(Villermé, 1840, Vol. 1, p. vi)

We find here the ethnographic approach marking philanthropic treatises on poverty (cf. § 3.1), yet this time within the context of a systematic investigation conducted on the basis of what is conceived as a "positive" method focusing on a specific and well-defined subject: workers in that industry "which takes up most of the manpower," namely the textile industry.[13] Villermé distinguishes between its three sectors – cotton, wool, and silk – and then between the various departments, cities, and factories. An unprecedented amount of information is collected, organised, and presented: for each locality, data is provided pertaining to manufacturing methods, workers' tasks, working hours, wages, housing costs, and the prices of food and other consumer goods. The *Tableau* is therefore usually regarded as the first genuine work enquiry, an influential cornerstone in labour studies that laid the foundation for the birth of the sociology of work. With this treatise – William Reddy (1984, p. 369) argues – social research on labour conditions acquires "a definite form, to which all future practitioners of this art will be expected to conform."

Much space is devoted to the Lyonnais *fabrique* and to the *canuts* (cf. § 1.1 and 5.1), who according to Villermé (1989, p. 369), "far from being morally degraded and of meagre intelligence as has been said, are on the contrary more advanced in true civilisation . . . than many men raised by their wealth or social status above the workers' rank." In this apology for textile workers based on the notion of "true civilisation" we can glimpse a polemic against those who, like Girardin in the early 1830s, had "degraded" them to the rank of new barbarians (cf. § 2.1). The gap between Villermé's description of Lyonnais workers and that provided by the *Journal des débats* in 1831 bears witness to the transformation of the liberal elites' representations of subaltern subjects that this chapter and the previous one have retraced and interpreted: the shift from the metaphor of barbarism to the emergent image of the honest and industrious worker. Like Girardin, Villermé was a champion of political and economic liberalism. Yet, he believed that liberalism ought to promote a kind of positive knowledge that would make it possible to "diagnose" those social pathologies for which it was necessary to take governmental and administrative action to safeguard the social body. Indeed, in his view what distinguished the liberal order from the Ancien Régime was precisely this diagnostic faculty, this capacity of society to tell the truth about itself. It was therefore to ensure the development of liberal society that the *Tableau* provided a portrayal of industrial pathologies of unprecedented rawness and depth, revealing the distortions and excesses which needed to be corrected to ensure the bourgeois civilisation's destiny – starting with the major issue of child labour, as we shall see in the next chapter.

The vivid and scathing denunciation of some baleful aspects of work in large factories – sources of promiscuousness, alcoholism, and a more general "corruption of morals" – does not lead Villermé to question the need for capitalist development. Instead, the *Tableau*'s general premise is that the latter brings unquestionable improvements to the living conditions of the whole population.[14] The analysis of the

industrialisation process is so detailed that it reveals the latter's complex character, the various ways in which it had penetrated into the countryside, and the positive effects of the alternation between agricultural and manufacturing work, which mitigates the effects of economic crises. There is no longer any room for outdated criticisms of the industrial era based on an apology for the traditional and rural economy. On the contrary, it is precisely with the aim of ensuring industrial and economic development that Villermé focuses on the social pathologies stemming from the exploitation of manpower to advance moderate, specific, and circumscribed proposals for reform (cf. §§ 4.1 and 4.2). Hence, his perspective clearly differs from and overcomes the agricultural, artisanal, and family-centred tendency characterising the "Christian political economy" we have considered above (cf. § 3.1), yet without subscribing to the political economy's orthodoxy of British liberalism.

The first volume of the *Tableau* presents the results of the investigation conducted across the various sectors and localities, while the second one discusses elements common to the whole textile industry, the main problems associated with its work conditions, and political, social, and legislative strategies to deal with them. Regular use is made of statistics while the data from previous social enquiries conducted in the 1830s within the framework of the *économie politique charitable* are frequently employed as a documentary basis (cf. § 3.1.2). But the fundamental piece of empirical evidence is drawn from first-hand observation, modelled after the ethnographic methods of philanthropists' treatises from the 1820s (cf. § 3.1.1). Statistical evaluation and empirical investigation are intertwined and interpreted from a medical-hygienist perspective aimed at assessing workers' physical-sanitary conditions; their food, hygiene, and sexual habits; and their dwellings and work places' climatic-environmental conditions. As in the previous treatises, here too we find a strong moralising tendency whereby "forgetfulness of moral principles" is regarded as a major cause of workers' poverty. Thus, Villermé (1989, p. 378) indicates a "fair" salary as that which does not exceed the basic level required for the social reproduction of the labour force, arguing that "the more workers earn, the more easily they can satisfy their depraved tastes."[15] Yet to this elitist conservative view, a medical approach is now added that focuses on elements such as the temperature and quality of the air in factories, and more generally on labour's consequences in terms of workers' physical constitution, which makes Villermé one of the fathers of occupational medicine.

The mantras of improvidence, irreligion, alcoholism, dissoluteness, and concubinage were thus downplayed in favour of other reflections of an "ecological" nature, so to speak, which placed *security* policies before moralising. This gaze on social security, the work environment, and the governance of industrial labour is the most innovative and original aspect of the *Tableau*. The very detailed and moderate reform proposals it offers reflect an emergent tendency towards pioneering welfare policies that made the wage labourer's condition into the strategic pivot for the integration and governing of industrial pauperism. The fact that they were subsequently translated into legislative measures reveals the political vocation and effects of the empirical investigations which marked the genesis of the modern social sciences. The next chapter considers these outcomes to describe the impact of the *Tableau* in terms of legislation and policies for workers' protection and,

more broadly, the way in which the practices of social enquires considered so far contributed to the genesis of the modern principles of welfare, starting from the regulation of labour relations.

Notes

1 On 14–17 June 1791, the Constituent Assembly unanimously voted in the laws proposed by Isaac Le Chapelier, the founder of the Feuillants, later guillotined in 1794. Subsequently, under the Napoleonic Empire, the law of 12 April 1803 renewed the prohibition to form coalitions and established the employment record book (cf. § 4.1). In 1804, art. 1781 of the civil code ruled that an employer's word was to be taken over that of his employee in salary disputes; in 1810, art. 415 of the penal code made the establishment of coalitions for the purpose of collectively suspending or preventing work a punishable crime (in 1825–52 over 11,000 sentences were delivered in relation to it). Workers' unrest in the early 1830s was one of the causes that led to the issuing of a law on 10 April 1834 that increased penalties for associations and contributed to sparking the second *révolte des canuts* (cf. § 5.1). The juridical picture remained unchanged for many decades, until the Ollivier law of 2 May 1864 abolished the crime of coalition and the Waldeck-Rousseau law of 21 March 1884 legalised trade unions, abolishing the Le Chapelier law (see Burstin, 1990, 1997; Le Crom, 1998).
2 These words come from the call for investigations launched by the Lyon Academy, and on the basis of which Gérando's work won the award in 1820. This was first published, after significant revision, four years later (on the following developments of this author's approach to poverty, see Gérando, 1839, 1841).
3 In 1821 Gérando established this society together with Rochefoucauld-Liancourt (the former president of the Revolutionary Committee for the Extinction of Mendicity and then of the first French savings bank); leading French philanthropists then entered the *Société de la morale chrétienne*, including Constant, de Broglie, Lamartine, Guizot, and Tocqueville.
4 Along these lines, see also Fodéré (1825). The "Christian economists" often referred to Sismondi, while their most frequent targets were Charles Dupin's industrialism and Charles Dunoyer's liberalism: see Duroselle (1951) on this current of thought.
5 See also Rémusat (1840) for a similar perspective on public welfare.
6 Specifically, Foucault (1995) states that punishment reforms had the effect of creating and isolating a particular form of illegality, namely "delinquency," which could be made use of against other popular illegalities, particularly those of the workers (absenteeism, theft, vagrancy, frauds, etc.). By "popular illegalities" (or working-class illegalism) he means the spontaneous "resistance" put up by the subaltern classes against the socioeconomic transformations underway, which often intertwined with workers' struggles and Republican movements, triggering the "great fear" of the subaltern classes.
7 The reform law, issued on 28 April 1832, abolished corporal forms of punishment such as stocks, the pillory, branding, and the cutting of hands; it made terms of imprisonment for debt shorter; it introduced a distinction between political crimes and ordinary ones; it treated recidivism lighter; and it limited deportation in favour of detention. The death penalty was abolished for the crimes of conspiracy, the counterfeiting of coins and signets, and all forms of theft. Extenuating circumstances were described as "undefinable and unlimited"; among the most commonly invoked factors were the defendant's good conduct before the offence, his or her poor education, age, signs of regret, motive, influence from accessories to the crime, ignorance of the law, poverty, and lack of premeditation (Garçon, 1901). In this period, the morality and law branches of the ASMP focused on the debate on the prison system, with contributions from two leading voices in this debate, namely Lucas and Bérenger.

8 On the ASMP competitions, see Picot (1901). This 3,000-franc award was offered by the ASMP morality branch and assigned, after an extension, in 1838, based on a report by the economist Charles Dunoyer.

9 The use of data is substantial, yet their interpretation seems questionable and arbitrary: it gives the idea that the author is trying to use this data to justify a specific social picture rather than carry out any actual investigation. Frègier aims to estimate the numerical consistency of the working-class population in Paris in order to deduce from it the size – equal to "one-third" – of the depraved and potentially dangerous segment. This quantitative description is then followed by a qualitative one of the mores and habits of the "depraved portion" of male and female workers and ragmen.

10 "It is only as the effect of a whole procedure of selection, in which the penal system is a cornerstone, that around 1840 we see a whole series of discourses appear that are both the effect of the division and have the function of overturning it. Thus, Frégier's text-fiction constructs the *category of dangerous class*," writes Foucault (2015, p. 172) in a text that offers a reading of the similarities between the prison-based punitive system and the disciplinary regime of work, between "wage-form" and "prison-form," between "crime and punishment" and "work and salary."

11 Frégier also states that agriculture and public works should be promoted not in opposition to industry, but as a way to absorb excess manpower in times of crisis, and decries both businessmen's greed and the "tyranny of workers' secret societies" aimed at "dictating wage prices" through blackmail.

12 This author was long neglected on account of his conservative perspective and then reappraised due to his significant methodological contribution to sociology's development (see also Le Play, 1864). Based on extensive research conducted in factories and mines, Le Play's work aimed to provide the material foundations for a positive method of investigation of labour conditions, and to systematically define the principles of patronage, which had acquired considerable importance over the course of the Second Empire. In relation to the latter, it is also worth mentioning the development of the first *cités ouvrières* – or company towns – like the Cité Ouvrière de Mulhouse, which was promoted by a dozen entrepreneurs, partly thanks to public funding from Napoleon III, and aimed at providing workers with modest yet comfortable housing with basic sanitation. The town was built in several phases from 1853 to 1897 until there were 1,243 single and family houses, each with an independent entrance and garden.

13 In 1839, the French cotton industry employed roughly 900,000 workers (including 100–150,000 children), the wool industry 20,000, and the silk industry 180,000.

14 "Since our Revolution, we have seen poverty . . . decrease significantly. Furthermore, among us wealth and its advantages are less the exclusive privilege of only one class than ever before: everyone lays claim to them today, which is why the poor see themselves as being more unfortunate than before, even though in fact their condition has improved" (Villermé, 1989, p. 367).

15 The "moralisation of workers" is described as a great "necessity in the present epoch," and extensive space is devoted to an investigation of workers' "vices" with the aim of distinguishing poor yet honest workers from the dangerous classes: "this separation between the good and the bad, in different neighbourhoods, is an important fact," Villermé writes with regard to Lille. Alcoholism is presented as the workers' greatest scourge, so much so that the author suggests that employers should agree not to hire workers who drink too much (Villermé, 1989, pp. 367–378). Even when it comes to the *canuts*, Villermé praises their wisdom yet denounces "their passion for expensive pleasures, their profligacy, and their excessively free, at times dissolute mores" (ibid., p. 363). These considerations are combined with a scrutiny of the entrepreneurs' conduct, because – in accordance with the classical liberal perspective – it is deemed responsible for any reform of workers' conditions: the entrepreneurs "alone can accomplish it; without them it is impossible" (ibid., p. 407).

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