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'Prophets in the pay of state': The institutionalization of the middle-class habitus in schooling between 1880 and 2010

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Abstract

Although it is well established that contemporary school-based pedagogy continues to be primarily oriented towards a middle-class habitus, little research has documented how crucial elements of such habitus, like an expressive self-conception and emotional management, became integrated in the educational institute and its philosophy. Therefore, this article reconstructs how the current middle-class habitus was institutionalized and what type of personality structuring it eventually replaced. We study the shifts in pedagogical ideas, the role of education and the position of teachers and relate these to structural factors such as state-formation and changing class structures. We draw on the process-relational approach of Elias and Bourdieu and perform a content analysis of 480 pedagogical advice articles published in Flanders (Belgium) between 1880 and 2010, to demonstrate how a discourse of formalization and self-control has been substituted by a more informalized and expressive view. We conclude with a reflection on the impact of such an expressive pedagogical regime on the reproduction of class inequality.

Keywords

education, habitus, historical analysis, informalization, state-formation

Introduction

It has been well established that school implicitly asks of all its pupils what they cannot all equally deliver (Bourdieu, 1977). Some students enter through the school gates with

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a set of linguistic and cultural competences already valued by the teaching staff, offering them immediately a sense of entitlement and insight in the rules of the educational game. Others lack this prerequisite cultural knowledge, disadvantaging them in the educational race. On a structural level, this has been demonstrated, time and again, by investigating what the role is of (inherited) cultural capital in shaping educational success (for an overview see Kraaykamp & Van Eijck, 2010). While for a long time the focus was primarily on educational *outcomes*, in recent years we witnessed an increasing interest in the *processes* that determine these outcomes. The study of teacher–students interactions revealed how certain ways of doing, feeling and acting are preferred and therefore more rewarded in schools. The teaching staff expect their students to be expressive, confident in asking for help, feel at ease in making their own choices and not being afraid to show emotions or talk about feelings (e.g. Calarco, 2011; Lareau, 2011; Stephens, Markus, & Phillips, 2014). In other words, education is clearly structured to reinforce a middle-class habitus. Pupils who did not internalize such a type self-management, through their upbringing, may experience a habitus mismatch and easily feel out of place (Reay, 2001).

The strength of these studies is that they detailed how taken-for-granted ways of being and feeling answer to networks (i.e. fields or figurations) of socialization and penalization and specially how education rests on an institutionalization of a middle-class habitus. A limitation of this body of literature, however, is that they do not explain the historical and structural conditions that brought exactly this type of personality structuring into educational focus. Especially within the context of current studies of educational stratification, following Bourdieu's synchronic view on habitus formation (i.e. comparing classes and studying the relationship between habitus and field), habitus formation is primarily approached in an a-historical way. Scholars take snapshots of the current situation and in doing so largely neglect how education, class structure and habitus are not fixed features but dynamic and evolve over time. In this article we seek to complement this literature by following Elias's more diachronic approach (Paulle, Van Heerikhuizen, & Emirbayer, 2012) to study how habitus formation changed over time. As Reay (2004) rightly pointed out, the habitus is not only the result of individual trajectories but is always a compilation of both individual as well as collective histories.

That contemporary pedagogy seems to foster a middle-class habitus, emphasizing expression, informal behaviour and emotionality, does not entail that education has always relied on such personality structuring. Hence, to understand why a certain type of self-conception and emotional management gets integrated within the educational institute and its philosophy, we need to delve into the historical and structural conditions that underlie it. Seeing that we cannot observe classroom interactions or interview teachers from the past, we here propose to do a type of 'archaeological sociology' that uncovers the hidden cultural foundations on which the current educational field rests. We seek to reconstruct how the current middle-class habitus became institutionalized and what type of personality structuring it eventually replaced. This means looking at the shifts in pedagogical ideas, the role of education and the position of teachers and relating these to structural factors such as state-formation and changing class structures.

In order to do so, this article focuses on the theoretical triad of education–habitus–state and relies on the process-relational approach of Elias and Bourdieu. The article is structured as follows. First, we describe the intrinsic relationship between education and

the state by emphasizing the role of teachers therein. Second, we explain how the logic of the state has evolved during the last century from a collectivizing system to a therapeutic approach. Next, we go into how this relates to a conversion in habitus formation as described by Elias and more recent interpretations of his work. To close the theoretical triad, we eventually relate this back to changes in pedagogical ideologies and child rearing. We complement this theoretical analysis with an empirical quantitative content analysis of 480 pedagogical advice articles published between 1880 and 2010 in Flanders (the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium). The results revealed a general shift from a pedagogical discourse dominated by a behaviourist understanding of child rearing as the formalization of personality towards a more informal and emotional approach that emphasizes self-expression. In the conclusion we elaborate the implications of our findings.

Teachers as state prophets

As many scholars have demonstrated, the development of state power is inextricably linked to the rise of mass schooling (De Swaan, 1988; Green, 1990; Ramirez & Boli, 1987). There are two specific reasons for this. First, to guarantee efficient functioning, states rely on a 'division of labour of domination' (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 36). They need specialized personnel, people with specific authoritative knowledge who maintain the functioning of the governing apparatus, i.e. the 'bureaucratic field' (Bourdieu, 2005). This is only possible when it is accompanied by a concentration of what Bourdieu (2005) terms 'symbolic capital' that legitimizes this type of power. In other words, state servants are always in need of educational credentials that certify who has the right to enter the bureaucratic field and wield the power the state has monopolized. In doing so, education eventually justifies status hierarchies produced by the state (Meyer, 1977).

Second, as institutional theories often stress, the main driving force between the close intertwining of state-formation and the development of (state-sponsored) mass education is a cultural one, i.e. homogenizing the population (Green, 1990). Most new nation-states had to unify regions that were very heterogeneous with respect to language, class and religion through the creation of 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 2006). This explains why especially young, fragile and heterogeneous states like Prussia, Italy and Belgium were among the first to establish a state-supported system of mass schooling, while long-established countries like Britain and France only started to subsidize schooling when their positions were internationally threatened by the rise of the US and the German Empire (Green, 1990; Ramirez & Boli, 1987).

In the process of state-formation teachers played a crucial role as being both constitutive for the further development of state control as well as being completely dependent on it. Their employment and status are entirely encapsulated within state institutions and when compared to other state-related divisions (e.g. the medical or juridical sector), teachers never achieved real autonomy from the state. De Swaan (1988, p. 235) points out three reasons for this: (1) teachers' expertise is not esoteric enough to enjoy the benefits of an exclusive knowledge status, (2) there is hardly any alternative employment outside of government-subsidized educational institutes and (3) educational institutes comprise a hierarchy which creates a possibility of internal social mobility.

Given their direct interest in a strong state apparatus, the teaching corps is defined by ‘self-perpetuation and self-protection’ (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 149). Teachers have an interest in adhering to a discourse that contributes to the perpetuation and protection of the state apparatus – making teachers political socializing agents or, as Bourdieu and Passeron claim, ‘little prophets in the pay of state’ (1990, p. 20). This not only means that they are in the exceptional position of reinforcing state power, and consequently their own position, by instilling pro-state attitudes in their pupils, but also by imposing a certain pedagogical regime on society as a whole.

The changing logic of the state

Although originally organs of the state occupied themselves primarily with establishing internal and external security, through both military and fiscal means, later on their scope broadened drastically (De Swaan, 1988; Mann, 2012). During the early phases of development, states were characterized by a combination of a clear centralist control mechanism combined with a collective regulation of material welfare or what Mann termed the ‘half-military and half-civil’ nation-state (2012, p. 395). However, during later phases healing, helping and rearing – what Bourdieu (1999, p. 182) termed ‘the left hand of state’ – increasingly became tasks assigned to professionals on the payroll of the state. Hence, from the second half of the 20th century onwards, processes such as educational expansion, economic growth and de-industrialization engendered new power balances that, in turn, led towards an increasing individualization and therapeutization of state control.

This therapeutization of society has increasingly attracted the attention of scholars and manifests itself within multiple spheres of life (e.g. Elchardus & De Keere, 2010; Furedi, 2002; Rose, 1989). It is defining of therapeutic state control that those who exercise authority over others, ranging from kindergarten teachers to executive managers, are supposed to permanently nurture people’s emotional state and desires. This therapeutic type of population administration departs from a traditional welfare approach because it is not only concerned with physical, economic and material factors (physical health, working hours, housing, income, etc.), but also focuses on psychological wellbeing. People coping with personal or social problems are to be placed under the surveillance of ‘experts of subjectivity’ (Rose, 1989) such as pedagogues, job coaches, counsellors, or therapists. In other words, the ‘left hand of the state’ learned to imitate the therapeutic gestures of the psychologist and, in doing so, extended its scope by also including the minds of its population.

The rise of this therapeutic state is directly related to growth of a new middle class. First, the creation of social protection and rising living standards engendered a larger affluent class, drawing the sting out of the traditional conflict between holders of capital and labour (Lash & Urry, 1987). Consequently, in the past decades more political support was rallied for a dismantling of collective protection and welfare regulation. This eventually led to an individualization of social support combined with a state ethic of self-responsibilization (Wacquant, 2009). Second, the educational expansion and the baby boom also gave rise to a new middle class that pushed for a more therapeutic approach to welfare (Bourdieu, 1979/2010, pp. 302–303, 314–315). From the start, this new social

class was threatened by downward social mobility. To avoid declining social status they attempted to reconvert their social positions by reinventing their occupations in such a way that their jobs conformed better to their credentials, aspirations and social status. The expanding fields of public wellbeing, education and lifestyle provided an excellent place to accomplish these strategies of reconversion as they are characterized by a demand for credentials and ensuring a high return on educational and cultural capital. Consequently, this new middle class was destined 'to play a vanguard role in the struggles over everything concerned with the art of living' (Bourdieu, 1979/2010, p. 367). In this way, the state became one of the most important domains in which this newly educated generation could seek refuge, leading to the reconversion of the original welfare apparatus to a model that matched their aspirations and ethics better (e.g. not probation officers but life trajectory coaches). Hence, this therapeutic state is, above all, a new middle-class state.

From a formal to an informal habitus

How do the preceding arguments relate to an institutionalization of varying types of habitus? Processes of state monopolization of (physical and symbolic) power never exist independently of changes in disciplinary methods and personality structures (Elias, 1991, 1939/2000; Gorski, 2003). One cannot describe evolutions in social structure, such as the transformation of state control, without taking into account the adjustments they cause in the way the self is being moulded and formed (Gorski, 2003; Rose, 1989). In other words, state power always relies on a culturally shaped self or habitus and the latter always changes in correspondence with its structuring contexts.

As mentioned earlier, although the notion of habitus became a standard concept in social science through the work of Bourdieu, it was already being used extensively by Elias beforehand (Paulle et al., 2012). When compared to Bourdieu, Elias's focus is much more on the collective history of habitus. His historical work on manners, etiquettes and sports (1939/2000; Elias & Dunning, 1986) understands habitus formation – the development of a 'second nature' in Elias's terms – as above all, a steady intensification of emotional control. In other words, habitus functions as an inner compass or a set of habits that allows people to repress their immediate impulses and inclinations. For Elias, the increasing complexity of social relationships that characterizes modern nation-states demanded a refinement of behaviours through a *formalization* of emotions. Hence, the role of early state institutions was to instil deference, formality and self-control (Gorski, 2003).

However, just as state formation is a continuous process, the transformation of the structure of personality is also ongoing. Recent historical work on self-regulation revealed that since the second half of the 20th century a steady trend towards a softening of formality and strict behavioural guidelines, as well as a new appreciation of emotional expression and flexibility settled in (De Keere, 2014; Van Vree, 2011; Wouters, 2007). This expressive turn in personality structuring is what Wouters and others have called *informalization* (Wouters, 2007; see also Kilminster, 2008; Van Vree, 2011). This evolution does not signal a disappearance of the formalized or controlling second nature but rather that it is supplemented by a 'third nature' or an extra layer that allows for more flexible, subtle and emotional behavioural patterns (Wouters, 2007). Moreover, this

apparent loosening of self-restraint is not incidental but results from a closer integration of several social classes into one welfare system combined with a democratic ethic of egalitarianism, disallowing overt status display, and therefore also pushes for more elusive strategies of social distinction (Wouters, 2007).

Wouters' study of etiquette books from the 1890s to the present century revealed that not only explicit displays of obedience and status superiority have become unwarranted but also that more subtle forms of emotional expression have been increasingly encouraged. Notions such as discipline, authority and perseverance were slowly pushed out of the cultural spotlight by concepts such as authenticity or self-expression (De Keere, 2014). Bourdieu himself described this expressive turn as a shift from a *duty* to a *fun ethic*, which, according to him, mirrors the tension between the old and new middle class. The latter tried to resist the gravity of the social space by discrediting the old middle-class emphasis on status thrift and restraint, while instead promoting an expressive self that is not preoccupied with prestige and rule following but with wellbeing and psychological liberation (Bourdieu, 1979/2010, pp. 365–371).

Here we see how a classed habitus and state control get tied together, because this expressive habitus is only possible within carefully designed institutional contexts that allow for such – to use the words of Elias (Elias & Dunning, 1986, p. 44) – ‘controlled de-controlling of emotional control’, and the therapeutic state is precisely that setting. It is an individualized way of governance that relies on the emotional expression of its citizens and is therefore a collectively organized controlled de-controlling of the self. At the same time, as explained in the previous section, this therapeutic state is also a new middle-class state. So when Bourdieu and Passeron claim that teachers are prophets of the state, this also means that teachers are simultaneously preaching for a middle-class personality formation, as the one is inseparable from the other. In this way we see how class habitus, state and education form a triad of which the elements cannot be analysed separately, bringing us finally back to changes in pedagogy and child rearing.

The shift in child rearing

What historical studies on pedagogy and child rearing have shown repeatedly, is that emotional expression became an increasing concern of parents and teachers, while a belief in emotional suppression, which used to be central, has steadily lost ground (Bakker, 2000; Stearns & Haggerty, 1991). This transition resonates well with the shift in habitus development from formalization to informalization and a state logic from collective to therapeutic. Moreover, besides a general change in values, this therapeutization of society also had a direct effect on the way child upbringing and education are being conceptualized. According to Furedi (2002), contemporary child rearing is characterized by an obsession with emotionality and mental wellbeing, obliging parents and teachers to become emotional trainers and therapists. Children who deviate from the psychological norm are carefully monitored or, if necessary, taken to a professional in order to therapeutically remediate psychological malfunctioning. Many scholars eventually corroborate his analysis that children are currently nurtured in a highly individualized and medicalized manner (e.g. Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009; Rose, 1989). This does not only entail more attention being paid to emotions, but also implies a whole practice of medical testing, categorizing and monitoring (Rose, 1989).

The therapeutic manner of child rearing has also had an impact on teachers' role and behaviour. Within the educational field the consensus slowly settled that the pedagogic task of teachers exists primarily in cultivating the emotional individuality of the child (Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006). Based on a former analysis of educational journals, Anttila and Väänänen (2015) argue there has been a clear shift from the teacher as an authority figure towards the teacher as an emotional coach. Hence, contemporary schooling turns teachers into, what Hochschild (1983) calls, emotional labourers who have to manage different feeling rules in order to elicit the right emotions in themselves and their pupils (see also Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006).

Analysis

The empirical question that we seek to answer is how did the above-described evolution in state, education and habitus translate itself into changing pedagogical thinking? To get an empirical grip on this question we now assess how variations in pedagogical ideas of teachers over time mirror (1) a shift from a preference for a formal habitus (e.g. focus on self-control, discipline, duty) to an expressive one (e.g. emotional expression, authenticity, wellbeing) and (2) whether this can be related to a rise in therapeutization and a changing understanding of the role of teachers and schooling. To this end we analysed articles from eight different primary teachers' advice journals from Flanders in Belgium, published between 1880 and 2010. This method was informed by two considerations. First, these articles are not only written *for* teachers but mostly *by* teachers. Second, these journals have been published throughout the history of mass schooling, allowing us to go back in time in a reasonably comparative manner. To analyse these articles in a systematic way, we opted for a quantitative content analysis (Neuendorf, 2001; for more details see below).

The case of Belgium

Belgium, the country we focus on, was founded as a constitutional monarchy in 1830 after a revolutionary struggle for independence from the Netherlands. This young and economically fragile state had to unify two very different regions, a Dutch-speaking and Catholic north (Flanders) and a French-speaking and more anti-clerical south (Wallonia). Only 12 years after its independence the government already passed its first educational law which obliged municipalities to organize free schooling. Although most schools were still organized by the parish, a first alliance between the state and education was quickly established. Soon, the control over education became the object of several 'school wars': first between anti-clerics and Catholics, later between the French- and Dutch-speaking areas. More than a century later these conflicts were finally settled by creating two separate educational networks and regulating their corresponding subsidies in an educational pact (1958).

The case of Belgium demonstrates two important general issues. First, nation-building efforts were from the start related to the development of mass schooling systems. The underlying assumption was that children's personality, attitudes and behaviour can and should be moulded by explicit homogenization efforts and it was the schools' task to do

so (Green, 1990; Ramirez & Boli, 1987). Second, the establishment of mass schooling gave rise to a polarization between distinct interest groups. State and mass schooling are so closely intertwined that interest groups who desire a strengthening of state power can never neglect education. However, the crux of this research is not on the cultural particularities of Belgium. Here we will only investigate more general and underlying conceptions of self-regulation that would be typical for any Western nation-state that developed towards a therapeutic model during the 20th century.

Selection

We only selected Flemish (Dutch) journals to increase the comparability since (1) there are clear cultural (e.g. no shared media) and political (e.g. no nationwide political parties) differences between the two main Belgian regions and (2) the educational network was gradually split up as result of the process of federalization that characterized the institutional history of Belgium.

A three-step selection procedure was followed. First, we selected four time-periods – with a time lapse of about 40 years – from the end of 19th century up until today: (1) the end of the 19th century (1880–1900), (2) the interwar period (1920–1940), (3) the postwar period (1960–1980) and (4) the present time (2000–2010). Subsequently, we selected for every period two journals based on their ideological affiliation. Due to the strong pillarization in Flanders, it is important to take into account the divide between Catholics and non-Catholics. The selection of the two journals per period was, independent of their ideological affiliation, based on (1) their content, i.e. they had to have a broad notion of pedagogic advice and on (2) the fact that the journals had published at least 10 volumes. This selection yielded a sample of eight journals from 1885 up until today (see online Appendix for a list of journals). Finally, the separate articles were randomly selected by taking the first 60 articles from the first chosen volumes that entailed clear societal, psychological or pedagogic advice (purely practical advice about among other things exercises or timetables were excluded). Following this procedure, we eventually selected 480 articles.

Coding schema

To analyse the articles and ensure replicability we developed a well-delineated coding scheme. To that end we deconstructed the discursive universe of education by understanding any pedagogical ideology as an attempt to answer four questions: (1) ‘What is individual development?’, (2) ‘How do we achieve this development?’, (3) ‘How should we understand the role of the teacher?’, and (4) ‘What is the relationship between school and society?’ The possible answers to these questions were translated into semantic units or themes that fitted for coding (see summary in Table 1).

What is individual development? Any educational programme aims to create a self-steering and independent individual, otherwise it would be pointless to invest in guiding behaviour and refining habits (code: self-steering). However, how this self-steering individual is comprehended may differ drastically. When education aims primarily to

Table 1. Coding schema based on the four pedagogic questions.

Pedagogy	Code	Description
What is individual development?		
All	Self-steering	A child needs to learn how to act autonomously and become independent.
Formal	Improvement	The goal is to improve the child and form an ideal human being.
Formal	Self-control	School should cultivate restraint, self-control and discipline.
Expressive	Authenticity	Children are unique and their authenticity and individuality need to be treasured.
Expressive	Self-expression	Individuals have to learn to express their thoughts and feelings (often creatively).
Expressive	Talent	Every child has a certain innate talent or a gift.
How to achieve individual development?		
Formal	Behaviourist psychology	Human psyche is in need of habitation, repetition and avoidance of impulses.
Formal	Order	Creating order and discipline in the classroom is a condition for education.
Expressive	Wellbeing psychology	Psychological wellbeing entails feelings of wellbeing and happiness.
Expressive	Medicalization	Individual differences and problems need to be interpreted in a medical way: dyslexia, ADHD, personality disorder, etc.
Expressive	Psychological tests	We need to use standardized and psychological tests: IQ test, EQ tests, personality test, etc.
What is the role of the teacher?		
Expressive	Teacher as example	The teachers are role models, they embody the ideal citizen.
Expressive	Teacher as coach	The teacher has to have an open relationship with the child as a coach or friend.
Relation between education and society?		
Formal	Nationalistic education	Education is a means to cultivate nationalistic or patriotic values.
Expressive	Democratic education	The child needs to be introduced to a culture of debate, consensus and tolerance.

inculcate children with a formalized second nature, then self-steering means the ability to control one's desires and impulses (code: *self-control*). Moreover, individual development is one of improvement: the child needs to become a better version of its natural self (code: *improvement*). From an expressive perspective, education is not about improvement but development is interpreted in terms of self-discovery and expression, often through creative means (code: *self-expression*). This presupposes a more essentialist self-image assuming that development entails an activation of one's intrinsic talents (code: *talent*). Children are not expected to conform to a specific ideal but have to learn how to discover and express their unique and authentic selves properly (code: *authenticity*).

How to achieve development? The answers to the question of how to achieve such self-development entails assumptions about the functioning of the human psyche. If the focus lies on creating a second nature then the task of child rearing lies in inhibiting wrong behaviour and regulating impulses and inclinations through habituation and repetition. This understanding of our mental faculties can be traced back to behaviourist psychology (code: *behaviourist psychology*) – a reasoning that leads to the view that teachers need to create an atmosphere of repetition, order and discipline (code: *order*).

An informalized pedagogy endorses an almost opposite psychological premise. According to this view, the fundamental task of education is not to formalize or habituate the child but to nurture the child so that it can release its inner talents and potential. This may manifest itself in two specific ways. The first is a strong affiliation with development, gestalt and humanistic psychologies that focuses predominantly on emotional development and wellbeing. Children can only develop in a safe learning environment where they feel valued and cherished (code: *wellbeing psychology*). The second manifestation, related to the medicalization of childhood, is an interest in the monitoring of aptitudes, talents and needs (code: *psychological test*). This also translates into a concern for learning-related disabilities (ADHD, dyslexia, personality problems, etc.) and the implementation of a whole range of psychological tests (code: *medicalization*).

The role of the teacher? If the task of a teacher is to formalize behaviour than they must try to embody this desired personality. In the teacher–student relationship, the teacher ought to be a role model to whom the child can look up to (code: *teacher as example*). Hence, the teacher should be a champion of self-control and discipline. An informalized teacher–student relationship, on the other hand, would above all strive towards equality, openness and emotional authenticity. Under this view the teacher is considered a coach who accompanies the student on their path towards self-actualization. This, however, turns teachers into emotional labourers rather than disciplining agents (code: *teacher as coach*).

The relationship between education and society? The final question pertains to the societal role education has to fulfil. The societal position of teachers (as described above) presumes that, in general, they will be inclined to see education as a means to cultivate positive attitudes towards society and state. Yet, how society is conceptualized can drastically differ. If teachers are vested in a state system that is primarily based on collective welfare combined with authoritarian regulation (i.e. half-military and half-citizen), we can expect teachers to promote deference towards the state and a patriotic ideology. In the end children need to become obedient members of their own community (code: *nationalistic education*).

However, if state regulation is based on individualization of social problems and more informal and non-hierarchical relationships, education does not have to cultivate state obedience but rather instil tolerance and openness in children and teach them to form and express opinions. This entails that pupils become familiar with democratic notions like debate, consensus and freedom of speech (code: *democratic education*).

Themes were, regardless of the length or importance, dummy coded per article. This implies that one article can have more than one theme. To assess the reliability of our analyses, we calculated an inter-rater agreement. About 10% ($n = 50$) of the articles

Table 2. Reliability in Cohen's kappa and occurrence of the themes in percentages.

	Cohen's kappa	Percentages			χ^2 dif. secular–Catholic
		Total	Secular	Catholic	
Improvement	0.62	20.0	22.5	17.5	1.875
Self-control	0.50	18.1	20.0	16.2	1.137
Authenticity	0.55	14.4	12.1	16.7	2.048
Self-expression	0.72	14.6	12.1	17.1	2.408
Talent	0.55	12.1	14.2	10.0	1.961
Self-steering	0.51	14.6	17.1	12.1	2.408
Behaviourist psychology	0.45	12.1	14.2	10.0	1.961
Order	0.35	10.8	12.9	8.8	2.157
Wellbeing psychology	0.72	21.5	18.3	24.6	2.781
Medicalization	0.88	6.9	7.5	6.2	0.293
Psychological tests	0.79	4.4	4.2	4.6	0.500
Nationalistic education	0.50	16.9	20.4	13.3	4.292*
Democratic education	0.56	7.7	8.8	6.7	0.732
Teacher as example	0.41	15.2	17.5	12.9	1.955
Teacher as coach	0.45	15.2	16.7	13.8	0.792

Significance levels: * $p < 0.05$.

were independently coded by two researchers. A Cohen's kappa coefficient was calculated for every theme separately and for the coding scheme in total (Table 2). The coding scheme has an average Cohen's kappa of 0.6, which means the reliability varies from moderate to good (Fleiss, 1981, pp. 38–46).

Results

Before examining the period variations, we present the aggregated summary of our findings (Table 2). Two general conclusions are warranted. First, all codes were mentioned in the 480 articles. The most salient codes were *improvement* and *wellbeing psychology*, with an incidence of 20% and 21%, respectively. The least salient theme was *psychological testing*, which was mentioned in only 4% of the articles, although it did rise to 10% during the 1960s. Second, differences between secular and Catholic journals are often small and mostly insignificant, suggesting that both educational networks – although always in conflict over the dominance of the educational field – agree on the fundamental role of education itself. In the next section, we study the prevalence of each theme in the four time-periods.

What is individual development?

Figure 1 reveals that creating a self-steering individual has always been inherent to teachers' discourse, although it was never a dominant theme. It is mentioned in approximately 15% of the articles and this proportion stayed relatively constant over time. This

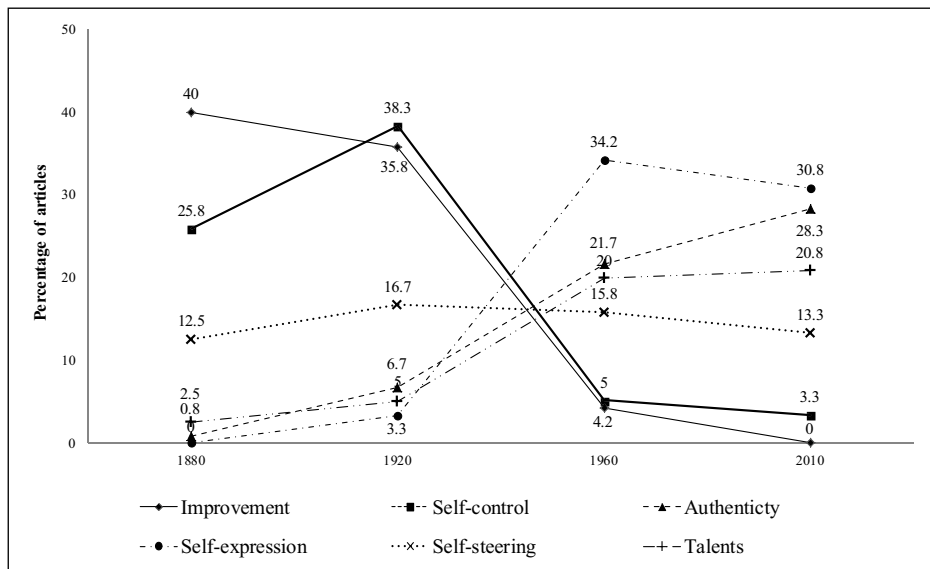


Figure 1. What is individual development?

demonstrates that the history of pedagogical discourse is not one of an increasing emphasis on autonomy but is determined by an ever-changing interpretation of what self-steering means and how it should be achieved.

Up until the 1920s, approximately 40% of the articles described ‘habitus development’ as a form of individual improvement; teachers were expected to transform children from natural creatures into good and disciplined human beings: ‘The heart and the will have to be constructed, making the conscious right and just, a purification and ennoblement of feelings, a cultivation of the total soul’ (1886, DOG, vol. 2, no. 8, p. 57). Many nationalistic heroes, religious figures and even God were presented as examples of this ideal: ‘Of course, no man can match God, but he always needs to strive towards perfection’ (1921, DOR, vol. 18, no. 22, p. 344).

Over 25% of the articles from the end of the 19th century and 38% of interwar articles highly value formalization of the self through restraint. In this view, a well-developed individual is someone who is able to restrain his/her desires and passions. A poorly educated person ‘will find himself unable to control his lusts and passions. ... Therefore, it is necessary to have self-control. This is the foundation of all other virtues’ (1895, HLO, vol. 1, no. 8, p. 250).

This ethic of duty is expressed by a strong emphasis on the human ‘will’. About 33 articles from the first two periods explicitly mention the importance of cultivating ‘will-power’. This willpower is thought to be achieved by exercise, i.e. by doing ‘will-gymnastics’. A formalized second nature, so it seems, can only be established by perseverance and discipline.

Figure 1 also indicates that both authenticity and a priority on talents became more popular from the interwar period onwards. In the 1920s, almost 7% of the articles

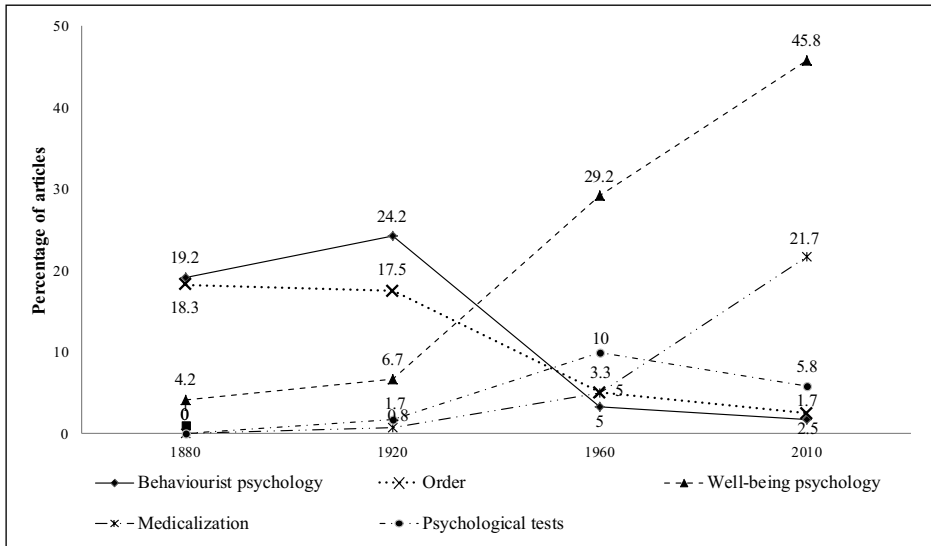


Figure 2. How to achieve individual development.

described individual development as a process in which the uniqueness of the child should be safeguarded. This element becomes more popular over time and is mentioned in approximately 22% of the articles from the 1960s and in 28% from the 2010s.

Hence, in more recent times the child’s personality is not something which teachers have to improve but should reveal: ‘The school has to develop the uniqueness of the personality of a young human being and has to fulfil this’ (1966, JSW, vol. 50, no. 8, p. 398). The development of a child is like the birth of a butterfly: ‘Out of every cocoon in our garden there comes a beautiful butterfly, we are sure of this. Their beautiful colours can only be revealed if the team offers an education tailored to the capabilities of every child’ (2011, S+V, vol. 4, no. 6, p. 25). Closely linked to this view, we find that the idea that every child has a talent becomes more popular, varying from 2% in the 1880s to almost 21% in the 2000s.

Finally, notions like creativity and expression initially did not receive much attention, but this changed from the 1960s onwards. Since the second half of the 20th century, almost one third of the articles emphasized the importance of creative self-expression, as ‘it nurtures self-confidence, maybe even self-actualization and self-development’ (1965, JSW, vol. 49, no. 7, p. 309).

How to achieve self-development?

Figure 2 shows that behaviourist psychology was slowly replaced by a wellbeing approach to the human psyche.

Until the second half of the 20th century, psychological development was synonymous with formalizing behaviour. Like a muscle, a second nature can be trained by

constantly repeating the right impulses. Related to this approach, authors stressed the importance of order, obedience and discipline: 'Without proper schooled discipline, even the best education is without effect and children just become savages.' Yet, the teacher should be cautioned not to eradicate the child's 'willpower': 'it should not lead to paralysis, it has to be a cheerful obedience and happy docility' (1887, DOG, vol. 3, no. 24, p. 185).

By the middle of the 20th century, the behaviourist conception of the child's psyche is completely replaced by a more emotional and wellbeing approach: 'Children will blossom and grow when they feel that we have faith in them. ... Wellbeing is always essential: what does the child needs to feel good and to develop?' (2011, KLA, vol. 22, no. 214, p. 13). From the 1960s onwards, authors start to assert that 'the child has to be understood in his human totality' (1967, JSW, vol. 3/51, no. 5, p. 209), including its emotions and spirituality. This approach is mentioned in only 5% of the articles from the 1920s, but becomes the most salient theme by the 2010s where it occurs in more than 45% of the articles. During the two latest time-periods, the classroom is portrayed as a place where the child can safely de-control: 'It is a clear pedagogical principle that the youth needs to feel safe and cherished to explore the "new"' (1967, JSW, vol. 3/51, no. 3, p. 99).

In the more recent articles, most features of the child are believed to be intrinsic. This entails not only a belief that every child is gifted in its own unique way, but also the conviction that not all difficulties can be surmounted by willpower. On the contrary, difficulties have to be detected, often by means of psychological testing, and treated professionally. At the end of the 19th century, the psycho-medical problems that pupils might encounter during education (e.g. ADHD, hypersensitivity) are mentioned only in about 4% of the articles. At the beginning of the 21st century this theme is presented in almost 22% of the articles. The same applies, albeit to a lesser extent, for the references to tests that can detect these intrinsic mental differences (10% in the 1960s and 6% in the final period).

The relation between teacher and student?

Figure 3 reveals that the depiction of the teachers' role in the earlier time-periods was dominated by the idea that they need to serve as an example for children. Over a quarter of these articles urge teachers to embody an ideal citizen by striving for constant improvement in one's behaviour and attitudes: 'Moral progress can be achieved, if the teacher works daily on the perfection of his character, always tries to know himself better' (1886, DOG, vol. 2, no. 15, p. 114). Hence, to be a good example is to exhibit self-control, restraint and discipline. The teacher must be strong and firm since children are 'like ivy, they need something to which they can attach themselves and hold on' (1887, DOG, vol. 3, no. 24, p. 187).

This hero-like representation of teachers almost completely disappears in the second half of the 20th century and is replaced with a more 'coach-like' approach, conceiving the student-teacher relationship as an authentic encounter between two equals and: 'As a teacher I do not want to wear a mask or play a little theatre. I want to be an authentic teacher' (2010, KLA, vol. 21, no. 207, p. 38). One should not change or improve the student but guide them in their quest for self-discovery. The teacher is a coach who

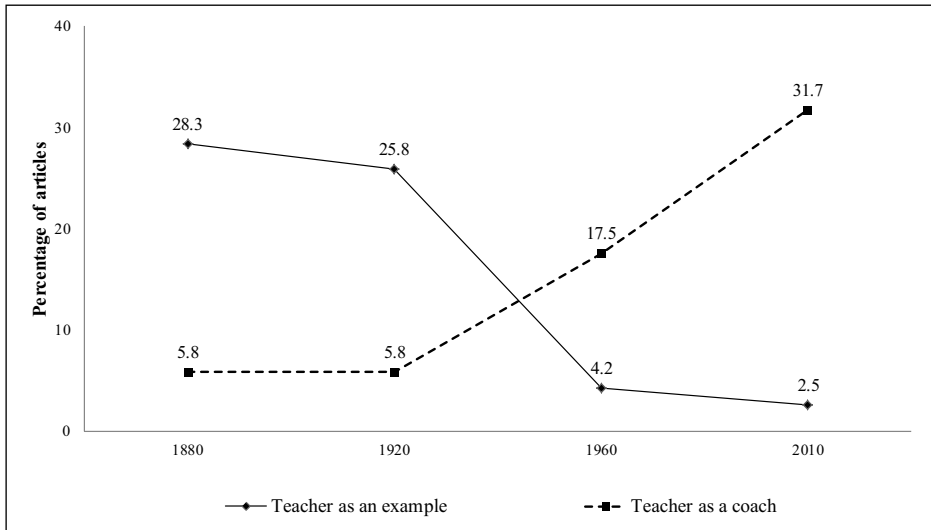


Figure 3. The relation between teacher and student.

cultivates the children's potentials rather than an engineer who creates new individuals. The teacher is a 'coach for the individual learning activity, a facilitator of students' activities, like a co-worker of their students (not "in front of the class" but "in the class")' (1967, JSW, vol. 3/51, no. 5, p. 231).

Education and society?

Figure 4 illustrates that a nationalistic view on education had a high occurrence in the two earliest time-periods. Schools are expected to instil 'love for the fatherland', because in the child 'lingers the fame and greatness of the nation' (1895, HLO, vol. 1, no. 12, p. 353). As one author explicitly stated: 'It is the task of the school to instil respect for rules and laws of the nation, to cultivate obedience and teach the principle of sacrifice for the state. ... In this manner school becomes a benefactor of state and labour in true patriotic sense, forming morally good and decent citizens of the nation' (1885, DOG, vol. 1, no. 10, p. 74).

A second trend is the rising incidence of the democratic theme, i.e. debate, participation and tolerance were almost absent before the Second World War, although Belgium was already 'formally' a democratic country. For the two most recent time-periods, Figure 4 shows that almost 15% of the articles elaborate on these democratic notions: 'An essential task of today's education is teaching children to be tolerant. Be open-minded and acknowledge that also other religions, social groups and cultures include competent and worthy people' (1965, JSW, vol. 1/49, no. 1, p. 7).

Conclusion

This article aimed to uncover some of the historical conditions that made an institutionalization of the current middle-class habitus in education possible. By focusing on the

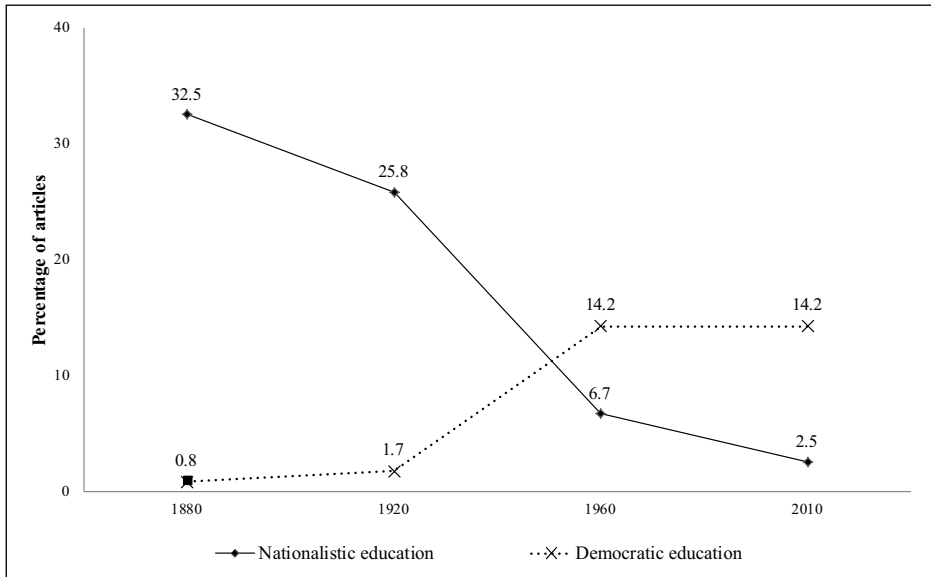


Figure 4. Education and society.

theoretical triad education–habitus–state, we learned how preferred personality structuring of teachers is directly tied to the transformation of state control and the role of the middle class therein. Our empirical findings confirm the conjecture that throughout the 20th century teachers’ pedagogical ideas have evolved from a self-conception that focused on the formalization of human behaviour towards one that emphasizes informalization and self-expression. Notions like restraint, self-improvement and discipline together with behaviourist psychology, teachers as role models and a patriotic education have gradually lost significance and were replaced by a more expressive view on children’s development. Since the mid-20th century themes like wellbeing, personal child–teacher relationship, belief in talent and democratic values have become more salient within pedagogical journals for teachers.

So, in the process of establishing a therapeutic state and institutionalizing an informalized habitus, teachers played a double role. First, they re-tailored their profession towards a more therapeutic approach and, in this respect, not only helped to maintain state power but (re)secured their own function and position within the state as well. Second, as members of the new middle class they are also co-responsible for a diffusion of a more informalized personality structure which makes pupils also more disposed to a therapeutic controlled de-controlling of the self. As Bourdieu aptly concluded when describing the new *petite bourgeoisie* and their tendency towards a therapeutic ethos: ‘those who started by professing a faith and ended up making it a profession’ (Bourdieu, 1979/2010, p. 370). Hence, teachers remained prophets of the state, only they now preach a different type of sermon.

These findings do not only add to our understanding of the reproduction of class inequality through education, but also shed a new light on the therapeuticization process

itself. Most scholars of therapeutization have primarily focused on the structural level of state-formation and shifting modi of social control (Elchardus & De Keere, 2010; Furedi, 2002; Rose, 1989), but largely neglected how this process pivots on a changing class structure and habitus reformation. In this respect it is especially revealing to see how an informalized habitus and ethos of self-expression go in tandem with, on the one hand, a belief in intrinsic and natural talents and, on the other, testing and medicalization of differences. An emphasis on expression of the inner self and natural talents can eventually contribute to legitimizing inequality through naturalization and fostering a 'culture of the gift' wherein educational outcomes are presented as the result of superior and innate qualities. Yet at the same time, this informalized habitus also asks for a specific therapeutic setting that allows for controlled de-controlling which, again, middle-class pupils are more familiar with.

Finally, this brings us to the issue addressed in the introduction, namely the habitus mismatch experienced by pupils who lack middle-class cultural knowledge and dispositions. As Tobin (1995) argued, teachers' promotion of self-expression carries a certain irony as it claims to focus on wellbeing and personal development, while it actually blocks the educational trajectory of those who have not yet internalized such types of emotional management. In this way working-class children, who are less familiar with an informalized ethos, do not have the ability to receive from education the mobility possibilities it is supposed to offer (Spruyt, De Keere, Keppens, Roggemans, & Van Droogenbroeck, 2016). Hence, by valuing middle-class ways of personality structuring, schools actually help in reproducing the cultural hegemony of the middle-class ways of being and doing. However, because of the intricate relationship between state, habitus and education, this situation is not the result of teachers or, more generally, members of the middle class consciously trying to protect their social position, but is a historically grown situation wherein class interest, state control and personality structuring are closely interwoven.

Clearly, this article focused on general trends. Such trends, however, are the outcome of the ongoing struggle within the education field (which are in turn influenced by the changing relations between different fields). So, when we argue that a discourse of formalization and self-control has been substituted by a more informalized and expressive view, this in no way implies that this process was a smooth transition, nor that this transition cannot be reversed. Both Elias (1991, 1939/2000) and Wouters (2007, 2011) already pointed out that social change is never linear but always a process of integration and disintegration. As explained earlier, the transition that we described here results from the integration of several social classes into one welfare system combined with a democratic ethic of egalitarianism. Yet, in the past three decades both elements came under pressure, and together with an increasing influence of international student assessment studies, pitting countries against each other (e.g. PISA, TIMSS), this has led to a counter-movement which aims to restore pedagogical emphasis on knowledge, discipline and direct instruction (see Hirsch, 2016). This we see for example in new initiatives like Charter (US) and Academy (UK) schools that focus more on achievement, skills and hard work (e.g. High Dosage Tutoring, Knowledge is Power Programme or Match Education). The future will teach us whether

such initiatives will change the dominant ideas in education, but if so it will always be part and parcel of an overall changing class structure (Kulz, 2015).

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Appendix

For more details on the corpus of texts, go to <https://osf.io/2tbr8/>