

‘GIVING THE WORKER HIS HOUSE’:
INTERVENTION, INTERACTION, AND INACTION IN
THREE FRENCH CITIES, C. 1840-80

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SHORT ABSTRACT

The history of working-class housing in nineteenth-century France is dominated by narratives of isolated successes, legislation at the end of the century, and the experience of housing in Paris above all other cities. Because of this, the significance and diversity of provincial French experiences have been overlooked. This obscures the very real and important role that different local elite strategies concerning the ‘housing problem’ played in provincial cities through the century, regardless of whether they impacted national housing policy. Just as important as direct interventions – which sought to improve legislation or build new houses – were strategies of interaction, which focused on working-class families impacted by poor housing without necessarily improving conditions, and self-conscious strategies of inaction, whereby provincial elites consciously chose not to intervene in the domain of workers housing because of what they judged more pressing economic, social, or political concerns.

By comparing the strategies employed by industrial and municipal elites in the three textile cities of Roubaix, Mulhouse, and Lyon between c. 1840-80, this thesis explores the multifaceted nature of the ‘housing question’ and responses to it. In this thesis, I reveal the diversity of elite strategies regarding housing, which were driven by a distinct combination of different local, regional, national, and international conditions. Through incorporating both failure and inaction alongside successful intervention and distinctive interactions, I not only overcome the dominant narratives in histories of housing, but I also offer a fresh

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interpretation of the social history of the heterogeneous, overlapping, and occasionally conflicting different elites that existed in nineteenth-century provincial France. The ways local industrial and municipal elites chose or chose not to tackle their specifically local housing situations reveal to us the different ways that interactions with workers and their domestic milieu shaped the construction of identities in nineteenth-century France.

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interpretation of the social history of the heterogeneous, overlapping, and occasionally conflicting different elites that existed in nineteenth-century provincial France. The ways local industrial and municipal elites chose or chose not to tackle their specifically local housing situations reveal to us the different ways that interactions with workers and their domestic milieu shaped the construction of identities in nineteenth-century France.

The existing historiography on housing in nineteenth-century France is restricted by two overriding concerns: the notion of a 'progression' towards legislative reform, and the overbearing dominance of Paris as a choice for case studies. The first of these concerns derives from the notion that all nineteenth-century housing initiatives contributed to the slew of state housing legislation in the years either side of the turn of the twentieth century. In this notion, the nineteenth century is merely a period of 'origin' for the later state social housing initiatives of the twentieth century. As a result, responses to the housing question that failed at the local level, or were not able to impact national legislation meaningfully, are treated in isolation.

The second overriding concern in urban and housing histories of the nineteenth century is the overemphasis on the French capital of Paris. This overemphasis comes from a variety of reasons: Paris's size compared to other French cities, its site as a history of repeated urban clashes in the revolutions of the nineteenth century, the centralisation of French government in this period, and the mass public works executed by the prefect Haussmann that changed the shape of the city in a generation. But this focus on the Parisian urban experience at the expense of other cities gives a skewed image of housing; a skewed image that only invites provincial experiences into the story when they are replicated in the capital.

In this thesis, I redress these two historiographic skews of focus. By focusing on the middle decades of the nineteenth century, predominantly between c. 1840-80, I avoid creating a predictable ‘finish line’ of social housing legislation. In so doing, I am able to embrace the complicated differences that existed in nineteenth-century French approaches to the ‘housing question’. This shift away from a narrative of reform allows me to complement provincial ‘successful’ housing interventions with distinct stories of differing priorities, of hesitation, exploration, inaction, and of no-less-notable failures. Additionally, by moving away from Haussmann’s boulevards and the predominance of Paris to compare three textile cities, I destabilise neat conceptions of centre-periphery relationships. By focusing on the housing strategies of local ‘elites’ – whether these are industrial, municipal, religious, or a combination of the three – I can explore the rich variety and messiness of power relationships in the provincial city. The diversity in the ways that the provincial elites interacted with local, regional, and national government authorities, and with national and international networks of housing reform debates, all create a far more nuanced and multifaceted ‘history of housing in France’ than one that solely looks at Paris.

This thesis is, at its heart, a comparative history of provincial elites and their strategies concerning their local housing problems; this is not a comparative history of housing alone. By the term ‘provincial elites’, I refer to those individuals who monopolised social, economic, and political power in the three cities in this period. Sometimes these groups overlapped and shared the same goals, whereas at other times these groups came into conflict with one another. Different elites adopted a variety of strategies concerning the working-class housing question throughout the period which I have divided into three groups: strategies of direct intervention (aimed at improving housing legislation or physical housing conditions), interaction (aimed at meeting the working-class family in their home without necessarily changing physical conditions), and active inaction (the conscious and articulated decision

neither to intervene nor interact with poor-quality housing). All these strategies reflected different concerns with constructing and maintaining local elite identities and hegemony, reflected repeatedly in the ways that housing could act as a vehicle to impose bourgeois accepted norms.

With the established aim of providing a multifaceted history of how interactions with housing helped shape elite identity within nineteenth-century France, I draw on the advantages of both traditional multi-nation comparison and the more recent *histoire croisée*, or entangled history, approach. Through so doing, I am building on recent work in urban and social history that also take two or three cities within a single nation as their focus, and which explore the different relationship between distinctly local characteristics and wider ideals. Additionally, I do not treat the three cities in my study as frozen and isolated from one another: drawing on *histoire croisée* allows me to explore the impact of key moments of inter-city competition and the crossing of ideas and individuals.

For my comparison, I have chosen three textile cities: Roubaix (Nord), Mulhouse (Haut-Rhin), and Lyon (Rhône). These were all cities which were driven by the textile industry in the nineteenth century – cotton and wool in Roubaix, cotton in Mulhouse, and silk in Lyon – and each experienced distinct pressures on housing due to the population growth that accompanied the growth and success of these industries.

Roubaix witnessed the fastest proportional population growth of all French cities in the nineteenth century, increasing almost sixteen-fold between 1801 and 1901 from barely 8,000 inhabitants to over 124,000. This was mostly driven by an influx of migrant workers from nearby Belgium and, by the 1870s, Roubaix was essentially a Belgian city, as French inhabitants were in a minority. The textile elite responsible for driving the industrial growth of

Roubaix was a relatively closed caste: they were unified by a fierce Catholicism, inter-family marriages that cemented business ties, and a marked sense of economic and cultural competition with their larger, older neighbour of Lille. Many of the elite strategies regarding housing in Roubaix reflected these distinct characteristics – a focus on morality, on charity, and on expanding business to compete with the textile industry in Lille.

Mulhouse, lying in the easternmost corner of France, shared a similar trajectory to Roubaix of rapid industrial growth resulting in a migrant-driven population boom. As an independent city-republic in French Alsace until 1798, Mulhouse's growth was limited by the encircling border, and the population was only around 6,000 inhabitants. Once these limits were lifted with the voluntary annexation into the French nation in 1798, Mulhouse's industry expanded rapidly, and the population soared in response, primarily through migration from German and Swiss states. By the time Mulhouse was annexed to the new German nation following the Franco-Prussian war, this population stood at just over 53,000. Similar to Roubaix, Mulhouse's industrial elite was also remarkably homogenous. These Alsatians were uniformly Calvinist, interrelated through marriage and business, and committed to scientific and philanthropic progress. Additionally, especially early in the period studied in this thesis, this elite displayed an fierce sense of independence from national government, with the memory of municipal freedom before French annexation. By the end of the period, when Mulhouse was a German city, this had completely changed, as both elite and working class alike became some of the most ardent supporters of the 'protestor' position pushing for the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France. Additionally, just as population growth brought a demographic shift in Roubaix, with French citizens in the minority, Mulhouse's Calvinist elite saw themselves outnumbered by Catholic migrants by as early as the mid-1830s.

Lyon offers a slightly different story. An older city than either Roubaix or Mulhouse, Lyon was also much larger: the population of Lyon in 1800 was roughly the same as that of Mulhouse in 1900. Its neighbouring suburban communes of La Croix Rousse and La Guillotière, however, experienced very similar population increases relative to Roubaix and Mulhouse before their absorption into the city of Lyon in 1852.

Although not an independent city-state like Mulhouse, much of Lyonnais elite identity was constructed through opposition to the central French state, as symbolised by the city of Paris. When the suburban communes were ‘reunited’ with Lyon in 1852, this was accompanied by the suppression of the office of mayor, with the prefect of the Rhône governing the city instead. This change necessitated a renegotiation of the relationship not only between state and local figures in Lyon, but also between the previously independent suburbs of La Croix Rousse, La Guillotière, and Vaise, which were now only *arrondissements* in the expanded city of Lyon. This had been partly motivated by repeated working-class revolts in the 1830s and 1840s. In the period c. 1840-1880, then, the municipal and industrial elite of Lyon had to balance their disappointment at being ruled directly by the central French government with a concern for maintaining local security and peace, and avoiding future revolts.

The three cities evidently had similar population pressures on housing, but reacted to these pressures in different ways. By considering private housing initiatives alongside local government responses, and seeking out inaction and failure alongside success and internationally-renowned schemes, I have not had a single, coherent corpus of archival material to study. This has been further complicated by the differences between what has been preserved by different archives in the three cities. As a result, I have drawn on a range of material, and have structured the five chapters of the thesis thematically around three different terms: ‘housing’, as a discursive term (e.g. housing reform, housing legislation);

‘houses’, referring to the physical buildings (e.g. new houses, improving existing houses); and ‘homes’, as an emotive term (e.g. the family home, feeling ‘at home’, and the idea of the city as ‘home’).

Chapter 1 is concerned with analysing the French national ‘housing’ debate around the mid-century, the crucial role of provincial social and hygienic investigators in driving this debate, and the passage of two decrees on housing in the early 1850s: the Melun Law on unhealthy housing (1850), and Napoléon III’s donation of 10 million Fr. for new housing construction (1852). It rests on the analysis of printed primary material produced by early-to-mid-nineteenth-century hygienists and statisticians at the local, national, and international levels, as well as archival records of political debates in the National Assembly, prefectural councils, and private philanthropic societies. Ultimately, this legislation was not only driven by provincial figures, but also codified the local as the sphere where housing interventions should occur from the 1850s onward.

Chapter 2 compares three different ‘from-new’ styles of workers’ houses in the three cities, based on long-term pressures of population growth as well as a short-term crisis of natural disaster. The chapter argues that intervention or inaction in constructing new houses was the result of conscious decisions made by the local elites. Building reformed houses became a way that elites could signal their paternalist credentials as well as forming a source of local civic pride. For others, leaving housing to the private market in favour of maximising profit from expanding factories was indicative of different priorities in self-fashioning and self-preservation.

Chapter 3 focuses on analysing the records of the *commissions des logements insalubres* that were formed in each of the cities following the 1850 Melun Law. This is the only chapter in the

thesis where there exists a directly comparable corpus of archival records, as these commissions were run by the local municipalities and archived as such. However, this uniformity in theory did not bear out in practice, reflecting the significance of local conditions. By analysing the way that these commissions evolved to focus on uniquely local conceptions of ‘unhealthy houses’, this chapter reinforces the idea that legislation in this era, rather than creating a new focus on housing concerns, instead merely gave greater power to those who were already dealing with housing in provincial France.

Chapter 4 explores how middle-class onlookers in the three cities created a series of linked spatialized dichotomies between the home and the cabaret. These two opposing spaces were used to discuss, on the one hand, sober, religious families who spent their time outside work within the domestic sphere and, on the other, drunk, irreligious workers who abandoned the protection of ‘home’ to drink in the cabaret. In establishing how and why these dichotomies were created and developed, this chapter is structured around a microhistory of a sacrilegious bar crawl in 1874 Roubaix, where all the fears of drink, irreligion, and broken family ties were played out in the local press, trial coverage, and appeals against sentencing.

In Chapter 5, I consider the broader conception of ‘home’. Having established the different ways that elites used interactions with ‘the housing question’ and the working-class home to express and solidify their own local identities, this chapter asks whether there was space for the workers themselves within these communal, elite-dictated conceptions of the city as home. The chapter focuses on the context of a shifting socio-political landscape into the 1870s and 1880s, where workers’ strikes and political activism threatened the established hegemony of the city elites. I compare the different ways that municipal leaders sought to include or reject defining working-class urban features from the city, which is crucial to seeing how far the workers were allowed to feel ‘at home’ in the city.

LONG ABSTRACT

The diverse ways that municipal and industrial elites in these three cities chose to manage the 'housing question' in their cities through this period shows us the importance of appreciating variety within the nation-state of France in the nineteenth century. In the years before 'social housing legislation', it was at the level of the provincial city that local government and private philanthropic individuals explored different solutions to a variety of 'housing questions'.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADHR	Archives départementales du Haut-Rhin (Colmar)
ADN	Archives départementales du Nord (Lille)
ADR	Archives départementales du Rhône (Lyon)
AML	Archives municipales de Lyon (Lyon)
AMLi	Archives municipales de Lille (Lille)
AMM	Archives municipales de Mulhouse (Mulhouse)
AMR	Archives municipales de Roubaix (Roubaix)
AN	Archives nationales (Paris)
ANMT	Archives nationales du monde du travail (Roubaix)
BML	Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon (Lyon)
BMM	Bibliothèque municipale de Mulhouse (Mulhouse)
BSIM	Bulletin de la Société industrielle de Mulhouse
CLI	Commission des logements insalubres
DMC	Dollfus-Mieg et C ^{ie}
SICLC	Society for Improving the Conditions of the Labouring Classes
SIM	Société industrielle de Mulhouse
SOMCO	Société Mulhousienne des cités ouvrières
SSVP	Société[s] de Saint-Vincent-de-Paul

NOTE ON TRANSLATION

All translations in this thesis are my own, unless stated otherwise. Where I have kept certain terms in French – e.g. *cités ouvrières* or *logements insalubres* – it is because they lack a simple direct English translation.

INTRODUCTION: 'THOSE TWO SACRED THINGS WHICH MAKE MAN HONEST
AND NATIONS STRONG: *LA FAMILLE ET LE FOYER*'

On 23 May 1897, 350 people gathered for a grand banquet in the northern French industrial city of Roubaix to honour the work of a local cooperative housing association, *La Ruche Roubaissienne*. This housing society was one of the first of its kind in Roubaix. Founded by twelve men in a beer-hall in March 1895 and funded and operated by employers and workers together, *La Ruche* had built almost sixty houses in three small groups so far, and had just laid the first stone of their fourth group.¹ These houses were sold – not rented – to the city's workers, with the founders' goal of 'making the worker the owner of his [sic] home', so they could 'attach him to his city, to his quarter, to his house'.² The founders believed that, by 'giving the worker his house', they could 'protect those two sacred things which make man honest and nations strong: "*la famille et le foyer*" [the family and the home]'.³

Amongst the guests at the May 1897 banquet were industrialists, local politicians, journalists, workers, and visiting dignitaries from beyond Roubaix. The guest of honour was the politician Jules Siegfried, who had been responsible for recently passing landmark legislation on affordable housing (*habitations à bon marché*) in the French National Assembly on 30 November 1894.⁴ At first glance, *La Ruche Roubaissienne* looks like just an illustration of the local impact of the 'Siegfried Law', which marked some of the first steps of state intervention into the domain

¹ ADN X 78/13, Annibal Graveri, *La Ruche Roubaissienne. Société anonyme coopérative d'habitations à bon marché. Ses origines et ses deux premières années de Mai 1895 à Mai 1897*, (Roubaix, 1897), pp. 8-12, 52.

² Ibid., p. 14.

³ Ibid., p. 61.

⁴ '30 novembre – 1er décembre 1894 – Loi relative aux habitations à bon marché (1). (XII, B. MDCLXVI, no. 28,799.)', in J. Duvergier (ed.), *Collection complète des lois, décrets, ordonnances, règlements et avis du conseil d'état* (94; Paris, 1894), pp. 257-66.

of housing in France.⁵ The law had enabled the creation of state-funded ‘affordable housing committees’, which could dispense state savings loans to underwrite the construction of workers’ housing, and exempted these constructions from taxes on doors, windows and land for five years – providing both a good incentive as well as a healthy return for investors.⁶ *La Ruche* was just one of many local *Sociétés d’habitations à bon marché* that were set up throughout France in the months following the Siegfried Law, as the incentives the law provided spurred many who were not involved previously in housing to begin to build.

And yet, analysing the speeches that Jules Siegfried and other distinguished guests gave at this banquet offers an alternate reading of the significance of *La Ruche Roubaissienne*. Rather than highlighting Siegfried’s recent 1890s Parisian legislation as key for spurring local housing innovations, each speech instead looked back to the 1850s and to Siegfried’s forefathers in his Alsatian hometown of Mulhouse for providing the model for how industrialists could and should intervene in housing their workers. It had been there, in 1853, that local philanthropic industrialists founded one of the earliest, largest, and most successful workers’ housing schemes – the *cités ouvrières*.⁷ By the time *La Ruche Roubaissienne* was honoured at their banquet in 1897, the Mulhousian *cités ouvrières* contained over 1,200 single-family houses, most of which had been sold to workers.

⁵ Susanna Magri, 'Logement et habitat populaires de la fin du XIXe siècle à la Seconde Guerre mondiale', in Annie Fourcaut (ed.), *Un Siècle de banlieue parisienne (1859-1964)* (Paris, 1988), p. 114; Claire Carriou, 'Réforme du logement, réforme de la ville? Les politiques d'habitations à bon marché à l'épreuve de l'urbain (1889-1939)', in Arnaud Baubérot and Florence Bourillon (eds.), *Urbaphobie, ou, la détestation de la ville aux XIXe et XXe siècles* (Paris, 2009), p. 333.

⁶ 'Loi relative aux habitations à bon marché', p. 258; Sanford Elwitt, 'Social reform and social order in late nineteenth-century France: the Musée Social and its friends', *French Historical Studies*, 11, 3 (1980), p. 440.

⁷ Graveri, *La Ruche Roubaissienne*, p. 48; Will Clement, 'The ‘unrealizable chimera’: workers’ housing in nineteenth-century Mulhouse', *French History*, 32, 1 (2018), pp. 66-85.

M. Letailleur, general secretary of the department of the Nord, gave the first speech, and finished by looking to Siegfried and saying ‘I do not forget that it was on Alsatian land... that the fertile seed of affordable housing was born’.⁸ Following this, Siegfried himself rose. After praising the work of *La Ruche*, he continued by announcing: ‘You are doing here what I saw done in Alsace. You are, so to speak, the counterpart of the great industrial city of Mulhouse... Here, gentlemen, you have industrialists who are worthy of the Alsatian industrialists’.⁹

After Siegfried’s speech, it was the turn of the municipal councillor Eugène Motte to rise. Motte belonged to one of the most powerful industrial families in nineteenth-century Roubaix, which had been largely responsible for driving Roubaix’s unparalleled rate of industrial growth in the second half of the century. Motte had become a vocal supporter of *La Ruche* from early 1896, when he bought shares in the nascent association.¹⁰ As in the two speeches that preceded, Motte recalled Siegfried’s hometown of Mulhouse as the ‘the city of initiative, *par excellence*, in social works’.¹¹ But unlike Letailleur and Siegfried, who had used the example of 1850s Mulhouse as an innovative precursor for the good work currently being done in 1890s Roubaix, Motte instead focused on the 1850s inaction regarding housing in Roubaix. Motte conceded that, unlike their Mulhousian peers, his father’s generation of industrialists of the 1850s had been too focused on expanding Roubaix’s factories and maximising their profit to pay any attention to social improvement. The work *La Ruche* was now doing, Motte concluded, was a way for the Roubaisian elite to imitate and perhaps even outstrip the example set by their Mulhousian peers a generation prior, now that their city’s industrial prowess was well-established.

⁸ Graveri, *La Ruche Roubaissienne*, p. 42.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 43-4.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 27.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 48.

INTRODUCTION

Rather than interpreting *La Ruche* as an early product of a national law on affordable housing, and at the beginning of a narrative on early twentieth century French social housing, I want to focus instead on the importance of the fact that Motte highlighted how delayed this action regarding housing was in Roubaix when compared to other industrialists' decision to intervene in housing decades prior. By exploring the different ways that industrial and municipal elites in provincial France chose to interact with the housing problem in the decades before the Siegfried Law, this thesis makes an important intervention in the field of French housing history. This local interaction – or conscious lack thereof – took many forms: shaping national housing policy debates, constructing new model houses, managing existing stock, focusing on strengthening the moral bonds in the workers' family and household, and directing efforts to prevent worker insurrection by making the workers feel 'at home' in the city. In this thesis, I reveal how each set of interactions was driven by a distinct combination of local, regional, national, and international conditions and elite strategies of preservation, as opposed to following a simple top-down, state-driven narrative of the relationship between centre and periphery; between state legislation in Paris and uniform application in provincial cities.

By adopting a comparative approach and exploring the differences and variety of experience in the three textile cities of Roubaix, Mulhouse, and Lyon, this thesis destabilises a single 'French' narrative of working-class housing reform that culminated in the Siegfried Law and *Sociétés des habitations à bon marché* in the 1890s. I also shed new light on more than just the history of housing in France. The ways local industrial and municipal elites like the Mottes chose or chose not to tackle these different elements of the housing question reveal to us the different ways that interactions with workers and their domestic milieu shaped the construction of local industrial and municipal elite identities in the nineteenth-century French periphery.

Before the origins of social housing

The current historiography on housing in nineteenth-century France is shaped by two overriding concerns: the notion of a 'progression' towards legislative reform, and the overbearing dominance of Paris as a choice for case studies. My thesis draws on some of the work in this field, but by removing an insistence on the end-goal of 'housing reform' or on housing in Paris, I am able to show how important failure and inaction in provincial cities was alongside successes and legislative reform through the nineteenth century.

The dominant figure in the historiography of French workers' housing in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was Roger-Henri Guerrand.¹² His most important and influential work was his first, the 1967 *Les Origines du logement social en France 1850-1914* (The Origins of Social Housing in France 1850-1914), which was subsequently republished in 1987 and again in 2010.¹³ In this work, Guerrand balanced isolated examples of reformed housing throughout nineteenth-century France with an overarching narrative of a development towards twentieth-century social housing. When the third edition of this work came out posthumously in 2010, urban historian Annie Fourcaut added a preface titled 'Roger-Henri Guerrand: Discoverer of social housing', where she described Guerrand as essentially inventing the field of social housing history.¹⁴

¹² Roger-Henri Guerrand, 'De Mulhouse à Passy-Auteuil, les origines du « pavillon »', in Roger Quilliot and Roger-Henri Guerrand (eds.), *Cent ans d'habitat social : une utopie réaliste* (Paris, 1989), pp. 42-50; Roger-Henri Guerrand and Roger Quilliot, *Une Europe en construction: deux siècles d'habitat social en Europe* (Paris, 1992).

¹³ Roger-Henri Guerrand, *Les Origines du logement social en France 1850-1914* (Paris, 1967).

¹⁴ Annie Fourcaut, 'Préface: Roger-Henri Guerrand, découvreur logement social', in Roger-Henri Guerrand, *Les Origines du logement social en France 1850-1914* (Paris, 2010), pp. 5-14.

Naturally, writing with the goal of exploring the ‘origins’ of social housing, Guerrand structured his work around important legislative milestones: the 1850 Melun Law on *logements insalubres* (unhealthy housing), and the group of legislation following the Siegfried Law in the 1890s and 1900s. Although much of the work focuses on private, philanthropic endeavours that were scattered throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, these are all framed as ‘origins’ of the ‘social housing’ that both Guerrand and his readers know must inevitably follow in the early twentieth century. The title of his final chapter perhaps best reflects the sense of progression that runs throughout the text: focusing on the years after the Siegfried Law, he titled it ‘Some stepping stones...’.¹⁵

Subsequent housing historians have picked up on Guerrand’s notion of stepping stones: for them, the Siegfried Law marked just the first of several laws around the turn of the century which brought the state into the domain of housing: the Strauss Law (1906); the Ribot Law (1908); the Bonnevey Law (1912).¹⁶ As the father of the field of social housing history in France, Guerrand’s choice of narrative structure has proved attractive for housing historians that have followed; even when focusing on nineteenth-century developments in housing, there is one eye on how these developments contribute towards later social housing in the twentieth-century. The teleological narrative is reflected in these housing histories’ titles: for example, Rémy Butler and Patrice Noisette’s *Le Logement social en France 1815-1981: de la cité ouvrière au grand ensemble* (Social Housing in France 1815-1981: from the workers’ town to the high-rise housing estate), Jean-Paul Flamand’s *Loger le peuple: essai sur l’histoire du logement social* (Housing the People: An Essay on the History of Social Housing), or Anne Power’s *Hovels to*

¹⁵ Guerrand, *Les Origines du logement*, pp. 235-55.

¹⁶ Sarra Ben Yahmed, ‘Quelques jalons dans l’histoire du logement social’, *Regards croisés sur l’Économie*, 9, 1 (2011), p. 245.

High Rise: State Housing in Europe since 1850.¹⁷ Nicholas Bullock and James Read's *The Movement for Housing Reform in Germany and France 1840-1914*, like Guerrand's work, is theoretically restricted to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and covers the importance of provincial housing initiatives in two countries at great length. And yet, from the title to the way the book is structured, Bullock and Read still use the language of progress and reform in its timeframe, with provincial initiatives like the Mulhousian *cités ouvrières* judged as successful or not because of their impact on national policy.¹⁸

All of these housing studies operate with a preconceived understanding of where the story finishes – with twentieth-century state social housing policies. As a result, earlier nineteenth-century failures, aberrations, or non-state actors are dismissed from the main, state-centric narrative of legislative landmarks, meaning the picture of how important interacting with the working-class home was for provincial elites in this period is incomplete and skewed.

Meanwhile, alongside and frequently overlapping with these accounts of social housing origins or housing reform, are histories that focus exclusively on Paris as the sole city for analysis, frequently relegating the provincial urban experience from their histories. Simon Gunn has highlighted the specific attractiveness for urban historians in studying Paris during the second half of the nineteenth century, because of the impact of the vast public works that Emperor Napoléon III and his prefect, the Baron Haussmann, executed in the 1850s and 1860s.¹⁹

¹⁷ Rémy Butler and Patrice Noisette, *Le Logement social en France 1815-1981: de la cité ouvrière au grand ensemble* (Paris, 1983); Jean-Paul Flamand, *Loger le peuple : essai sur l'histoire du logement social en France* (Paris, 1989); Anne Power, *Hovels to High Rise: State Housing in Europe since 1850* (London, 1993), pp. 21-87.

¹⁸ Nicholas Bullock and James Read, *The Movement for Housing Reform in Germany and France, 1840-1914* (Cambridge, 1985).

¹⁹ Simon Gunn, 'The spatial turn: changing histories of space and place', in Simon Gunn and Robert J. Morris (eds.), *Identities in Space: Contested Terrains in the Western City since 1850* (Aldershot, 2001), pp. 1-14.

Analysing David Harvey's 1985 *Consciousness and the Urban Experience*, Gunn argues that the demolition of swaths of slumlands and the subsequent reconstruction of Paris from 1853 made it an appealing subject for examining the construction of space and meaning in an urban setting. For housing historians, the public works of Napoleon III and his prefect Haussmann are critical. Ann-Louise Shapiro has written expansively on state use of housing and social space to 'normalise' the insurrectionary working-classes of Paris in the second half of the nineteenth century, while Florence Bourillon has focused on the impact of Haussmannisation and urban expansion on housing and urban segregation in the French capital.²⁰ This inexorable allure of Haussmann's Paris in housing histories is not just confined to histories of the working-class home. Sharon Marcus, in her comparison of the bourgeois apartment block in London and Paris, chose Paris as her French example because the 'paradigmatic studies of urbanism have converged on Paris', while Alexia Yates's recent study of the rise of the commercial housing market in late nineteenth-century Paris focuses on the capital because of the unique impact of the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune on the urban fabric of the city in 1870-1.²¹

While these examples that select Paris as a distinct case study because of uniquely Parisian characteristics all make important contributions to the fields of urban and housing history, they are accompanied by a type of history that elides the 'Parisian' experience with a supposed

²⁰ Ann-Louise Shapiro, 'Housing reform in Paris: social space and social control', *French Historical Studies*, 12, 4 (1982), pp. 486-507; Ann-Louise Shapiro, *Housing the Poor of Paris, 1850-1902* (Madison WI, 1985); Ann-Louise Shapiro, 'Paris', in M. J. Daunton (ed.), *Housing the Workers, 1850-1914: A Comparative Perspective* (London; New York, 1990), pp. 33-66; Florence Bourillon, 'Rénovation "haussmannienne" et ségrégation urbaine', in Annie Fourcaut (ed.), *La Ville divisée: les ségrégations urbaines en question en France XVIIIe-XXe siècle* (Grâne, 1996), pp. 91-106; Florence Bourillon, 'Les expérimentations parisiennes en matière de logement populaire collectif de 1850 à 1894', *Revue du Nord*, 90, 374 (2008), pp. 77-93.

²¹ Sharon Marcus, *Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London* (Berkeley CA, 1999), p. 4; Alexia M. Yates, *Selling Paris: Property and Commercial Culture in the Fin-de-Siècle Capital* (Cambridge, MA, 2015).

‘French’ experience. In the same way that social housing histories judge provincial initiatives by whether they impacted legislative change, studies that substitute the ‘Parisian’ experience for the whole ‘French’ experience therefore only judge provincial housing initiatives as noteworthy or successful if they managed to make an impact in the capital. Christian Topalov’s 1987 work, promisingly titled *Le Logement en France: histoire d’une marchandise impossible* (Housing in France: History of an Impossible Commodity), only deals with non-Parisian examples in a cursory manner. The second section of Topalov’s book – over one hundred pages on the expansion and crisis of the rental system from 1860-1914 – is almost wholly concerned with Paris.²² A history of ‘housing in France’ this is not.

In this thesis, I redress these two historiographic skews of focus. By focusing on the middle decades of the nineteenth century, predominantly between c. 1840-80, I avoid creating a predictable ‘finish line’ of social housing legislation. In so doing, I am able to embrace the complicated differences that existed in nineteenth-century French approaches to the ‘housing question’. This shift away from a narrative of reform allows me to complement the kinds of local successes as Mulhouse’s *cités ouvrières* with distinct stories of differing priorities, of hesitation, exploration, inaction, and of no-less-notable failures. Additionally, by moving away from Haussmann’s boulevards and the predominance of Paris to compare three textile cities, I destabilise neat conceptions of centre-periphery relationships. By focusing on the housing strategies of local ‘elites’ – whether these are industrial, municipal, religious, or a combination of the three – I explore the rich variety and messiness of power relationships in the provincial city. The diversity in the ways that provincial elites interacted with local, regional, and national government authorities, and with national and international networks of housing reform

²² Christian Topalov, *Le Logement en France: histoire d’une marchandise impossible* (Paris, 1987), pp. 107-233.

debates, all create a far more nuanced and multifaceted ‘history of housing in France’ than one that solely looks at Paris.

Subnational comparisons and entanglements: Roubaix, Mulhouse, and Lyon

Adopting a comparative approach is one of the most effective ways of moving away from a single, homogenous history of housing in nineteenth-century France. Usually, mentioning comparative history as a way to move away from the nation-state paradigm would suggest a multi-nation comparison. As Philippa Levine noted in 2014, ‘if you identify as a comparativist, other scholars will assume that you are comparing countries, regions, or nations’ or, in other words, ‘the leading assumption will be that you are indeed involved in comparing two or more different societies, and that the basis of the comparison is national identity’.²³ There are significant problems, however, with using the nation as the unit of comparison to try and move beyond single-nation histories. Primarily, as Jan Rüger noted in his 2010 essay on transnational history, advocates of comparative history who want to move away from ‘the nation’ by adopting bi-national comparative studies often only further emphasised the idea of the nation as an analytical framework.²⁴ Colin Jones surmised this when he argued that traditional comparative history ‘ends up freezing and fortifying national stereotypes rather than undermining or subverting them’.²⁵ We can apply a similar argument to comparative studies that substitute capital cities like Paris or London to stand for nations in histories of housing. In M. J. Daunton’s edited work, *Housing the Workers, 1850-1914: A Comparative Perspective*, five of the six case-study chapters are European capital cities. Ann-Louise Shapiro’s

²³ Philippa Levine, ‘Is comparative history possible?’, *History and Theory*, 53, 3 (2014), p. 332.

²⁴ Jan Rüger, ‘OXO: or, the challenges of transnational history’, *European History Quarterly*, 40, 4 (2010), p. 659.

²⁵ Colin Jones, ‘French crossings: I. Tales of two cities’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 20, (2010), p. 2.

chapter on Paris does pay attention to some provincial French initiatives on *cités ouvrières* or home ownership, but she concludes that the 'the voluminous [contemporary] literature on the *cité ouvrière* obscured the essential failure of this reform strategy'... in Paris.²⁶

One way that historians have moved away from the 'freezing and fortifying' of national stereotypes is through the *histoire croisée*, or entangled history, approach of Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann. Owing a lot to both comparative and transfer histories, this approach examines interaction, and resultant change, from the objects or actors in question. In so doing, *histoire croisée* moves away from studies that have fixed beginning and end points, such as monolithic nation-states, instead focusing on the intersection of actors or ideas; *histoire croisée* is therefore able to examine how intersections change and influence the objects in question.²⁷ Birgit Van Puymbroeck surmises the appeals of *histoire croisée* its ability to 'leave behind the perspective of a nation-centred history by putting processes of intercrossing at the centre of the analysis'.²⁸

With the established aim of providing a multifaceted history of how interactions with housing helped shape elite identity within nineteenth-century France, I draw on the advantages of both traditional multi-nation comparison and the newer entangled history approach. Through so doing, I am building on recent work in urban and social history that also take two or three cities within a single nation as their focus, and which explore the different relationship

²⁶ Shapiro, 'Paris', p. 57.

²⁷ For a detailed study of this approach, see Bénédicte Zimmermann, 'Work and politics: towards the end of national hegemony?', in Wolf Lepenies (ed.), *Entangled Histories and Negotiated Universals: Centers and Peripheries in a Changing World* (Frankfurt, 2003), pp. 236-59; Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, *De La Comparaison à l'histoire croisée* (Paris, 2004); Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, 'Beyond comparison: "histoire croisée" and the challenge of reflexivity', *History and Theory*, 45, 1 (2006), pp. 30-50.

²⁸ Birgit Van Puymbroeck, 'The age of a mistaken nationalism': *histoire croisée*, cross-national exchange, and an anglo-french network of periodicals', *Modern Language Review*, 107, 3 (2012), p. 683.

between distinctly local characteristics and wider ideals. Each of these works present nuance within single nation-states in nineteenth-century Europe, whether this is Katherine A. Lynch's comparison of the meeting of national and local social policy in early nineteenth-century France, Carol E. Harrison's work on the comparing bourgeois identity construction in three French cities, which uses the local to '[bring] the fissures that divided the post-revolutionary middle classes into sharp relief', or Oliver Zimmer's work comparing civic and national identity formation in late-nineteenth-century Germany.²⁹ Adopting this 'mezzo-level' of comparative studies of cities within a single nation has the advantage, according to Nancy Green, 'of allowing closer views of variety within individual nation-states'.³⁰ Additionally, I do not treat the three cities in my study as frozen and isolated from one another; drawing on *histoire croisée* allows me to explore key moments of inter-city competition and the crossing of ideas and individuals. These moments include tracing the reputation of Mulhouse's reformed housing scheme in the other cities, as well as the consequences on local urban policy in Lyon after the relocation of the housing-conscious politician Claude-Marius Vaïsse from prefect of the Nord to prefect of the Rhône.

For my comparison, I have chosen three cities with what Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka have phrased as 'minimum similarity so as to allow comparison'.³¹ Roubaix (Nord), Mulhouse (Haut-Rhin), and Lyon (Rhône) were cities which were driven by the textile industry in the nineteenth century – cotton and wool in Roubaix, cotton in Mulhouse, and silk

²⁹ Katherine A. Lynch, *Family, Class, and Ideology in Early Industrial France: Social Policy and the Working-Class Family, 1825-1848* (Madison WI, 1988); Carol E. Harrison, *The Bourgeois Citizen in Nineteenth-Century France: Gender, Sociability, and the Uses of Emulation* (Oxford, 1999), p. 15; William Whyte and Oliver Zimmer (eds.), *Nationalism and the Reshaping of Urban Communities in Europe, 1848-1914* (Basingstoke, 2011); Oliver Zimmer, *Remaking the Rhythms of Life: German Communities in the Age of the Nation-State* (Oxford, 2013).

³⁰ Nancy L. Green, 'Forms of comparison', in Deborah Cohen and Maura O'Connor (eds.), *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-National Perspective* (London, 2004), p. 46.

³¹ Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka, 'Comparative History: methods, aims, problems', in Cohen and O'Connor (eds.), *Comparison and History*, pp. 34-6.

in Lyon – and each experienced distinct pressures on housing due to the population growth that accompanied the growth and success of these industries (fig. 0.1).

Roubaix, located just a few kilometres south of the Belgian border, began the century as an overgrown village with barely 8,000 inhabitants. As the industry expanded, Roubaix witnessed the fastest proportional population growth of all French cities in the nineteenth century, increasing almost sixteen-fold between 1801 and 1901, with one of the most dramatic periods of this increase between 1851-76 when the population swelled from just under 35,000 to just over 80,000. This was mostly driven by an influx of Belgian workers, who flocked to Roubaix's growing textile factories. By the 1870s, Roubaix was essentially a Belgian city, as French inhabitants were in a minority. Roubaix's total Belgian population was larger than the Belgian cities of Tournai or Mons, and only the three cities of Ghent, Brussels, and Antwerp had more Belgians than Roubaix.³² At the end of the century, Roubaix was one of only twelve French cities with a population of over 100,000.³³

Mulhouse, lying in the easternmost corner of France, shared a similar trajectory of rapid industrial growth resulting in a migrant-driven population boom. As Mulhouse was an independent city-republic in French Alsace until 1798, its growth was limited by the encircling border, and the population was only around 6,000 inhabitants.³⁴ Once these limits were lifted with the voluntary annexation into the French nation in 1798, Mulhouse's fledgling textile industry was able to expand rapidly, and the population soared in response, primarily through migration from German and Swiss states. By the time Mulhouse was annexed once again –

³² Jean Piat, *Quand Mimerel gouvernait la France* (Roubaix, 1992), p. 44.

³³ The other eleven being Paris, Lyon, Marseille, Bordeaux, Lille, Toulouse, Nantes, Rouen, Saint-Etienne, Le Havre, and Reims. John M. Merriman, 'Introduction: images of the nineteenth-century French city', in John M. Merriman (ed.), *French Cities in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1982), pp. 11-4.

³⁴ Clement, 'The 'unrealizable chimera'', pp. 69-71.

involuntarily this time – to the new German nation in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian war in 1870-1, this population had increased eightfold to almost 53,000; by the end of the century, it stood at just over 89,000. Just as population growth brought a demographic shift in Roubaix, with French citizens in the minority, Mulhouse's Calvinist elite saw themselves outnumbered by Catholic migrants by as early as the mid-1830s.³⁵

Lyon offers a slightly different story. A much older city than either Roubaix or Mulhouse, the population of Lyon in 1800 was roughly the same as that of Mulhouse in 1900. The proportional growth of Lyon was also slower compared to the boomtowns of the north, 'only' increasing fivefold in population throughout the century. Where Lyon shares a similar experience of rapid proportional population growth to that witnessed in Roubaix and Mulhouse, however, was in its suburban communes of La Croix Rousse and La Guillotière. Both these neighbouring communes, along with the smaller commune of Vaise, were governed independently by local municipal councils until 1852, when they were 'reunited' with the city of Lyon under the direct governance of the prefect of the Rhône. In the first half of the century, these suburbs experienced population growth similar to Roubaix and Mulhouse (fig. 0.1). Considering that they both had a high concentration of working-class inhabitants, the experience of local elites concerning housing in La Croix Rousse and La Guillotière was therefore similar to that in Roubaix and Mulhouse. What these processes of rapid population growth led to, therefore, was a series of distinctly localised and persistent pressures on housing in each of the cities.

While each of these cities experienced rapid population growths that placed unprecedented pressure on housing, they also had distinctly local characteristics that influenced the different elites in their responses to the housing question. Much of the history of Roubaix's industrial

³⁵ Paul Schmitt, *Mulhouse au XIXe siècle: la montée du Catholicisme* (Strasbourg, 1992), p. 107.

elite has been tied to a desire to move out from the shadow of Lille. Textile production in the region of Roubaix-Tourcoing, to the north-east of Lille, had been active since at least 1669, yet at the end of the *Ancien Régime*, Roubaix was in practice just an extension of Lille's production area, rather than exerting its own industrial individual identity.³⁶ In the nineteenth-century this changed, as the close-knit industrial families focused their resources on expanding industry. Economic historian David Landes asserted that this Roubaisian textile elite were driven by an 'inferiority complex' in relation to Lille, which derived from belonging to a 'village grown large' rather than the long-established 'big town'.³⁷ For Landes, the Roubaisian elite milieu was 'an emulative community seeking to affirm its place and dignity in the face of an advantaged rival. Success in business bec[ame] a mode of self-assertion'.³⁸ Roubaix never outstripped Lille in terms of size but, by the second half of the nineteenth century, its strength in industry earned the growing city the title of 'Manchester of the North' or 'the French Manchester'.³⁹

The textile elite strengthened business ties with endogamous intermarriage and high numbers of children.⁴⁰ This interrelated industrial elite was also homogenous in religion, with only 118 non-Catholics of a total population of 24 802 in 1845.⁴¹ The elite was devoutly Catholic, and monopolised industry and municipality as Roubaix grew, with family and intermarriage

³⁶ Didier Cornuel and Bruno Duriez, *Le Mirage urbain: histoire du logement à Roubaix* (Paris, 1983), p. 8; Mohamed Kasdi and Didier Terrier, 'Un process continu de développement industriel: le textile dans la région lilloise (années 1770- années 1820)', *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, 352, (2008), pp. 121-6.

³⁷ David S. Landes, 'Religion and enterprise: the case of the French textile industry', in Edward C. Carter, Robert Forster, and Joseph N. Moody (eds.), *Enterprise and Entrepreneurs in Nineteenth-and Twentieth-Century France* (Baltimore MD, 1976), pp. 68-70.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

³⁹ Pierre Pierrard, *Histoire du Nord* (Paris, 1992), p. 353; Piat, *Quand Mimerel gouvernait la France*, p. 14.

⁴⁰ Frédéric Barbier, *Le Patronat du Nord sous le Second Empire : une approche prosopographique* (Geneva, 1989), pp. 23-52.

⁴¹ Piat, *Quand Mimerel gouvernait la France*, p. 92.

between these elites forming the ‘cement of a society’.⁴² This unified, homogenous group was difficult to break into as an outsider. Jean Piat’s 1992 work on Auguste Mimerel, who moved to Roubaix from Amiens in 1816 and later became mayor in 1834, is an interesting study of how close-knit this elite had become by the 1830s. Piat emphasises this by analysing the power struggle between the ‘*étranger*’ Mimerel and one of the dominant Roubaisian families – the Bossuts.⁴³ Piat describes the political clashes between Mimerel and Jean-Baptiste Bossut, leader of this established Roubaisian family, as a ferocious Montagu and Capulet affair. Successful in business and in local politics, Mimerel remained a perpetual ‘outsider’ in the social caste of the Roubaisian elite, as exemplified by the marriages of his children to Lillois, rather than Roubaisian, notables.⁴⁴ By contrast, when the ancestors of Eugène Motte, shareholder of *La Ruche Roubaissienne*, first moved to Roubaix from nearby Tourcoing in the early decades of the century, they quickly consolidated their position through marrying into established Roubaisian families. The marriages of Jean-Baptiste Motte to Pauline Brédart, then of their son Louis to Jean-Baptiste Bossut’s daughter Adèle, aligned this family with the largest dynasties in the town, and accelerated their rise to industrial dominance.⁴⁵

Like Roubaix, Mulhouse also had an elite that dominated business and municipal governance, and was closely related through a complex web of intermarriage and business ties. However, this elite was distinct from others in France for a number of reasons. First, they were also denominationally homogeneous, except this homogeneity was Calvinist rather than Catholic. This marked Mulhouse out as a ‘Protestant oasis’: in Alsace in 1801, of a total population of

⁴² Pierre Pouchain, *Les Maîtres du Nord : du XIXe siècle à nos jours* (Paris, 1998), pp. 79-81.

⁴³ Piat, *Quand Mimerel gouvernait la France*, p. 27.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-9.

⁴⁵ Gaston Motte, *Les Motte : Étude de la Descendances Motte-Clarisse, 1750-1950* (Roubaix, 1952), pp. 33-8, 53-65.

520,000, only 18,000 were Calvinists, concentrated around Mulhouse.⁴⁶ This denominational difference, as we will explore in greater detail in the final chapter of the thesis, was only further emphasised when the overwhelmingly Catholic workforce streamed into the growing city: religious distinction became a way to reinforce class difference.

Second, the overlap between business and municipal governance had far more potency in Mulhouse because of its recent history as an independent city republic. The families who had ruled Mulhouse for centuries as *bourgmestres* were also those who founded the first textile factories in the mid-eighteenth century; in the nineteenth century, these families continued to dominate the key positions in municipal government as well as expanding the industry. As Robert Fox notes, the arrival and expansion of industry from mid-eighteenth-century Mulhouse meant that ‘the context for the exercise of power began to change, albeit with no significant shift in the *location* of power... the arrival of industry reinforced, rather than weakened, the established oligarchy’.⁴⁷ By the nineteenth century, the elite of Mulhouse constituted a veritable Calvinist ‘fabricantocracy’.

This long history of municipal independence in Mulhouse manifested in a palpable aloofness – in not outright animosity – towards impositions from the central French state in the nineteenth century. During the Restoration, progressive politics were ‘not a partisan position’, according to Carol E. Harrison, ‘but a virtual criterion for membership in the Mulhousian elite’ – as Mulhouse had never been a royal subject under the old Bourbon Monarchy, political

⁴⁶ Marc Lienhard, 'Les protestants', in René Epp et al. (eds.), *Catholiques, protestants, juifs en Alsace* (Mulhouse, 1992), p. 124; Paul Leuilliot, 'L'essor économique du XIXe siècle et les transformations de la cité (1815-1870)', in Georges Livet and Raymond Oberlé (eds.), *Histoire de Mulhouse des origines à nos jours* (Strasbourg, 1977), pp. 173-4.

⁴⁷ Robert Fox, 'Presidential address: science, industry and the social order in Mulhouse, 1798-1871', *British Journal for the History of Science*, 17, 2 (1984), p. 132.

opposition ‘was a crucial aspect of Mulhousien identity’.⁴⁸ In dying days of the French Second Republic, the central state issued a plebiscite on 20 December 1851 to ratify Louis-Napoléon’s *coup* that would establish him as Emperor of the new French Second Empire. Mulhouse was one of just five communes throughout the whole of France to return a ‘No’ majority vote.⁴⁹

Even during the Second Empire, over a half a century after Mulhouse was annexed to France, this fierce local identity endured. When the sub-prefecture of the Haut-Rhin department was moved from Altkirch to Mulhouse in November 1857 because of the growth of the latter, the new sub-prefect’s first report to his superiors in April 1858 dedicated several pages to ‘the spirit of Mulhouse’. To begin, he claimed that ‘French sentiment does not exist in Mulhouse. This town is a vast factory, the owners of which belong, in their hearts, their minds and their language, to a foreign and Protestant race’. All that had changed since the reunion of 1798 was that these men were now ‘industrial lords’ instead of *bourgmestres*: they ‘remain impenetrable to the French idea’. Even though mayors were appointed by the prefecture as elsewhere in France since 1831, the mayor and his councilmen spoke to the representatives of departmental government ‘not as equal to equal, but as superior to inferior’. To the new sub-prefect, Mulhouse was not ‘an enemy country’, but certainly it was a ‘foreign’ one.⁵⁰ While, as we shall explore in the final sections of the thesis, the elite embraced French national identity in the aftermath of the German annexation following the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1, this could be portrayed as a continuation of protest and opposition to the state who technically ruled the city.

⁴⁸ Harrison, *Bourgeois Citizen*, pp. 19, 59.

⁴⁹ Mulhouse’s close vote of 1,683 ‘Yes’ and 1,800 ‘No’ in the plebiscite contrasts with the overwhelming electoral victory for Louis-Napoléon’s *coup*. In the rest of the Haut-Rhin department, the vote was 93,810 ‘Yes’ and 5,896 ‘No’; in the whole of France, only 640,737 voted ‘No’, against 7,439,216 who voted ‘Yes’. Société industrielle de Mulhouse, *Historie documentaire de l’industrie de Mulhouse et de ses environs au XIXe Siècle* (Mulhouse, 1902), p. 19.

⁵⁰ ADHR 1 M 66, Sub-prefect of Mulhouse to prefect of Haut-Rhin, 4 Apr. 1858.

The third defining feature of this Mulhousian elite was what Arthur Dunham describes as their ‘rather unusually enlightened and public-spirited’ activities.⁵¹ In 1826, twenty-two young industrialists founded the *Société industrielle de Mulhouse* (SIM), which would become the centre for internationally-renowned philanthropy and reform discussion throughout the nineteenth century. Mulhouse therefore had a unique combination of a closely related Calvinist industrial and municipal elite, a history of independence from the French state, and an active commitment to social reform and philanthropy in its civil society associations. Within this context, the actions of the Mulhousian elite regarding housing often ran parallel to or ahead of national and departmental authorities.

Although not an independent city-state until 1798 like Mulhouse, much of Lyon’s history was also constructed through opposition to the central French state, as symbolised by the city of Paris. In his study *Civilization and Capitalism*, Fernand Braudel titled a section ‘Paris plus Lyon, Lyon plus Paris’, in which he asserted that, instead of producing a ‘single natural centre’, France’s economy from the fifteenth through to the eighteenth centuries had both Paris and Lyon vying for first place.⁵² Braudel continued by arguing that historians need to be aware of the formative role that this competition with Paris played in Lyon’s history.⁵³ This fraught relationship between France’s first and second cities is no better illustrated than by considering the political context at the beginning of the Second Empire, when the central French state forcibly ‘reunited’ Lyon with its suburbs to form a new agglomeration and suppressed the office of mayor. Between 1852-70, Lyon was ruled directly by the prefect of

⁵¹ Arthur L. Dunham, 'Industrial life and labor in France 1815-1848', *The Journal of Economic History*, 3, 2 (1943), p. 131.

⁵² Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century*, trans. Siân Reynolds, 3 vols. (Berkeley CA, 1992), iii, p. 326.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

the Rhône, rather than by a mayor.⁵⁴ Only one other French city was ruled in this way in the nineteenth century: Paris. This change necessitated a renegotiation of the relationship not only between state and local figures in Lyon, but also between the previously independent suburbs of La Croix Rousse, La Guillotière, and Vaise, which were now only *arrondissements* in the expanded city of Lyon. By the end of the Second Empire, Lyon was a city with an active animosity towards Paris: local journals extolling decentralisation appeared in the final years of Napoléon III's rule and, with the fall of the Second Empire, Lyon quickly adopted the title 'commune' on its council decrees.⁵⁵ The opposition to Paris that had shaped Lyon's earlier history had been stoked and reinforced by almost two decades of direct rule from Paris.

One of the reasons why the central French government suppressed municipal rule and the prefect of the Rhône as political administrator of Lyon in 1852 was security. This tied to another form of opposition that defined Lyon's civic identity by mid-century: rather than the clash between capital and province, this was the clash between capital and labour. In 1831, 1834, 1848, and 1849, the silk workers of Lyon (*canuts*) engaged in mass protest and occupation of the city in some of the first mass conflicts between industrial workers and employers in European history.⁵⁶ When seeking to understand the ways that the Lyonnais elites dealt with 'the housing question' in this period, it is important to keep in mind these dual oppositions: between Lyon and Paris, and between Lyon's elites and its workers.

As a much larger city than Roubaix and Mulhouse, Lyon did not have the same close-knit, homogeneous elite as these two boom-towns. Although there was definitely a fiercely

⁵⁴ Pierre-Yves Saunier, 'Center and centrality in the nineteenth century', *Journal of Urban History*, 24, 4 (1998), p. 440.

⁵⁵ Louis M. Greenberg, *Sisters of Liberty: Marseille, Lyon, Paris, and the Reaction to a Centralized State, 1868-1871* (Cambridge MA, 1971), p. 4.

⁵⁶ Robert J. Bezucha, *The Lyon Uprising of 1834: Social and Political Conflict in the Early July Monarchy* (Cambridge MA, 1974), pp. vii-ix.

Catholic population, there were also sizeable Protestant and Jewish minorities who engaged in their own business, charity, and philanthropy.⁵⁷ What united the Lyonnais elite was the attitude towards Paris, and attempts to assert Lyon's economic and cultural maturity and superiority from the capital. While Roubaix sought to assert independence and superiority from a local rival, and Mulhouse sought to maintain independence from the nation-state, Lyon was positioned in direct opposition to the capital city. For a thesis that focuses on destabilising centre-periphery, Paris-centric narratives, Lyon is the most obvious choice for a third city to complement the two French Manchesters.

Housing, houses, homes

This is a comparative history of provincial elites and their interaction with the housing problem; this is not a comparative history of housing alone. By the term 'provincial elites', I refer to those individuals who monopolised social, economic, and political power in the three cities in this period. Sometimes these groups overlapped – as with the Mulhousian fabricantocracy who dominated business, philanthropy, and municipal governance through the period – whereas at other times these groups came into conflict with one another – as with the imposition of the prefect of the Rhône as governor of Lyon. These different elites adopted a variety of strategies concerning the working-class housing question throughout the period which I have divided into three groups: strategies of direct intervention (aimed at improving housing legislation or physical housing conditions), interaction (aimed at meeting the working-class family in their home without necessarily changing physical conditions), and active inaction (the conscious and articulated decision neither to intervene nor interact with poor-quality housing). All these strategies reflected different concerns with constructing and

⁵⁷ Pierre Cayez and Serge Chassagne, *Les Patrons du Second Empire. Lyon et le Lyonnais* (Paris, 2006), pp. 25, 73-6.

maintaining local elite identities and hegemony, reflected repeatedly in the ways that housing could act as a vehicle to impose bourgeois accepted norms. Ezra N. Suleiman describes these kinds of elite strategies of self-preservation in France:

An elite securely anchors itself in the society when the elements, mythical or not, that underline its power become the generally accepted norms of the society... If the elite loses its self-confidence, if it loses the exalted image of itself, or if the society ceases to accept it... then that spells the beginning of the end of the elite's rule.⁵⁸

While certain chapters may draw upon histories of policy, architecture, or public health legislation, the unifying methodological approach is comparative social history exploring the multifaceted nature of the elite strategies concerning with 'the housing question'. To do so, the thesis is divided into three sections, with each focused on different terminology: housing, houses, and homes.

The first part refers to 'housing' as a discursive term, as used in such phrases as 'housing policy', 'housing legislation', 'housing reform', or 'the housing question'. This first chapter is concerned with analysing the French national 'housing' debate around the mid-century, the crucial role of provincial social and hygienic investigators in driving this debate, and the passage of two decrees on housing in the early 1850s: the Melun Law on unhealthy housing (1850), and Napoléon III's donation of 10 million Fr. for new housing construction (1852). It rests on the analysis of printed primary material produced by early-to-mid-nineteenth-century hygienists and statisticians at the local, national, and international levels, as well as archival records of political debates in the National Assembly, prefectural councils, and private philanthropic societies. Ultimately, not only did provincial actors drive the debates and legislation on housing in mid-century France, but, when passed, the legislation itself codified

⁵⁸ Ezra N. Suleiman, 'Self-image, legitimacy and the stability of elites: the case of France', *British Journal of Political Science*, 7, 2 (1977), p. 197.

in turn the local sphere as the arena for dealing with the housing problem, rather than trying to impose a single national norm.

The second section on ‘houses’ refers to the physical structures where workers lived. Rather than focusing on hygienic tracts or political debates on ‘the housing question’, which rarely involved contact with the workers themselves, the two chapters in this second part focus on direct interventions with the physical structures where workers lived. Chapter 2 compares three different ‘from-new’ styles of workers’ housing in the three cities, based on long-term pressures of population growth as well as a short-term crisis of natural disaster. The chapter argues that responses – be they intervention or inaction – in constructing new houses were the result of a conscious decision made by the local elites. Building reformed houses such as the *cités ouvrières* of Mulhouse became a way that elites could signal their paternalist credentials as well as forming a source of local civic pride. For others, leaving housing to the private market in favour of maximising profit from expanding factories was indicative of different priorities in self-fashioning and self-preservation.

Not all local elites built new houses, but this does not mean that they were unconcerned in improving the physical structure of the working-class dwelling. The third chapter of the thesis focuses on analysing the archival records of the *commissions des logements insalubres* that were set up in each of the cities following the 1850 Melun Law. This is the only chapter in the thesis where there is a directly comparable corpus of archival records, as these commissions were run by the local municipalities and archived as such. However, this uniformity in theory did not bear out in practice, reflecting the significance of local conditions. By analysing the way that these commissions evolved to focus on uniquely local conceptions of ‘unhealthy houses’, this chapter reinforces the idea that legislation in this era, rather than creating a new focus on

housing concerns, instead merely gave greater power to those who were already dealing with housing in provincial France.

The first parts of the thesis thus demonstrate that, even if all the elites did not build large-scale reformed housing schemes, interacting with workers' houses was a way for the urban elite to express different forms of local identity and pride. Increasingly, by the late 1860s however, these elites' focus had shifted from inspecting and managing unhealthy workers' houses and, instead, turned to blaming unhealthy workers' behaviours that perpetuated poor conditions.

The focus on workers and their behaviour is examined in the final chapters of this thesis, which are grouped under the section title of 'home'. The terminology of 'home' is more difficult to pin down and delimit, compared with that of 'housing' and 'houses'. As housing scholars such as David Benjamin and Cameron Parsell have agreed, the use of the word 'home' in academic writing is problematic as it is 'still an ambiguous term'.⁵⁹ Benjamin, pursuing the laudable goal of establishing a clear definition for the term that would encompass its multiple alternate meanings, gives us a somewhat muddled overarching description:

The home is that spatially localised, temporally defined, significant and autonomous physical frame and conceptual system for the ordering, transformation and interpretation of the physical and abstract aspects of domestic daily life at several simultaneous spatio-temporal scales, normally activated by the connection to a person or community such as a nuclear family.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ David N. Benjamin, 'Introduction', in David N. Benjamin (ed.), *The Home: Words, Interpretations, Meanings, and Environments* (Aldershot, 1995), p. 1; Cameron Parsell, 'Home is where the house is: the meaning of home for people sleeping rough', *Housing Studies*, 27, 2 (2012), p. 159.

⁶⁰ Quoted in Jeanne Moore, 'Placing home in context', *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 20, 3 (2000), p. 208.

Amos Rapoport gives us slightly more clarity, when he tries to extricate ‘home’ from ‘house’ or ‘dwelling’, by suggesting that ‘the proverb, home is where the heart is, emphasizes the *affective core* of the concept as effectively as the others [other proverbs] do the elements of *security, control*, and being at ease and *relaxed*’.⁶¹ Other definitions seek to break down the different meanings of home by looking to its longer etymological roots: Anatoly Liberman compared the old English word ‘ham’ (‘a village, an estate, and only sometimes a house’) with German ‘*Heimat*’ (‘homeland, native land’) and Old Icelandic ‘*heimr*’ (‘world’) to suggest that the modern ideas of privacy, comfort, and ‘sweet home’ come from an older ‘satisfaction of communal living’.⁶²

Using ‘home’ is difficult, therefore. A further complicating factor in using the word ‘home’ when talking about nineteenth-century France is that there is no direct French equivalent that covers the multitude of expressions that we can use ‘home’ for in English. The Czech-born French author Milan Kundera gave an interview to the New York Times in 1984 titled ‘When there is no word for “home”’ that appropriately covers these linguistic difficulties:

In French, of course, the word ‘home’ doesn't exist. You have to say ‘*chez moi*’ or ‘*dans ma patrie*’ – which means that ‘home’ is already politicized, that ‘home’ already includes a politics, a state, a nation. Whereas the word ‘home’ is very beautiful in its exactitude. Losing it, in French, is one of those diabolical problems of translation. You have to ask: What is home? What does it mean to be ‘at home’?⁶³

Even when limiting our definition of ‘home’ to the domestic, rather than the ‘homeland/Heimat’ notion of *dans ma patrie*, the French equivalents of *chez soi* or *foyer* are inadequate. During the nineteenth century, certain French figures occasionally overcame this linguistic deficit by using the English word ‘home’, especially by the end of the period studied

⁶¹ Amos Rapoport, ‘A Critical Look at the Concept “Home”’, in Benjamin (ed.), *The Home*, pp. 25–52.

⁶² Anatoly Liberman, ‘Our habitat: one more etymology brought “home”’ (4 Feb. 2015), <http://blog.oup.com/2015/02/home-word-origin-etymology/>, accessed 27 Apr. 2018.

⁶³ Milan Kundera, quoted in Jane Kramer, ‘When there is no word for “home”’, *New York Times* (New York NY), 29 Apr. 1984, p. 46.

in this thesis. One of the words that Émile Littré chose to include in the 1886 supplement to his 1870s *Dictionnaire de la langue française* (1872-7) was the word ‘home’. He commented that ‘home’ was an English word ‘which has tended to be introduced into French and for which we have no other equivalent than: *le chez-soi*’.⁶⁴

Significantly, we see that when nineteenth-century figures did go out of their way to use the English term ‘home’ when talking about interventions with working-class housing, this emphasised how foreign and un-French certain developments were. When Jean Dollfus, founder of the Mulhousian *cités ouvrières*, died in 1887, Frédéric Passy eulogised his achievements to an audience at the *Institut de France*. In discussing why Dollfus’s housing scheme was so notable, Passy wrote (translation in footnote):

La maison ouvrière procure à un certain nombre et elle fait entrevoir à d’autres, par le chemin de la prévoyance et de l’économie, la bienfaisante sécurité d’une existence assise. Elle enseigne ces qualités, ces vertus d’ordre, de soin, d’union, qui sont comme l’atmosphère naturelle de ce que les Anglais appellent d’un mot intraduisible : le *home*.⁶⁵

Evidentially, the use of the term ‘home’ in a French history thesis is a delicate issue both academically as well as considering contemporary conceptions of the term. I have divided the final two chapters to focus on two of the different meanings of home: first to refer to family, household, and the emotive tie to the domestic interior as perhaps best encapsulated as ‘*la famille et le foyer*’; then second to refer to communal attachment to neighbourhood, city, and even nation.

⁶⁴ Émile Littré, *Dictionnaire de la langue française: Supplément* (Paris, 1886), p. 189.

⁶⁵ ‘The working-class house provides for a certain number, and gives a glimpse for others, through the path of foresight and saving, the beneficent security of a settled existence. It [the house] teaches these qualities, these virtues of order, care, union, which are like the natural atmosphere of what the English call, in an untranslatable word: the home’, in AMM 66 TT B 4, Frédéric Passy, *Un Chef d’industrie alsacienne: Jean Dollfus. Lu dans la séance publique annuelle des cinq Académies du 25 octobre 1888*, (Paris, 1888), pp. 4-5.

By focusing on the home as family and domestic interior, Chapter 4 explores how middle-class onlookers created a series of linked spatialized dichotomies between the home and the cabaret. These two opposing spaces were used to discuss, on the one hand, sober, religious families who spent their time outside work within the domestic sphere and, on the other, drunk, irreligious workers who abandoned the protection of ‘home’ to drink in the cabaret. Active improvement of housing as considered in previous chapters of the thesis could counter the allures of the cabaret but, failing that, it was the role of elite charity to visit working-class homes and strengthen family bonds in the face of the great misery. In establishing how and why these dichotomies were created and developed, both through interaction with workers and through isolated bourgeois anxieties, this chapter is structured around a microhistory of a sacrilegious bar crawl in 1874 Roubaix, where all the fears of drink, irreligion, and broken family ties were played out in the local press, trial coverage, and appeals against sentencing.

In the fifth and final chapter of the thesis, I consider the broader conception of ‘home’. Having established the different ways that elites used interactions with ‘the housing question’ and the working-class home to express and solidify their own local identities, this chapter asks whether there was space for the workers themselves within these communal, elite-dictated conceptions of the city as home. The chapter focuses on the context of a shifting socio-political landscape into the 1870s and 1880s, where workers’ strikes and political activism threatened the established hegemony of the city elites. I compare the different ways that municipal leaders sought to include or reject defining working-class urban features from the city, which is crucial to seeing how far the workers were allowed to feel ‘at home’ in the city.

The different ways that elites in the three cities dealt with the working class home were shaped by a combination of unique, pre-existing local characteristics, the influence of housing developments elsewhere in other provincial cities, and the shifting socio-political landscape

throughout the period. By the time the Siegfried Law was passed in the 1890s, people in these three cities had already spent half a century wrestling with solving their local housing problems.

Making a comparison of three cities, and encompassing the expansive subjects covered by ‘housing’, ‘houses’, and ‘homes’, has not been an easy task. It has necessitated immersing myself in the historiographies of three distinctly different cities, alongside the overarching literature on housing and elites. To find primary material, I have worked in eleven different archives in six different cities, hunting for signs of the ‘active inaction’ which was so important, to complement the more obviously catalogued sources concerning successful housing schemes or municipal commissions. By the end of this thesis, I demonstrate that direct housing intervention – in the form of reform legislation or the construction of new houses – was only a sliver of the full picture of ways municipal and industrial elites chose to respond to poor-quality housing in their cities. Making hygienic or charitable visits to interact with workers in their homes, along with active strategies of inaction that included choosing not to build or relocating away from dense slums, all indicate the central importance that housing played in the construction and expression of local elite identities in nineteenth-century provincial France. Comparing how and why these elites adopted similar and different strategies in this thesis, I reveal that the nineteenth-century ‘housing question’ in France extended far beyond just ‘giving the worker his house’.

PART I: HOUSING

CHAPTER 1: PROVINCIALIZING ‘THE QUESTION OF HOUSING’ IN FRANCE,

1820-50

In the aftermath of the February 1848 Revolution that ushered in the French Second Republic, the material needs of the working classes occupied an unprecedented position in political discourse. One local politician committed to improving conditions for the workers was the social Catholic northern councillor, Anatole de Melun. On 28 November 1848, Melun gave an impassioned address to his peers at a meeting in the Nord department’s prefecture of Lille. ‘The events of February’, he declared, ‘have called the government, as citizens of unsung duties, to put everything that touches upon the moral and physical wellbeing of the working classes on the agenda, and the question of housing, perhaps the most urgent, cannot be ignored’.¹ Confronted with ‘such a great evil’ of the current housing problem, de Melun argued, ‘a radical remedy is necessary’, and it fell to the government to improve conditions in workers’ cramped, expensive, and ‘deleterious houses’.² Throughout the rest of the meeting, de Melun outlined his plan for government legislation that would enable municipal commissions to enter and inspect houses, to demand improvements, and to declare the worst cases unfit for habitation.

The reaction from the assembled councillors was mixed. Lille, where the council was meeting, was one of the most heavily developed industrial centres in France, and with this development came terrible housing conditions of its workers. Less than a decade earlier, the Parisian hygienist Louis-René Villermé had announced that the moral and physical condition of Lillois

¹ AN F 8 210, ‘Département du Nord: Extrait du Registre aux Délibérations du Conseil général’, 28 Nov. 1848.

² Ibid.

workers was the worst in the country.³ No one at the meeting with de Melun denied the urgent need for improvement, but not all were comfortable with handing unparalleled and untested new powers to the apparatus of the central state. The most vocal opponent was Gaspar Lestiboudois, a botanist and doctor, who served as a conservative councillor for south-west Lille. He was ‘saddened to have to fight against a proposition so well-justified by the interest of humanity’, but his opposition was too strong to remain silent. While Lestiboudois agreed that the ‘reported evil is immense’ and that the ‘state of infection’ of the houses of the poor was ‘impossible to depict’, how, he asked, could such broad interventions avoid infringing on the rights of property held by landlords? The council, Lestiboudois argued, would happily support some kind of national legislative measure to improve housing conditions, but not one as expansive as the proposal that de Melun had brought to the table.⁴

Coming to de Melun’s defence, the prefect of the Nord asserted that, while the principle of property was absolute, it was always ‘subordinate to the interests of humanity’. Factory inspections and road alignments already overrode private property in the interest of public good: why not extend this to the most pressing issue of all by inspecting and improving workers’ houses?⁵ It was not argument that convinced all the assembled politicians and property owners, but it did enough. When the issue came to a vote, it was agreed that de Melun’s proposal was well-meaning but imperfect, and the proposition passed (with amendments) narrowly by 24 votes to 18.

This criticism in the council chamber of Lille was symptomatic of some of the opposition de Melun would go on to face when he took his proposal to the National Assembly. After his

³ William Coleman, *Death is a Social Disease: Public Health and Political Economy in Early Industrial France* (Madison WI, 1982), p. 218.

⁴ ‘Département du Nord... 28 Nov. 1848’

⁵ Ibid.

election as deputy of the Nord in May 1849, de Melun worked to draft the radical remedy he envisaged that could simultaneously assuage the doubts of its detractors. The national law that was eventually passed on 13 April 1850 on *logements insalubres* was more limited than de Melun had originally proposed, but it still empowered municipalities throughout France with unprecedented powers of inspection, regulation, and enforcement concerning working-class housing (fig. 1.1). It was so closely aligned with the zeal of this northern deputy that it was known as the Melun Law. But this law was not just the product of concern for the working-classes in the wake of the 1848 Revolution. The Melun Law emerged from decades of public health debates in France, and brought government officials into the houses of workers: as Catherine Kudlick puts it, ‘public health paved the way for an unprecedented penetration into private space’.⁶ Lestiboudois’s concerns about state actors crossing the threshold and threatening landlords’ property rights were therefore born out in the aftermath of the Melun Law.

While the Melun Law undoubtedly marked a crucial turning point in the history of working-class housing in France, historians have concentrated too much on the significance of the bill passing in the National Assembly and on the impact of the law in Paris, at the expense of the importance of conditions in Lille motivating its early conception.⁷ Overemphasis on the passage of the Melun law in the National Assembly, on the following enthusiasm of the Parisian housing inspectors, and the personal interests of Louis Napoléon, future emperor of the Second Empire all combine to make the ‘housing question’ seem wholly concerned with and dictated by the capital. Not only did the momentum for tackling the housing question

⁶ Catherine Jean Kudlick, *Cholera in Post-Revolutionary Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley CA, 1998), p. 78.

⁷ For example: Yankel Fijalkow, *La Construction des îlots insalubres, Paris, 1850-1945* (Paris, 1998); Florence Bourillon, ‘La loi du 13 avril 1850 ou lorsque la Seconde République invente le logement insalubre’, *Revue d’histoire du XIXe siècle*, 20/21, (2000), pp. 117-34; Elsbeth Kalff, *Le Logement insalubre et l’hygiénisation de la vie quotidienne, Paris, 1830-1990* (Paris, 2008).

come from work in the provinces, the legislation of the 1850s on housing itself placed the responsibility for dealing with the problem in the hands of local municipal and voluntary bodies. In fact, as this chapter demonstrates, when Anatole de Melun asserted that the housing question was an urgent concern in 1848, this was true not only in Lille but throughout the whole of mid-nineteenth-century industrial France.

Situating the housing question back in the provinces, this chapter will be divided into parts, each of which challenges the Parisian-centric historiography of housing reform discourse in mid-century France. The first section focuses on the work of one of the most influential French hygienists, Louis-René Villermé. While much of his early work on tying together poverty, space, and mortality focused on the French capital, it was only when he ventured out into the provinces to collect data that he was able to publish his most influential work – an 1840 treatise on the physical and moral condition of French textile workers. Without the experience of visiting the provincial cities and relying on local experts for providing his data, Villermé's work would not have received the acclaim that it has since. The second section turns to analysing the work of the local experts in Lyon, Mulhouse, and the Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing region that Villermé relied on, both before and after he visited the cities. The studies that these experts produced in the 1830s and 1840s relied on distinctly local knowledge and local data, and therefore nuanced the idea of a single 'housing question' – let alone solution – by 1848. The third section traces the spread and impact of the work of the English housing reformer Henry Roberts in France in the late 1840s and early 1850s. Traditional historiography emphasises the role played by Louis Napoléon for introducing this paramount early reformer's work to France in the early 1850s; this section of the chapter will challenge this conclusion by showing how a group of industrialists and philanthropists in Mulhouse worked separate from, in parallel to, and even ahead of the central French state in engaging with this international housing reform discourse. By analysing the importance of

provincial innovations in contributing to bringing the housing question to the fore, this chapter will ultimately shed new light on two key pieces of early 1850s legislation: the Melun Law of 13 April 1850 on *logements insalubres* and Napoléon III's donation on 22 January 1852 of 10 million Fr. for new housing construction.

Both the Melun Law and the 22 January 1852 housing fund were illustrative of a complex interrelationship between different levels of government and French society in the early public health debates. This is further emphasised, as the conclusion to this chapter will show, by the fact that both the wording of these laws and what they entailed formally designated the periphery as the primary arena for action in dealing with the housing question. Indeed, the passage of this legislation merely gave greater powers to those individuals who were already active in reforming housing; it was not legislation or central government action that gave rise to these housing reformers. All of the below sections emphasise this point: while legislation on housing in mid-century France illustrates how urgent the question had become for central French government figures, there had been local experts working on the housing problem for decades prior, who seized on the opportunity to pursue their goals further with greater legislative power.

Louis-René Villermé: statistics and housing in the 1820s and 1830s

In the decades before Anatole de Melun gave his evocative speech in Lille, a generation of socio-medical hygienists and statisticians had argued for the link between poor housing and workers' health and morality. Health councils throughout France in the 1810s and 1820s pursued statistical surveys of public hygiene, culminating in the foundation of the journal *Annales d'hygiène publique* in 1829. One of the journal's key contributors was Louis-René

Villermé, one of the unofficial leaders of the French hygienist movement and whose legacy endures today as one of the fathers of the modern discipline of social epidemiology.⁸

Villermé, born in Paris in 1782, entered the Napoleonic military after his medical studies to serve as a surgeon between 1804-14.⁹ Following military service, he moved back to Paris, where he would go on to write several important treatises on health. He first focused on prisons, where he criticised the cruelty of poor hygienic conditions, and used statistical evidence to prove in 1829 that declining mortality rates were directly correlated to improving detention conditions.¹⁰

Villermé took this relationship between material conditions and mortality beyond the confines of prisons in a further series of studies, published between 1822-30, that examined the links between poverty and mortality in different Parisian *arrondissements*.¹¹ To do so, he drew on recent innovative statistical work on Paris. The prefect of the Seine, Chabrol de Volvic, had appointed Frédéric Villot to oversee the first Parisian census in 1817, with the results published in four volumes under the title of *Recherches statistiques sur la ville de Paris* in 1821,

⁸ Ann La Berge describes Villermé and Alexandre Parent Duchâtelet as the two unofficial leaders of the French hygienist movement, and the French equivalents of Edwin Chadwick. Ann La Berge, *Mission and Method: The Early Nineteenth-Century French Public Health Movement* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 1; C. Julia and A. J. Valleron, 'Louis-René Villermé (1782-1863), a pioneer in social epidemiology: Re-analysis of his data on comparative mortality in Paris in the early 19th century', *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 65, 8 (2011), pp. 666-670; Lisa F. Berkman, and Kawachi Ichiro, 'A Historical Framework for Social Epidemiology : Social Determinants of Population Health', in Lisa F. Berkman and Kawachi Ichiro (eds.), *Social Epidemiology* (Oxford, 2014), p. 1.

⁹ Coleman, *Death is a Social Disease*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁰ Louis René Villermé, *Des Prisons: telles qu'elles sont et telles qu'elles devraient être* (Paris, 1820), pp. 5, 76; Louis René Villermé, *Mémoire sur la mortalité dans les prisons* (Paris, 1829).

¹¹ Louis René Villermé, 'De la mortalité dans les divers quartiers de la ville de Paris : et des causes qui la rendent très différente dans plusieurs d'entre eux, ainsi que dans les divers quartiers de beaucoup de grandes villes', *Annales d'hygiène publique*, 3, (1830).

1823, 1826, and 1829.¹² Using the unprecedented, rich data from these surveys, Villermé established three variables to test: at-home mortality rate, population density, and income.¹³ In his final essay, Villermé challenged the dominant theories that disease and mortality rates were dependent either on contagion (i.e. caused by contact with ill individuals) or on ‘miasmas’ (i.e. caused by contact with filth or dirty air) and argued, rather, that income was the dominant determinant of mortality: the richer areas of Paris had lower mortality rates than the poorer quarters.¹⁴

Villermé’s work in the 1820s and early 1830s was not based on gathering new evidence: rather, he marshalled existing studies and interpreted data to form his conclusions. As William Coleman has suggested, the purpose of Villermé’s early work was ‘to join number and social fact’, and it was his ability to draw potent conclusions from diverse information that made him such a respected figure.¹⁵ His theories were tested in 1832 when cholera struck Paris. By the end of the epidemic, one in nineteen Parisians had been diagnosed with the disease, and over 18,000 died.¹⁶ The outbreak had rendered Paris a laboratory for theorists of disease causation.¹⁷ The attempts by contagionists to quarantine the infected, or by miasmists to sanitise public spaces had both fallen short and, instead, it was Villermé’s social theory of

¹² Joshua Cole, *The Power of Large Numbers: Population, Politics, and Gender in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca NY, 2000), pp. 55-7; Dorothy Porter, *Health, Civilization and the State: A History of Public Health from Ancient to Modern Times* (London, 2006), p. 66.

¹³ Julia and Valleron, ‘Louis-René Villermé’, p. 667.

¹⁴ Villermé, ‘De la mortalité dans les divers quartiers de la ville de Paris’; Bernard-Pierre Lecuyer and Eric Brian, ‘L’argent, la vie, la mort : les recherches sociales de Louis-René Villermé sur la mortalité différentielle selon le revenu (1822-1830)’, *Mathématiques et sciences humaines*, 149, (2000), pp. 33-4; Jason Corburn, ‘Equitable and Healthy City Planning: Towards Healthy Urban Governance in the Century of the City’, in Evelyne De Leeuw and Jean Simos (eds.), *Healthy Cities: The Theory, Policy, and Practice of Value-Based Urban Planning* (New York NY, 2017), p. 32.

¹⁵ Coleman, *Death is a Social Disease*, p. 149.

¹⁶ Kudlick, *Cholera in Post-Revolutionary Paris*, p. 1.

¹⁷ La Berge, *Mission and Method*, pp. 184-5.

epidemiology which was shown to have been correct.¹⁸ Just as it would when it reached British cities, cholera struck all classes and all quarters, yet it had been disproportionately devastating for the poorer members of society.¹⁹

Villermé methodically tested his theory once data from the cholera epidemic was available for interpretation. In 1834, he published a study of mortality rates in '*maisons garnies*' – furnished lodging houses – in Paris during the 1832 epidemic.²⁰ The classification '*maisons garnies*' covered five different types of temporary lodging houses, ranging from the elaborately furnished '*grands hôtels*' to the lowest '*logeurs à la nuit*': lodgings used by transient workers and prostitutes.²¹ By examining the cholera outbreaks in these lodgings, Villermé was therefore able to use a data set that closely aligned health, mortality, and stratified categories of housing that denoted class differences. Of the 3,106 '*maisons garnies*' in Paris in September 1832, cholera had been recorded in 965: just over 30% of all lodgings.²² However, when examining the breakdown by type of lodging, Villermé discovered that only 3.9% of the '*grands hôtels*' class had recorded cases of cholera, compared with 60.2% of the lowest class.²³ This was just recorded cases too: in his conclusion, Villermé proposed that the rate of outbreaks in the poorer quality lodgings would likely be much higher due to unreported cases. While his study used the five classifications of '*maisons garnies*' because of their class differentiation by price and cultural prestige, his conclusions also had an implication for how quality of housing

¹⁸ Kudlick, *Cholera in Post-Revolutionary Paris*, pp. 77-80; François Delaporte, *Disease and Civilization: The Cholera in Paris, 1832*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge MA, 1986), p. 80.

¹⁹ Robert J. Morris, *Cholera 1832: The Social Response to an Epidemic* (London, 1976), pp. 95, 197.

²⁰ Louis René Villermé, 'Note sur les ravages du choléra-morbus dans les maisons garnies de Paris depuis le 29 mars jusqu'au 1er août 1832, et sur les causes qui paraissent avoir favorisé le développement de la maladie dans un grand nombre de maisons', *Annales d'hygiène publique*, 11, (1834), pp. 385-409.

²¹ Ibid.; Coleman, *Death is a Social Disease*, p. 174.

²² Villermé, 'Note sur les ravages du choléra-morbus', p. 388.

²³ Coleman, *Death is a Social Disease*, p. 176.

contributed to death rates, with ‘*grands hôtels*’ in notably better hygienic condition than their cheaper counterparts.²⁴

By 1834, then, Villermé’s work had developed from his early focus on prisons or arrondissements towards singling out housing conditions, wealth, and mortality as linked. These conclusions, however, were isolated to Paris and the conditions in the capital. In order to test his hypotheses on a wider level, Villermé embarked in 1835 on a trip that would take over a year, visiting textile towns and assessing both the moral and physical condition of their workers. The resulting work was the 1840 *Tableau de l’état physique et moral des ouvriers employés dans les manufactures de coton, de laine et de soie* (Study of the physical and moral state of workers employed in the cotton, wool, and silk industries).²⁵ Unlike his previous synthetic studies, this was a more intimate investigation that would place Villermé in direct contact with the workers. He aimed to combine statistical evidence gathered by local government officials or philanthropic bodies with first-hand experience of how the workers lived. In the introduction to *Tableau*, Villermé outlined his goal as an impartial observer that: ‘It was necessary for me to examine the effects of industry on those that it employs, to examine the misery without humiliating it, to observe misconduct without irritating it. This task was difficult’.²⁶ He wanted to ensure that he gained a full picture of workers’ (particularly male workers’) lives, so he made sure he:

followed the worker from his factory to his home. I entered there with him, I studied him within his family; I attended his meals. I did more: I had seen him in his work and in his home, I wanted to see him in his pleasures, to observe him in the places of his meetings. There, by hearing his conversations, with me sometimes mingling, I was, without him knowing, the confidant of his joys and of his complaints, the witness of his vices and of his virtues.²⁷

²⁴ Shapiro, *Housing the Poor of Paris*, p. 15.

²⁵ Louis René Villermé, *Tableau de l’état physique et moral des ouvriers employés dans les manufactures de coton, de laine et de soie*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1840).

²⁶ Ibid., i, p. vi.

²⁷ Ibid., i, p. vi.

Villermé broke his study into two volumes, each stretching to over four-hundred pages. In the first, he dedicated a section each to observations from towns dominated by the cotton industry, then the wool industry, and then the silk industry; in the second, he applied another layer of discussion and analysis.²⁸ Housing conditions formed a central part of both volumes. In Lyon, the leading silk town in France, Villermé found on his visits between February-April 1835 and May-June 1836 that the silk weavers were housed ‘as everywhere else, in the worst quarters and the least beautiful and least clean houses’.²⁹ Yet the style of housing was mixed depending on the areas of town. Few cities in Europe, he went on to write, had streets as narrow and houses as low and cramped as those in the Saint-Georges quarter at the base of the Fourvière hill; yet in the houses of La Croix Rousse, the other of the two dominant mountains in Lyon, the opposite was evident, with towering blocks of houses with high ceilings for the silk weavers’ equipment.³⁰ For woollen workers, conditions were also mixed. In Reims, for example, workers who could afford to live in the expensive centre of town enjoyed houses that lacked neither air nor light, and which also frequently had gardens; those who lived on the outskirts, however, had to live in ‘miserable-looking houses, [with] rooms that are frequently dirty and humid’.³¹

But it was cotton workers, particularly in the Haut-Rhin and in the Nord, that Villermé argued had the worst housing conditions. Visiting Mulhouse between June-July 1835 and again in September 1836, Villermé noted that it was here that the industry was ‘taking giants’ footsteps’ in the rapidity of its development, which was having a negative impact on the quality of housing.³² Because of the insufficient number of houses in the town compared to

²⁸ La Berge, *Mission and Method*, p. 164.

²⁹ Villermé, *Tableau*, i, p. 361.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, i, pp. 361-2.

³¹ *Ibid.*, i, p. 222.

³² *Ibid.*, i, p. 14.

the increasing number of workers required to operate the new factories, workers were forced to choose between walking for up to three hours a day to and from surrounding villages, and crowding into already occupied dwellings in the centre while paying disproportionately high rents.³³ Villermé described the latter as ‘miserable dwellings, where two families slept, each in a corner, on straw thrown on the floor and held in place by two planks’.³⁴

In the northern towns around Lille, the situation was just as bad, if not worse. In the poorest areas, Villermé described ‘alleyways, narrow, winding, deep *cours*...with eight square metres on average per person’.³⁵ Unlike in the capital, where such population density was at least dispersed vertically over as many as seven storeys, houses were much lower in the Lillois region, meaning that inhabitants were closer together and more ‘piled up’ on one another than in the most populous quarters of the capital.³⁶ The workers of Lille, for Villermé, were the most miserable in all of France.

In the second volume, Villermé moved on to discuss what he saw as the result of these terrible physical housing conditions: moral depravity in the form of drunkenness, cohabitation, and all number of other vices.³⁷ The language here, unlike his earlier Parisian surveys, was no longer focused on hygienic and physical conditions drawn from statistical surveys. Instead, the rhetoric shifted to moral judgement, with Villermé drawing on his experience as ‘witness to his [the worker’s] vices and his virtues’, to intertwine personal, subjective observation with his continued accumulation and interpretation of statistics. While he generally approved of the conduct of the Lyonnais workers, Villermé was critical of the

³³ Ibid., i, pp. 24-8.

³⁴ Ibid., i, p. 27.

³⁵ Ibid., i, pp. 80-1.

³⁶ Ibid., i, p. 81.

³⁷ Ibid., ii, pp. 34-82.

workers' behaviour in the Haut-Rhin and the Nord: in cotton towns above all others.³⁸ The solution to these outrages, for Villermé, was simple: raising of wages, and an increase in industrial paternalism through savings schemes, schools, and improving work conditions.

These solutions did not spring fully-formed from Villermé, however, but were instead directly motivated by what he had witnessed already in action in Mulhouse. In the Haut-Rhin town, as we shall see in the following section, industrialists gathered around a *Société* and undertook studies on how to improve the condition of workers in their town. Part of the reason why Villermé's descriptions of Mulhouse were so detailed and vivid is because he relied heavily on the statistical surveys produced by members of this *Société* in the late 1820s and 1830s. When, therefore, Villermé praised the industrialists in Mulhouse for these early steps and called for their emulation elsewhere, he was actively acknowledging the role of provincial experts in dealing with local issues.³⁹

Despite the sensationally lurid depictions of the worst conditions he found, Villermé's two volumes together read as a display a liberal optimism for the future situation of the working classes.⁴⁰ Conditions were not terrible in every town and in every house, he argued, and in fact most had improved in the past two decades. The worst housing conditions were having a dangerously pernicious impact on the moral condition of workers, this was undeniable, and emphasised throughout the *Tableau*. And yet, for Villermé, the solution lay not in the hands of an overreaching state and radical change but, rather, in the hands of local industrialists, who could solve their local issues through improved wages and paternalism.⁴¹

³⁸ Coleman, *Death is a Social Disease*, p. 218; La Berge, *Mission and Method*, p. 166.

³⁹ Villermé, *Tableau*, i, pp. 57-9; La Berge, *Mission and Method*, p. 176.

⁴⁰ La Berge, *Mission and Method*, pp. 170-1.

⁴¹ Villermé, *Tableau*, i, pp. 57-9.

By 1840, when *Tableau* was published, Villermé had brought the weight of his statistical analysis and rhetoric to highlight the impacts of poor housing and poverty on both health and morality, and to bring the housing question to the forefront of public debate. *Tableau* was hugely influential, both for Villermé's peers and for subsequent historians who have looked to it for examples of working-class life in early nineteenth-century France. Villermé's methods and marrying of statistic 'fact' with subjective opinion have been the subject of debate.⁴² But what cannot be denied is the importance of local studies – both in terms of their findings and the perspective they gave on different conditions in France – in driving Villermé's work.

The following section will focus on the years after the publication of *Tableau*, and will consider the actions of local experts whose work Villermé had relied upon in the 1830s. Through the 1840s, these local statisticians and reformers disagreed with Villermé's 'optimistic' solution, instead declaring that the urgency of the housing question required a stronger solution than merely higher wages. While Villermé concluded that the solution lay in the hands of local industrialists or charitable bodies, these same figures increasingly concluded that their actions would only be meaningful when coupled with legislative change to tackle the housing

⁴² Some of the main criticisms of Villermé's work come from William M. Reddy, William H. Sewell, and Paul Rabinow. Reddy has dramatically claimed that 'thousands of people' over the years have been 'fooled by... abundant detail' in the work in assuming that the depiction Villermé presented was objectively true, while all three historians assert that Villermé was pursuing a moralistic ulterior motive that skewed his results and meant that he manipulated the emotions of his readers. William M. Reddy, *The Rise of Market Culture: The Textile Trade and French Society, 1750-1900* (Cambridge, 1984), especially pp. 153-6, 171-2, 180; Paul Rabinow, *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment* (Cambridge MA, 1989), p. 63; William H. Sewell, *Work and Revolution in France: The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 223-32. Ann La Berge, however, convincingly defends the accusation that Villermé had preconceived notions that his research was designed to prove, by drawing a similar conclusion of the work of Villermé's British contemporary and counterpart, Edwin Chadwick and his report of 1842: Villermé was, for La Berge, not an outlier compared to his contemporaries' approach to social research. La Berge also uses evidence from Villermé's private letters to cast doubt on Reddy's portrait of Villermé as a 'manipulator of readers' emotions' and that his moral outrage was 'feigned for stylistic effect', instead showing how it is possible that Villermé's shock was real, and important for contextualising his rhetoric and tone. La Berge, *Mission and Method*, pp. 178-9.

question. By the end of the 1840s, this provincial-driven agitation for legislative action culminated in the Melun Law, showing that interaction with housing at the local level could have a national impact.

Local knowledge and national debate in the 1840s

The work of Villermé and his peers writing for the Parisian journal *Annales d'hygiène publique* helped establish the importance of 'public health' concerns on the national, political scale by 1840. Rather than focused on educating the public, these mostly-voluntary hygienists were, according to public health historian Ann La Berge, 'more interested in influencing the organs of government and their own professional colleagues'.⁴³ Many of these 'professional colleagues' were grouped around Paris, due to what William Coleman calls its 'manifold singularities': its size compared to other French cities, its history as the site of repeated recent bloody insurrections, the prestige of its education institutions, and the centrality of the city to French government.⁴⁴ But, while key figures coalesced around the Parisian journal, the movement was still 'national in scope' as we saw from the way that local experts influenced Villermé's study. What's more, much of the responsibility for conducting research into public health issues before the Second Republic took place in the provinces, where local differences nuanced the Parisian-centric image.⁴⁵ In the immediate lead-up to legislation on housing in the early 1850s, there was therefore not a single 'Parisian' experience of housing and hygienic concerns and a single, homogenous 'provincial' experience: the diversity of local knowledge

⁴³ Ann La Berge, 'The early nineteenth-century French public health movement : the disciplinary development and institutionalization of Hygiène Publique', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 58, 3 (Fall 1984), p. 368.

⁴⁴ Coleman, *Death is a Social Disease*, pp. 35-6, 41.

⁴⁵ La Berge, *Mission and Method*, pp. 1, 19-24.

accumulated by these experts revealed that there was neither a unique 'housing question', nor an exclusive solution.

In Lyon, France's second city, there was a vibrant community of public health innovators within and alongside local government, both before and after Villermé's visit in the mid-1830s. The municipal side of this is perhaps best exemplified by the work of two mayors in the July Monarchy: Gabriel Prunelle (mayor between 1830-5) and Jean-François Terme (1840-7). Both men were qualified doctors before entering municipal government. Prunelle, a military doctor during the Napoleonic Wars like Villermé, pioneered work in Lyon into several issues concerning the working classes, particularly children's education.⁴⁶ In 1831, he was responsible for a series of wide-ranging preventative hygienic measures as cholera approached French borders, including the rationalisation of Lyon into seven '*secteurs sanitaires*' and a street-by-street scheme of inspection and disinfection.⁴⁷

Terme, who had served as deputy mayor under Prunelle, became mayor after attaining a reputation as an enterprising and reform-focused administrator at the *Hospices Civils* in Lyon.⁴⁸ He worked with other hygienists to study social and hygienic issues, including co-authoring detailed studies of orphans between 1838 and 1840, while his most important legacy to the city was a scheme in the 1840s to bring clean drinking water to Lyon and its *faubourgs*.⁴⁹ Both mayors, while members of the government 'establishment', brought their expertise as medical

⁴⁶ Nicolas Carrière, 'La vie de Gabriel Prunelle, médecin et maire de Lyon de 1830-1835', (M.D. thesis, Université Claude Bernard - Lyon 1, 2015), pp. 56, 86.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 91-107.

⁴⁸ Thomas Bouffet, 'Jean-François Terme, médecin hygiéniste et maire de Lyon de 1840-1847', (M.D. thesis, Université Claude Bernard - Lyon 1, 2014), p. 52.

⁴⁹ Jean-François Terme and Jean-Baptiste Monfalcon, *Nouvelles considérations sur les enfants trouvés* (Lyon, 1838); Bouffet, 'Jean-François Terme', pp. 112, 124-5.

professionals to take action on issues that directly affected the health of the poor in Lyon, rather than just pen studies or assemble statistics.

While these two mayors were undertaking practical changes to Lyon that were aimed at improving the physical condition of the workers, there were also groups of medical professionals who combined study with conjecture to propose solutions for working-class health issues. One of the more radical works produced in this period was a study of prostitution and syphilis by the venereologist Ariste Potton, published in 1842.⁵⁰ Potton's work combined detailed investigation of the medical impacts of syphilis with an accompanying focus on the moral impact of prostitution and his proposed solutions to the problem. For Potton, socio-economic conditions were the root cause. To reduce his argument to a chain of causality: poverty led women to prostitution and men to prostitutes, which in turn led to syphilis, followed by a loss of income for heads of households, culminating in a lower standard of living for already poverty-stricken working-class families. While careful to spell out that this was intended to be a medical report, rather than political tract, Potton posited that the solution to the dangers of prostitution was the targeting of the socio-economic conditions that 'cause or maintain it'.⁵¹ Potton was critical of the government and local authorities, who had been limited in their responses so far.⁵² For Potton, supposedly in his medical opinion as a venereologist, it would only be through a complete reformation of society, the elimination of poverty, and the drastic improvement in the condition of working-class men and women that the medical and moral woes of prostitution and syphilis would be eradicated.⁵³

⁵⁰ François Ferdinand Ariste Potton, *De la prostitution et de la syphilis dans le grandes villes, dans la ville de Lyon en particulier* (Lyon, 1842).

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 239, 284.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 175-6, 231-2.

⁵³ La Berge, *Mission and Method*, pp. 3, 226.

Potton's solution was radical, but his study was widely read. It was based on Lyonnais investigations, yet spoke to wider social issues. Later in the 1840s, another key treatise produced by practising medical experts placed Lyonnais concerns even more centrally. The Lyonnais doctors Jean-Baptiste Monfalcon and Auguste-Pierre-Isidore de Polinière published in 1846 a two-part treatise focused on 'salubrity in the great towns, followed [by] the hygiene of Lyon'.⁵⁴ The first half was a treatise on urban health in general, covering topics from cubic metres of air in dormitories to the management of cemeteries, from Greco-Roman times to present day, and from Paris and London to Ulm and Newport.⁵⁵ But even in this first general section, which was meant to be an overview, the two constantly gravitated back to Lyon as exhibiting some of the most promising developments in tackling insalubrity.⁵⁶ In a section on public urinals, for example, the two wrote with pride that 'we have seen the public latrines of London, Paris, and some other capitals; nowhere are they made with so much solidity and intelligence as in Lyon, where they have attained the perfection of the genus'.⁵⁷

Like their contemporaries, Monfalcon and Polinière dedicated a large portion of their work on hygienic conditions to describing working-class housing. They acknowledged, following Villermé, that workers may be better housed, clothed, and fed in general in the mid-1840s than they had been thirty years prior, but they qualified this acknowledgement by asserting that this did not deny the very real misery still encountered by the working classes.⁵⁸ One of their concluding remarks was that the working-class home is where 'all the causes of

⁵⁴ Jean-Baptiste Monfalcon and Augustin-Pierre-Isidore de Polinière, *Traité de la salubrité dans les grandes villes; suivi de l'hygiène de Lyon* (Paris, 1846).

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 112, 149, 216.

⁵⁶ Monfalcon had worked together with the mayor Terme on his work on orphans, so had a personal stake in the success of the Lyonnais municipal public health initiatives: Terme and Monfalcon, *Nouvelles considérations sur les enfants trouvés*.

⁵⁷ Monfalcon and Polinière, *Traité de la salubrité*, p. 112.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 390.

insalubrity are gathered', which served to bookend the proposal made early in the tract that '[t]rue glory for a municipal council is to improve the material condition of workers by putting healthy dwellings at their disposal'.⁵⁹ Unlike Potton's radical call for a largescale socioeconomic overhaul, the two doctors instead urged for legislation that would give greater powers to municipal councils in dealing with housing conditions.⁶⁰

Lyon therefore had a diverse public health community in the 1840s, with members of both the political establishment and private medical officials all contributing to an identification of local concerns and solutions. While these solutions ranged from increased powers for municipal councils to complete socio-political upheaval to tackle poverty, the Lyonnais public health community agreed that it was the working-class house that was the source of many hygienic and moral deficiencies and which, therefore, should be the primary focus for improvement. This concern with working-class housing echoed Villermé's conclusions but what was different in Lyon was the consensus that in order to confront the poor physical conditions that accompanied poverty, what was needed was political action, ideally in the form of increased political decentralisation and power in the hands of local officials. This contrasts to Villermé's proposal for philanthropic industrialists to lead the way. In a city which, time and time again, was defined by its opposition to the yoke of Parisian rule, it is perhaps not surprising to see Lyon's hygienists argue for more devolution of power to the provinces regarding the housing question.

To the north-east, in Mulhouse, there was a similar combination of local government and private interaction regarding housing issues in the 1830s and 1840s. Lyon had a population almost eight times the size of Mulhouse's in 1840, yet Mulhouse was one of the fastest

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 38, 390.

⁶⁰ La Berge, *Mission and Method*, p. 39.

growing towns in the country because of its dynamic cotton industry (fig. 0.1). As a result, as Villermé had observed, the poorest workers who came to staff these growing factories lived in miserable conditions. While Mulhouse's Restoration mayors such as André Kœchlin (mayor 1830-2, 1832-43) and Émile Dollfus (mayor 1843-8) made important contributions to the government of the growing town and management of its increasing working-class population, the most notable and unique contribution of Mulhouse came from its *Société industrielle*.

Founded in 1826 by twenty-two young industrialists, the *Société industrielle de Mulhouse* (SIM) would go on to become what Paul Rabinow has called 'one of the most important loci of reform thought and practice in the nineteenth century'.⁶¹

SIM had a number of foundation goals that dictated the actions its members took over the following decades: the 'advancement and propagation of industry', the creation of a library and monthly bulletin, the establishment of a prize for industrial and scientific inventors and, most importantly, the cultivation and consolidation in the workers of a love for work.⁶² SIM fast became central not only to the associational activity of the Protestant industrial elite in Mulhouse, but also to the very identity of the town itself. Mayors and heads of industry alike were prominent members of SIM, and when the bourgeois neo-classical *Nouveau Quartier* was built to the south of the medieval centre of Mulhouse from 1826, the building for SIM formed one of the three main frontages of the public square.⁶³

⁶¹ Rabinow, *French Modern*, pp. 95-6. There are numerous detailed studies of the actions of the Société, which is still in operation today. Florence Ott has published two works on the Société, during the French and German periods respectively: Florence Ott, *La Société industrielle de Mulhouse, 1826-1876 : ses membres, son action, ses réseaux* (Strasbourg, 1999); Florence Ott, *La Société industrielle de Mulhouse au temps de l'Empire allemand, 1871-1918* (Mulhouse, 2004). For details of the Société's developments in scientific study as well as its philanthropic action, see Robert Fox's work in Fox, 'Presidential address', pp. 143-5 and Robert Fox, *The Savant and the State: Science and Cultural Politics in Nineteenth-Century France* (Baltimore MD, 2012), pp. 103-7. For the role of the Société within Mulhousian bourgeois associational life, see Harrison, *Bourgeois Citizen*, especially pp. 34-7, 59.

⁶² ADHR 9 M 18, 'Règlements de la Société industrielle de Mulhausen', s.d.

⁶³ Ott, *La Société industrielle de Mulhouse, 1826-1876*, p. 101.

The peculiar nature of Mulhouse's 'fabricantocracy' helped spur SIM to success in its work. SIM was, officially, a separate entity from the municipal council. However, the appointed mayors in this period were drawn from the same leading Calvinist families that had dominated industry and had governed Mulhouse when it had been an independent city-state.⁶⁴ These families – particularly the Dollfus, Kœchlin, and Schlumberger – were knitted together not only through shared history and denomination but also through a web of complex intermarriages, reflected in the names of the town's textile industries: Kœchlin Frères, Dollfus-Mieg et C^{ie}, Kœchlin-Dollfus et C^{ie}, Thierry-Mieg et C^{ie}, to name just a few.⁶⁵ These familial relations meant that not only was SIM closely aligned with business and municipal elites, but also that the members of SIM who belonged to companies that might elsewhere in France be expected to be competing with one another would be more amenable to the kinds of pan-company philanthropic or paternalist endeavours that SIM promoted.⁶⁶ Robert Fox has described how SIM's activities were 'no empty charade', and that the close familial ties meant that co-operation on SIM's work 'transcended such frail boundaries as existed between individual firms'.⁶⁷

SIM was primarily made up of industrialists with a scientific or social interest, rather than strictly medical specialists. In the fifty-year period 1826-76, 44.2% of *membres ordinaires* were manufacturers, as opposed to just 1.7% who were medical professionals.⁶⁸ And yet, this group

⁶⁴ Three of the six presidents that presided over SIM between 1826 and 1911 bore the name Dollfus; Emile Dollfus, mayor between 1843-8 was also concurrently president of SIM from 1834-58. Ibid., pp. 13, 145.

⁶⁵ David Allen Harvey, *Constructing Class and Nationality in Alsace, 1830-1945* (DeKalb IL, 2001), pp. 17, 22.

⁶⁶ Michel Hau uses the example of the founding of the *École de chimie de Mulhouse* by the chemists Daniel Dollfus-Ausset and Daniel Kœchlin-Schouch. Although these two men belonged to rival textile firms, the fact that they were cousins and members of SIM facilitated their co-operation and the successful founding of the first French school of chemistry. Michel Hau, *L'Industrialisation de l'Alsace (1803-1939)* (Strasbourg, 1987), p. 400.

⁶⁷ Fox, 'Presidential address', p. 145.

⁶⁸ Ott, *La Société industrielle de Mulhouse, 1826-1876*, p. 227.

would be responsible for commissioning medical studies and philanthropic schemes that would gain national attention well into the Second Empire. Its members founded technical schools for the town's workers and an asylum for the blind; they launched studies on infant mortality and pioneered crèches for working mothers, and, as we shall see in more detail throughout this thesis, debates at the SIM launched one of the most important and pioneering housing schemes in nineteenth-century Europe.⁶⁹ While it is undeniable that these schemes were motivated to a large degree by the industrialists' personal interest – wanting to keep their workforce happy and healthy – this should not detract from the fact that this group was operating independently from the central state and regional government. What's more, SIM's work in the 1820s and 1830s gained it a reputation that extended far beyond the confines of the growing Alsatian town.⁷⁰

As we saw in the previous section, such was the reputation of the SIM that Villermé drew special attention to it in his 1840 *Tableau*. He had drawn upon the 1828 statistical work of one of SIM's early members, Dr Achille Penot, during his discussion of workers' conditions in Mulhouse.⁷¹ But Villermé not only used SIM as a source of local statistical data: he admired their associational paternalism as a model for emulation throughout France, and was even

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 459. For more about the impact of the specifically local conditions and structure of the Mulhousian elite milieu on the later success of the housing scheme, see Clement, "The 'unrealizable chimera'", pp. 66-85.

⁷⁰ The national impact of SIM as a source for social and medical innovation can be shown by subscription lists to annual reports of its activity. Alphonse Kœchlin's foundation of an asylum for the blind at nearby Ilzach in 1857 offers an illustration of this wide interest. In the 1857-8 report, Mulhouse accounted for 9,050 Fr. of the 13,624.30 Fr. total subscriptions, with other subscriptions coming from twelve additional towns only, primarily in Alsace and neighbouring Franche-Comté, Basel, Westphalia and Württemberg. By 1862-3, however, Mulhouse's share of the 12,287.15 Fr. had shrunk to 6,419 Fr., with subscriptions coming from forty-one other towns, as far afield as Paris, Rouen and London. ADHR, 3X 1, Annual reports of the asylum for the blind, 1857-63.

⁷¹ Villermé referenced Penot's *Discours sur quelques recherches statistique comparée, faites sur la ville de Mulhouse*, which was presented at the SIM in September 1828. Villermé, *Tableau*, ii, p. 249. Penot continued to be an active contributor of statistical reports to the SIM: Achille Penot, *Recherches statistiques sur Mulhouse. Discours lus à la Société industrielle de cette ville* (Mulhouse, 1843).

made an honorary member during his visit in 1835.⁷² As we saw above, Villermé envisaged industrial paternalism modelled after the Mulhousian industrialists as one of the main proposed solutions to the poor condition of workers in France. His call for other towns to follow their work naively neglected the distinctly local characteristics that facilitated their success in Mulhouse in the first place. Nowhere else in France was there such a closely-intertwined, denominationally distinct group, whose dominance of municipal governance and industry made large-scale independent studies and philanthropic schemes possible. While SIM might have seemed to have been a distinctly separate and private associational group, its numerous overlaps of personnel, leaders, and priorities with the Mulhousian municipal government made it unique to the Alsatian textile town.

While, in the 1840s, Villermé was praising the SIM's existing work and calling for its emulation throughout other industrial centres in France, his publication of the poor condition of housing in Mulhouse embarrassed the industrial elite.⁷³ The *Société* doubled down on its efforts to improve the condition of their workers, culminating in a series of debates about developing new housing construction in the early 1850s, which we shall examine in the final section of this chapter.

In Mulhouse, the enlightened industrialists were embarrassed by how bad Villermé's depiction of their workers made their town look; elsewhere in France, there were some who felt Villermé had underestimated the problem, and had not been harsh enough. In the Nord, where Villermé had claimed there had been a gradual improvement in conditions over the past few decades despite its miserable appearance in the mid-1830s, the Lillois physician Jean-Pierre Thouvenin argued that Villermé was wrong, and that conditions were as bad as they

⁷² Stéphane Jonas, *Mulhouse et ses cités ouvrières* (Strasbourg, 2003), pp. 49-50.

⁷³ Fox, 'Presidential address', p. 184.

had always been, if not worse.⁷⁴ While in Lyon and in Mulhouse we have considered experts dealing with local issues at the municipal level, Thouvenin sought to bring his local expertise to bear on the national level, by responding to Villermé's work in the Parisian journal *Annales publique d'hygiène*.⁷⁵ Thouvenin wrote an extensive report on the impact of industry on the health of workers in industrial cities in 1846, in which he built on Villermé's *Tableau*, but from the perspective of a local doctor and by drawing on his own local knowledge of the condition of workers in Lille. While housing conditions for the poorest workers in towns like Mulhouse might be as bad as Villermé had portrayed, Thouvenin argued they 'by no means approach the revolting filthiness' of those in Lille.⁷⁶ Even the physiognomy of Lillois workers, for Thouvenin, had been irrevocably altered a result of the drastic housing problems. He described the workers as 'generally small, pale, scrawny, and present[ing] a physical and moral state [which is] inferior to the workers in the factories of Rouen, Mulhouse, Lyon'.⁷⁷

Thouvenin used the example of the nearby towns to contrast with Lille. Roubaix and Tourcoing were apparently vastly different to Lille, with 'many long and large streets offering a series of houses... Around half of the workers live in happy little houses built for them in the suburbs'.⁷⁸ This was a somewhat idealised vision of workers' housing conditions in Roubaix (as we shall see in the following chapter), and certainly not one that was to last into the Second Empire with the continued population growth. But by juxtaposing this image of workers in Roubaix and Tourcoing with the conditions he was familiar with in Lille, Thouvenin sought to emphasize the pitiable conditions in his own city.

⁷⁴ La Berge, *Mission and Method*, p. 175.

⁷⁵ Jean-Pierre Thouvenin, 'De l'influence que l'industrie exerce sur la santé des populations dans les grands centres manufacturiers', *Annales d'hygiène publique*, 36, (1846), pp. 16-46, 277-96.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 288.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 282.

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 283-4.

Thouvenin operated in the same professional milieu as Villermé and the other Parisian hygienists who contributed to the *Annales d'hygiène publique*, but he offered a view that was built wholly upon provincial knowledge. Unlike in Lyon and in Mulhouse, where the work of individuals like Monfalçon and Polinière or the SIM sought to assert that their cities were already active and ahead of others in the country in dealing with the housing problem, Thouvenin's aim seems to have been to solidify the image of Lille as the most unhygienic and awful city in the country, with comparisons used to make Lille look worse, rather than better. Nevertheless, when it came to concluding his study, Thouvenin agreed with Villermé that the best course of action to solve the worst conditions of the workers was through emulating groups such as the *Société industrielle de Mulhouse* and encouraging factory owners, rather than the state, to take a greater responsibility for caring for their workers and setting a standard for moral behaviour.⁷⁹

Thouvenin's agreement with Villermé on the need for industrialist voluntary action as opposed to state legislation represented only one of the responses advocated in the Nord. Instead of Protestant industrialists, who drove efforts to improve workers' conditions in Mulhouse through SIM, the associational response in the Nord came instead from the social Catholics grouped around the de Melun twins and their approach to modern charitable activity.

The twins Armand and Anatole de Melun were born in 1807, in Brumetz, Aisne, the department just south of the Nord. The two were raised in a family where charitable action was seen as one of the most important ways of expressing one's faith.⁸⁰ As adults, Armand in

⁷⁹ La Berge, *Mission and Method*, pp. 175-6.

⁸⁰ Amédée d'Andigné, *Armand de Melun : un apôtre de la charité, 1807-1877* (Paris, 1961), pp. 21, 57.

particular was one of the leading members of the social Catholicism movement, dedicating his life to the eradication of misery.⁸¹ In 1841, Armand declared that the only solution to the 'social problem' was through charity, and that this charity must be inspired by religion that was unfettered by politics.⁸² Later in the decade, between 1845-6, the twins founded the *Société d'économie charitable* to bring together other like-minded individuals to pursue this goal.⁸³ Armand set his sights beyond France. In 1847, at an international congress on prison conditions in Brussels organised by the Belgian reformer Édouard Ducpétiaux, Armand brought together European and American delegates and urged them to consider forming an international association to improve the condition of the poor.⁸⁴

Despite their international ambitions, the twins initially focused on trying to organise relief and alleviation through independent Catholic groups, rather than through government action. This changed following the revolution of 1848, when the workers were enfranchised. Armand argued in an 1849 tract titled 'Of the intervention of society to prevent and alleviate poverty' that improving the physical condition of workers was now not only a moral or 'social question', but also a political one.⁸⁵ Like his brother, who had described 'the question of housing' as the most urgent when he spoke to the general council in Lille the previous November, Armand lamented that the most miserable housing conditions in France were concentrated on the great industrial centres. In the houses in these towns, which were 'burrows rather than dwellings', Armand declared that 'human creatures with haggard faces

⁸¹ Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *Les Débuts du catholicisme social en France, 1822-1870* (Paris, 1951), pp. 184-5, 209-10, 464.

⁸² M. l'abbé Baunard, *Le Vicomte Armand de Melun : d'après ses mémoires et sa correspondance* (Paris, 1880), pp. 165-6.

⁸³ Timothy B. Smith, 'The ideology of charity, the image of the English Poor Law, and debates over the right to assistance in France, 1830-1905', *The Historical Journal*, 40, 4 (1997), p. 1008.

⁸⁴ d'Andigné, *Armand de Melun*, p. 203.

⁸⁵ Armand de Melun, *De l'intervention de la société pour prévenir et soulager la misère* (Paris, 1849), p. 1.

and shrivelled, spindly limbs vegetate, suffer, and die'.⁸⁶ When cholera returned once more to France in 1849, his brother Anatole passionately argued once again to the departmental council of the Nord that poor physical and hygienic conditions were 'one of the principal causes of the illnesses which decimate the wretched classes'.⁸⁷ As he had when he spoke to the council in November the previous year, Anatole once again called for improved legislation that could tackle these awful conditions.

When representing the current condition of housing in the Nord, the de Melun twins adopted a similar perspective to Thouvenin. But when it came to solutions, their goal was legislative reform motivated by fervent Catholic belief: the de Melun twins argued the duty for dealing with the problem of poverty lay in the hands of an expanded public assistance programme and housing reform legislation. Anatole was elected deputy of the Nord in 1849, his brother Armand as deputy of Ille-et-Vilaine, and the two of them began to work on proposing legislation that could radically change the way that government interacted with public assistance. At first glance, this focus on legislation and political change appears similar to the conclusions reached by hygienists in Lyon. However, the twins' focus on social Catholicism – effectively bringing the state into the management of previously private religious charity – was met with ardent opposition from politicians who disagreed with the notion of public assistance programmes.

In fact, the social Catholics gathered around the de Meluns were almost unique in their pursuit of direct government intervention in charitable action in nineteenth-century France. As we have seen, hygienists such as Villermé or Thouvenin were more concerned with

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁸⁷ AN F 8 210, 'Département du Nord: Extrait du Registre aux Délibérations du Conseil général', 4 Sep. 1849.

illustration than legislation; describing poor conditions but calling for employers to take up the mantle of improving them. Timothy B. Smith has shown that Armand de Melun was a 'rare proponent of national public assistance programmes'; the majority of his peers, Catholics, conservatives, and liberals alike, opposed any state charity that appeared similar to the 'Poor Law' model in Britain. These opponents feared that the British model eradicated individual, voluntary charitable initiative, replacing it by tax-funded government action.⁸⁸ Alexis de Tocqueville, after visiting England, expressed his belief in his 1835 *Mémoire sur le paupérisme* that replacing private charity with state-mandated public assistance would create 'more miseries than it can cure' as it broke a potential constructive relationship between the classes.⁸⁹ It was assumed, by detractors, that if the state took on a greater role in public assistance then it would somehow inhibit private, religious charity. In early 1849, Michel Chevalier articulated this assumption when he defended the need for continued private charity in a speech to the *Collège de France*. Chevalier claimed that, if one was obliged to finance state public assistance, charitable individuals would essentially be reduced to taxpayers. By removing the voluntary, piously-motivated sphere of private charity and replacing it with taxpayer-funded public assistance programmes, Chevalier argued, 'the bond of reciprocal friendship' that was forged between the poor and their allies who volunteered in charitable activity would be eliminated.⁹⁰

As we saw in the opening to this chapter, the de Melun twins were successful in overcoming this obstinate opposition, and were able to pass the law of 13 April 1850 on *logements insalubres*

⁸⁸ Smith, 'The ideology of charity', pp. 1000, 1007-10. Frances Gouda has also shown how the English Poor Law was opposed by French and Dutch social reformers alike, for its movement of charitable action away from 'an integral component of a community grounded in spiritual, moral values', Frances Gouda, *Poverty and Political Culture: The Rhetoric of Social Welfare in the Netherlands and France, 1815-1854* (Lanham, MD, 1995), pp. 158-65.

⁸⁹ Alexis de Tocqueville, quoted in Smith, 'The ideology of charity', p. 1006.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 1010.

in France after a series of impassioned debates in the National Assembly. During these debates, reports like Villermé's were used to emphasise physical and moral impacts on poor housing throughout France.⁹¹ Through this law, municipalities throughout France could now create *commissions des logements insalubres*, armed with myriad unprecedented powers, to inspect and regulate poor quality housing. These commissions could visit the homes of workers and decide to declare poor housing unfit for habitation if improvements were not made. The opponents to state assistance in the National Assembly had reduced the scope of the Melun Law, by making the formation of these commissions optional, rather than mandatory, and by staffing them with local volunteers but, still, the foundations had been laid to move towards solving the housing question.

The Melun Law of 1850 encapsulated the variety of different attitudes towards solving the housing problem that were forged through a combination of Parisian and provincial figures. This was an act of government, but one that passed greater initiative and powers to local government, as those in Lyon had hoped. It required local volunteers who had both the desire to improve conditions as well as the knowledge and expertise of the local area, which combined the models of the SIM or the social Catholics. As we shall see in Chapter 3, far from creating a single, national solution to the housing problem, the Melun Law empowered individuals in provincial cities for whom the housing question was uniquely local.

Inspirations for new housing construction

The Melun Law was wholly concerned with the management and improvement of existing poor housing stock; there was no provision for the construction of new housing. Discussion

⁹¹ Gustave Jourdan, *Législation sur les logements insalubres* (Paris, 1880), pp. 166, 171, 200-1; Bourillon, 'La loi du 13 avril 1850', p. 118; Kalff, *Le Logement insalubre*, p. 38.

of this problem – how to replace stock deemed too unhealthy, or to build new housing to improve conditions from scratch – ran parallel to debates on reforming existing housing in the 1840s and early 1850s. Ideal reformed housing would be clean, cheap, and comfortable for the workers, and would combine the kind of private initiatives that Villermé and Thouvenin had called for with support from a sympathetic government. But there were several obstacles to overcome: how could the government support schemes that would intervene so directly with the private market? How could housing be inexpensive for workers without making a loss for their patrons? What form of workers' housing would best be suited to tackle the urgency of the moral and physical concerns of the housing question? To this last point, French utopians such as Charles Fourier had envisaged grand *phalanstères*: blocks of housing that could accommodate 1,600 workers. Of course, in Fourier's utopian vision, this form of housing would accompany a communalisation of all housing alongside other facets of modern life, as society would be reorganised radically.⁹² This was not going to be a practical model for immediate relief of the housing question in Second Republic and Second Empire France. So where, then, were reformers to turn to for models for emulation?

Across the channel, there had been an active model housing movement in Britain since the early 1840s that would inspire imitation not only in France, but in Germany and the United States as the century drew on.⁹³ The figure central to this movement, described by historian John Nelson Tarn as 'a real pioneer of housing design, the father of the whole working class

⁹² Charles Fourier, *Cités ouvrières. Des modifications à introduire dans l'architecture des villes* (Extrait de *la Phalange, revue de la science sociale*) (Paris, 1849), pp. 17-25; Leonardo Benevolo, *The Origins of Modern Town Planning* (London, 1967), pp. 56-62.

⁹³ Franziska Bollery and Kristina Hartmann, 'A patriarchal utopia: the garden city and housing reform in Germany at the turn of the century', in Anthony Sutcliffe (ed.), *The Rise of Modern Urban Planning, 1800-1914* (London, 1980), pp. 135-65; Cynthia Zaitzevsky, 'Housing Boston's poor: the first philanthropic experiments', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 42, 2 (1983), pp. 157-67; Thomas Adam, *Buying Respectability: Philanthropy and Urban Society in Transnational Perspective, 1840s to 1930s* (Bloomington IN, 2009).

movement', was the architect Henry Roberts.⁹⁴ Roberts worked with the two London-based limited dividend model housing companies, the Metropolitan Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Industrious Classes (MAIDIC, 1841) and the Society for Improving the Conditions of the Labouring Classes (SICLC, 1844).⁹⁵ One of the key innovations of Roberts's housing companies was in their approach to financing new constructions. The goal of these companies was philanthropic, but not wholly altruistic. The houses designed by Roberts and built by these companies would be financed by shareholders, who would receive a five-percent return on their investment. This was a return much lower than the market norm, but a return nonetheless. Investors could therefore be enticed by the prospect of making a small profit, and workers would be able to benefit from the high quality buildings and comparatively low rents that a small dividend would entail.⁹⁶ This financing model came to be known as 'five percent philanthropy'.

It was not just in financial structuring that these companies innovated. Each of the blocks of accommodation that Roberts constructed was different; each was intended to serve as a model of what was possible, as an inspiration for further development, rather than as a unitary blueprint.⁹⁷ Soon, the work of Roberts and his societies drew the attention of Prince Albert. Roberts and the SICLC wanted to display their work at the Great Exhibition, with a series of drawings and plans accompanied by a scale-model house. The organising committee for the Exhibition did not want such a large exhibit, nor the expense of constructing one. The prince consort, who had been closely following the work of Roberts and his colleagues, overrode the committee and financed the construction himself.⁹⁸ The model Roberts built in 1850, outside

⁹⁴ John Nelson Tarn, *Five Per Cent Philanthropy: An Account of Housing in Urban Areas Between 1840 and 1914* (Cambridge, 1973), p. 16.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁹⁶ Adam, *Buying Respectability*, p. 46.

⁹⁷ Tarn, *Five Per Cent Philanthropy*, pp. 15-16.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-1.

the main exhibition hall in Hyde Park, was a block of four dwellings, arranged with two at the ground floor and two at the first floor.

Roberts accompanied this construction with a detailed treatise, *The Dwellings of the Labouring Classes*.⁹⁹ This work outlined some of the architectural details of buildings already constructed by SICLC, as well as serving as an illustration of the Great Exhibition model. But it was not just a descriptive work: this was a manifesto for the kind of housing construction that Roberts felt was necessary to tackle the modern housing problem. Current workers were in such a ‘wide extent of wretchedness’ because of the failings of poor housing. Poor ventilation, drainage and supply of water, combined with ‘a system of over-crowding that would not be tolerated in the farm-yard, the stable, or even the dog-kennel’ meant that it was impossible to ‘promote the comfort and moral training of a well-ordered family’ without drastic reform.¹⁰⁰

Roberts carefully prescribed the ideals of this reformed housing, from minimum ceiling heights to improve air circulation (ideally no less than 7’6” in the country, and 9’ minimum in urban townhouses) to the ‘preservation of domestic privacy and independence of each distinct family’ in blocks of accommodation and the ‘separating of the sexes’ (which was ‘so essential to morality and decency’) within individual dwellings themselves.¹⁰¹ Reformed housing, for Roberts, would be designed to improve the physical and hygienic conditions of workers, but they should also improve their moral condition. He was able to reinforce his prescriptions with reference to how his housing in London had fared under a recent cholera epidemic. The model house that he had constructed on George Street in Bloomsbury, containing accommodation for 104 working men, escaped with just a handful of cases of mild

⁹⁹ Henry Roberts, *The Dwellings of the Labouring Classes, Their Arrangements and Construction* (London, 1850).

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 10, 21.

diarrhoea, compared with the 'the cholera [which] was ravaging to a fearful extent the filthy and over-crowded receptacles in its immediate neighbourhood'.¹⁰² Here was a pendant to Villermé's study of the '*maisons garnies*' in Paris following the cholera epidemic of 1832: new housing construction along hygienic lines that would overcome the social environment of poverty that encouraged disease and mortality.

Prince Albert was not the only leader who watched Roberts's developments with interest. During his exile in London between 1846-8, Louis Napoléon had followed the housing reform movement in England closely before his return to France in September 1848.¹⁰³ As president of the Second Republic, Louis Napoléon had Roberts's *The Dwellings of the Labouring Classes* translated in 1850.¹⁰⁴ The government drew up a list of 379 names of people who requested a copy, or who the central ministry deemed required one.¹⁰⁵ Louis Napoléon wanted to compete with Prince Albert, who had signalled his commitment to improved housing through his association with Roberts, so the prince president ensured the front page of the translation bore the message 'translated and published by order of the President of the Republic'.¹⁰⁶ In previous sections of this chapter, we have seen the complicated web of different levels of government and society that formed the debate over housing and public health in the 1840s: here, the head of the French state was clearly staking his claim for a key role in reformed housing.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁰³ Rabinow, *French Modern*, p. 84.

¹⁰⁴ Benevolo, *The Origins of Modern Town Planning*, pp. 118-9; Georges Teyssot, 'The disease of the domicile', *Assemblage*, 6, (1988), p. 81; Bullock and Read, *The Movement for Housing Reform*, p. 295.

¹⁰⁵ AN F 8 210, List of names of those who received the translation, s.d. (1850).

¹⁰⁶ Henry Roberts, *Des Habitations des classes ouvrières... Traduit et publié par ordre du Président de la République*, trans. [Unknown] (Paris, 1850); Guerrand and Quilliot, *Une Europe en construction*, p. 34.

Louis Napoléon's commitment to reformed housing was not limited to this translation. At the beginning of 1849, M. Chabert established the *Société des cités ouvrières de Paris*.¹⁰⁷ Chabert commissioned the architect Gabriel Veugny to build a block of 194 flats, to house around five hundred people, on the *Rue Rochechouart*.¹⁰⁸ This block quickly drew the attention of Louis Napoléon, who subscribed his name to it in another attempt to vie with Prince Albert in terms of the patronage of workers' housing schemes.¹⁰⁹ While, in the long term, the scheme was unsuccessful, its name of *Cité Napoléon* indicated the support of the president for housing innovation. This was reinforced on 22 January 1852 when the now Emperor Napoléon III announced the donation of 10 million Fr. from confiscated Orléanist property to encourage the construction of new houses in 'large manufacturing cities'.¹¹⁰ This fund, combined with the translation of Henry Roberts and the patronage of the *Cité Napoléon*, set the tone for the Emperor's attitudes towards new construction of workers' housing in the Second Empire.

This brief overview of Louis Napoléon's involvement with reformed housing is only one side of the story. By analysing the reception of Roberts's work and the Orléanist fund in the provinces, we can see that Louis Napoléon was not leading the debate; he was merely running parallel to those innovating in the French periphery.

The government distributed the translation of Henry Roberts's treatise following a *circulaire* from the Minister for Agriculture and Commerce on 20 August 1850. This *circulaire* urged prefects to distribute the copies of the translated work to councils of hygiene in the

¹⁰⁷ Jean-Pierre Babelon, 'La rencontre de l'utopie et de l'ordre moral', in Roger Quilliot, Roger-Henri Guerrand, and Christian Thibault (eds.), *Cent ans d'habitat social : une utopie réaliste* (Paris, 1989), p. 27.

¹⁰⁸ 'Partie Officielle: Rapport à l'Empereur', *Le Constitutionnel* (Paris, France), 6 Apr. 1854; Bullock and Read, *The Movement for Housing Reform*, p. 312.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 312-3; Babelon, 'La rencontre de l'utopie', pp. 27-8.

¹¹⁰ 'Partie Officielle', *Le Moniteur Universel* (Paris, France), 23 Jan. 1852, p. 1.

department, but also to encourage directly the construction of model dwellings that might offer a French answer to Roberts's work in London.¹¹¹ The Parisian minister was inundated with requests for more copies than were originally sent out. The mayor of Amiens in the Somme asked for a copy before the distribution had begun so that the communal library could own a separate copy from the departmental one, while the prefect of Aisne asked for another forty copies in December 1850 so that every head of *canton* in his department could receive one.¹¹² These examples show there was evidently a public interest in housing beyond the confines of departmental government. In the Nord, where we have seen the urgency of the housing problem, the departmental authorities happily received the translation, which was discussed at a general council meeting in October 1850. The prefect of the Nord, Claude-Marius Vaïsse, wrote several times to the Minister for Agriculture and Commerce, asking for another twenty copies so that he might be able to distribute it more widely in the department; he finally received an apologetic reply in early December, stating that the demand was too high to be able to provide more than ten additional copies, which were enclosed.¹¹³

With the ubiquity of the housing problem, and the appeal of a document endorsed by the President of the Republic, it is unsurprising to see this eagerness on the part of some provincial government officers to distribute copies. The enthusiasm of provincial government authorities to distribute the work could be used to reinforce the idea of housing reform ideas spreading from the centre-out, tracing a direct line downwards and outwards through the bureaucratic levels of mid-century centralized France from Louis Napoléon down to the *canton*. The example of the Haut-Rhin department and town of Mulhouse, however, upsets

¹¹¹ AN F 8 210, 'Ministre de l'Agriculture et du Commerce, Circulaire no. 44', 20 Aug. 1850.

¹¹² AN F 8 210, Mayor of Amiens to Minister for Agriculture and Commerce, 5 Jul. 1850; AN F 8 210, Prefect of Aisne to Minister for Agriculture and Commerce, 2 Dec. 1850.

¹¹³ AN F 8 210, Vaïsse to Minister for Agriculture and Commerce, 3 Oct. and 27 Nov. 1850; ADN M 349/7, Minister for Agriculture and Commerce to Vaïsse, 5 Dec. 1850.

this simple picture. In the Haut-Rhin, despite the similar urgency of the housing question in its industrial cities that had been proven both by Villermé and by local experts, the departmental authorities issued a more tepid response. The general council agreed at a meeting of 28 August 1850 that, while they expressed ‘sympathy for efforts undertaken by Mr Roberts of London’, they would not be able ‘to devote a fund for the propagation of this work’ because of ‘reasons of economy and the needs of other departmental services’.¹¹⁴ It is difficult to fathom why this council reacted so differently to its peers elsewhere in France: as we shall examine in greater detail in the following chapters, these contrasting departmental responses remind us to consider the whims and personalities of prefects and other provincial figures as independent from a hypothetically uniform government system.

Despite this frostiness from the general council in the Haut-Rhin, the work of Henry Roberts did make its way to Mulhouse. In fact, while Louis Napoleon’s translation of Roberts’s work may have been the first contact with this English housing reformer that many Frenchmen would have had, industrialists in the *Société industrielle de Mulhouse* had been following the developments of Roberts for years prior. This might explain the lack of enthusiasm displayed by the Haut-Rhin authorities in August 1850 – they did not feel like they had to spend time and money distributing a text already in the possession of the department’s most active industrial society – but even so, the fact remains that the industrialists of Mulhouse were able to pre-empt and bypass government instruction regarding which reform texts they should be reading.

¹¹⁴ AN F 8 210, Prefect of Haut-Rhin to Minister for Agriculture and Commerce, 11 Oct. 1850; AN F 8 210, Extract of register of deliberations of general council the department of Haut-Rhin, 28 Aug. 1850.

On 24 September 1845, members of SIM gathered to hear a paper by Daniel Dollfus-Ausset. Dollfus-Ausset, in addition to being one of the founders of SIM, was also one of the heads of the textile company *Dollfus-Mieg et C^{ie}* (DMC) and a *Vénérable* of the local masonic lodge.¹¹⁵ He had recently returned from a trip to England, and had seen Roberts's early work in London. In his paper to SIM, Dollfus-Ausset outlined the details of Henry Roberts's SICLC, which had been founded only the year earlier.¹¹⁶ He declared that the plans that Roberts was producing looked extremely promising, and were likely to exert 'an immense influence on the workers, with regard to their physical, intellectual, and moral development'.¹¹⁷

The Mulhousian industrialists who heard Dollfus-Ausset's paper were not unfamiliar with the notion of philanthropic-inspired housing schemes. Between 1835-6, the mayor André Kœchlin had built three-storey houses for the workers of his factory, with a flat on each floor and accommodating thirty-six households in all.¹¹⁸ The flats were rented at rates of 12-13 Fr. per month, under half those of the private market at the time.¹¹⁹ Over a decade before Roberts began his work at the SICLC, these were working examples, and represented one of the first attempts of paternalist housing on the continent. As part of his praise for Mulhousian industrialists, Villermé wrote about Kœchlin's houses in *Tableau*, and described them as a perfect success.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ Ott, *La Société industrielle de Mulhouse, 1826-1876*, p. 99; 'Règlements de la Société industrielle de Mulhausen', p. 6.

¹¹⁶ 'Procès verbeux des séances, 24 septembre 1845', *BSIM* (Mulhouse, France), 1845, p. 117.

¹¹⁷ 'Travaux divers', *BSIM* (Mulhouse, France), 1845, pp. 144-5.

¹¹⁸ Bullock and Read, *The Movement for Housing Reform*, p. 420; Arthur Borghese, 'Industrialist paternalism and lower-class agitation: the case of Mulhouse, 1848-1851', *Social History / Histoire Sociale*, 13, 25 (1980), pp. 79-80; Michel Hau and Nicolas Stoskopf, *Les Dynasties alsaciennes : du XVIIIe siècle à nos jours* (Paris, 2005), p. 193.

¹¹⁹ Guy Groux and Catherine Lévy, *La Possession ouvrière : du taudis à la propriété (XIXe-XXe siècle)* (Paris, 1993), p. 34.

¹²⁰ Villermé, *Tableau*, i, pp. 58-9.

Years later, when Roberts and Prince Albert constructed their model at the Great Exhibition, another founding member and former president of SIM was in London to witness its construction.¹²¹ Jean Zuber *fils*, who had himself also built some model housing next to his paper factory in nearby Rixheim between 1849-51, presented a paper at SIM on 24 September 1851 in which he described the work of Roberts in London.¹²² Declaring that ‘to procure housing that is salubrious and at a low price for the working class is one of the most useful and praiseworthy preoccupations of the philanthropist’, Zuber showed his assembled peers the English version of *The Dwellings of the Working Classes*, as well as a pamphlet that he had brought back with him from the Great Exhibition.¹²³ While the *Société* also owned a copy of Louis Napoléon’s French translation, the fact that this meeting took place as a direct result of one of its members reading the English copy and seeing the models in person shows international nature of SIM and its relative independence from the central French state’s bureaucracy and from the seemingly indifferent Haut-Rhin provincial government.¹²⁴

The Mulhouse of 1851, when Zuber presented his paper, was a different city from the one that Villermé had visited between 1835-6. The population had almost doubled from the influx of migrant workers in this fifteen year period, and was fast approaching 30,000 (fig. 0.1).

Worker unrest had shaken the town after economic problems in 1846-8, and it is no surprise

¹²¹ Jonas, *Mulhouse et ses cités ouvrières*, p. 67.

¹²² 'Note sur les habitations d'ouvriers; lue à la séance du 24 septembre, par M. Jean Zuber fils', *BSIM* (Mulhouse, France), 1852, pp. 127-9.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 127; AMM O2 B 31, 'Model Houses for four families erected at the cavalry barracks, Hyde Park', s.d. (1850-1). Of the list of 379 names, mentioned above (p. 32, footnote 109), no. 287 was 'Dollfus', suggesting how SIM received their French copy despite an uncooperative prefecture. The pervasiveness of the surname in Mulhouse means there are several candidates: the most likely being Émile Dollfus, previous mayor of Mulhouse until 1848, and president of SIM from December 1834 to August 1858. Daniel Dollfus-Ausset and Jean Dollfus, as two leading industrialists with a displayed interest in housing, are two alternatives. Ott, *La Société industrielle de Mulhouse, 1826-1876*, p. 145.

¹²⁴ 'Projet d'habitations pour les classes ouvrières. Rapport présentée au nom du comité d'économie sociale, par M. le Dr Penot, dans la séance du 30 juin 1852', *Bulletin De La Société Industrielle De Mulhouse* (Mulhouse, France), 1852, pp. 129-41.

that the industrialists who gathered to hear Zuber speak were keen to engage in a wide-reaching paternalist housing scheme that might strengthen the bond between the classes.¹²⁵

The industrialists dispersed after Zuber's meeting, reconvening the following June when one of their members, Daniel Dollfus-Ausset's younger brother Jean Dollfus, declared his intention to found a private housing company inspired by Roberts.¹²⁶ The scheme received two grants from Napoléon III's 22 January 1852 fund, but for the most part was funded by shareholders throughout Mulhouse, who went a step further than Roberts by limiting their investment returns to just four percent. In the 1850s, Roberts himself would meet with the founders of the housing scheme in Mulhouse and even visit it, eventually declaring in 1862 that he 'considered the arrangements at Mulhouse surpassed everything of the kind that had been attempted elsewhere' and that they should be emulated in England.¹²⁷ Innovation in Mulhouse therefore fed back to the national and international reform networks that had helped spark the scheme in the first place.

We shall examine this scheme – the *cités ouvrières* of Mulhouse – in more detail in the following chapter and throughout the thesis, when we shall see how it came to be one of the most successful and innovative housing schemes in nineteenth-century Europe. But while examining the myriad contributions to the 'housing question' in mid-century France, the key point to emphasise is that this scheme emerged from a unique Mulhousian combination: a long history of local industrialists taking an active interest banding together for discussions on philanthropy and hygienic improvement; a central government that was actively encouraging

¹²⁵ Fox, 'Presidential address', p. 149.

¹²⁶ 'Projet d'habitations pour les classes ouvrières', *Bulletin De La Société Industrielle De Mulhouse*, 1852.

¹²⁷ 'Congrès international de bienfaisance: Séance du samedi 20 septembre', *L'Indépendance Belge* (Brussels, Belgium), 21 Sep. 1856, p. 3; Henry Roberts, 'Model Lodging-Houses in France', *Illustrated Usk Observer and Raglan Herald* (Usk, Wales), 16 Aug. 1856; 'Congrès international de bienfaisance', *The Morning Post* (London, England), 13 Jun. 1862, p. 3.

provincial initiations; and an international catalyst of the work of Henry Roberts at the Great Exhibition.

The next steps: solving the question of housing

This chapter has shown how the ‘question of housing’ that de Melun had designated ‘perhaps most urgent’ in 1850 was crucial throughout France in the years leading up to the Second Empire: from Paris to the provinces, from government appointees to philanthropic industrialists, and from medical experts to Catholic charitable figures. While the public health movement established common themes about the housing problem and its impact on the workers, there was not one clearly-established way to solve this problem. Nor was there a clear consensus on who should have to solve it. The provincial experience constituted a central formative role in shaping the nuanced ‘question of housing’ by 1850. Whether this role was making Parisian statisticians consider data beyond the capital, or through innovations that occurred in the writings and debates of provincial doctors and industrialists, the result was two pieces of legislation that placed the initiative for dealing with solving the housing question in the hands of municipal bodies and individual entrepreneurs as the 1850s drew on.

But the statistics, treatises, and legislation that helped establish this ‘housing question’ as so urgent by 1848 feel disconnected from the workers themselves and the houses they inhabited. Even in reports like Villermé’s or Thouvenin’s that refer to workers’ conditions, the examples used were described in the abstract to contribute to wider conclusions and reinforce statistics. The following two chapters move from the discourse-focused ‘housing question’ to focus instead on how provincial figures interacted with the bricks and mortar of workers’ houses in the 1850s and 1860s.

Chapter 3 will take up the aftermath of the Melun Law in exploring the uneven application of this law throughout France, and showing how it allowed figures working in local government to define and tackle their own localised definitions of the housing problems. But before this examination of the management of existing housing stock, the following chapter will focus on the construction of new housing in the three cities of Lyon, Mulhouse, and Roubaix.

Napoléon III's patronage of the *Cité Napoléon* in Paris, his distribution of Roberts's treatise, and his housing fund of January 1852 were all designed to encourage industrialist construction in the provinces. But the *Cité Napoléon* was an abject failure, and the fund was short-lived and only met with mixed engagement. Instead, industrialists in the cities were motivated by distinct local conditions and situations in deciding whether, and how, to build for the workers. By contrasting the different ways that three industrialists considered building houses for the workers of their towns, the following chapter will continue the discussion over whose role it was to be to solve the housing problem. At the same time, it will further deconstruct the centre-periphery stereotype of nineteenth-century France by considering the ways that the successful provincial housing scheme of the Mulhousian *cités ouvrières* influenced the thoughts and actions of other provincial industrialists in cities with similar pressing housing needs.

PART II: HOUSES

CHAPTER 2: 'FORCED TO BUILD HOUSES': INDUSTRIALISTS AND THEIR WORKERS

Having spent the second half of October 1858 on a pleasant trip across the Vosges with his wife, the textile magnate Louis Motte-Bossut (1817-83) returned to his hometown of Roubaix to find concerns with both his factory machinery and his workforce. Writing to his sons, Motte complained: 'I had so much happiness on my travels, everything seemed to me to be well: it was roses; on my return I felt the thorns'.¹ One of the main difficulties he was having was getting his workers to work. 'I'm hitched to the plough, whatever I do', he wrote, 'chiding my team... sometimes even flattering them, using all the means of rhetoric, from threats to prayers, my team does not work'. The reason for this lethargy, according to Motte, was the scarcity of new workers in the growing textile town. His spinners were 'not afraid of making a night of it [*faire la noce*] on Mondays' as they knew Motte and his colleagues could not afford to fire them. Increasing salaries to attract workers from rival firms would not work as the neighbours would only do the same to keep them, and the lack of available housing in Roubaix meant you could not appeal to surrounding towns and villages. Housing was the root of the problem here for Motte. 'There is no longer a [single] house available', he protested. 'Houses are inhabited before the pavement is even finished, before the staircase is put up. The people climb the ladder like chickens to sleep in the attic'. In order for the ambitious textile industrialist and his family to continue to spin, Motte declared, '[w]e are going to be forced to build houses'.²

¹ Louis Motte-Bossut to his sons, 31 October 1858, from ANMT 1988 007 0464 Gaston Motte, [*MOTTE-BOSSUT*] - *Une époque (1817-1883). Lettres de famille*, 1952, pp. 84-6.

² Louis Motte-Bossut to his sons, 30 Nov. 1858, in *ibid.*, pp. 86-7.

Two months after Motte's journey in the Vosges, and less than three weeks after he wrote to his sons, a police commissioner in Roubaix filed a report about a proposed '*cité philanthropique*' that 'all of the principal industrialists of Roubaix' were planning to build. While this December 1858 report does not give many details of this *cité*, it does state that the industrialists planned to raise capital themselves to build one thousand houses for the workers of Roubaix from the spring of 1859. To make these houses alluring to new workers, they would be rented at a return of just five percent, as opposed to the current market rates of as high as 18 percent. According to the police report, this '*cité philanthropique*' was going to be a true benefit to the whole town.³ The mayor of Roubaix was struck by this innovative solution, and sent a copy of the police report to the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce on 21 December, noting how the scheme was to fulfil the needs of many workers of his town.⁴

This *cité philanthropique* was never built, and Motte's fears about being unable to attract workers to Roubaix proved unfounded: the town's population increased by 15,000 between 1854 and 1861 alone and would go on to have the fastest proportional rate of growth of any French town in the nineteenth-century.⁵ Motte's factory, meanwhile, continued to be by far the largest and most successful of all those of the Roubaisian textile elite. But this vignette, capturing a father's worries to his sons and a police officer's premature report to a mayor, touches upon some of the key themes that will be addressed in this chapter. This is a chapter about proposed, realised, and failed solutions to the housing problem. But it is also a chapter about the role that workers' housing played in the self-fashioning of the industrialist class in each of these towns. For Motte, the housing problem was economic, as a lack of sufficient housing

³ ADN M 349/11, Police commissioner of Roubaix report, 18 Dec. 1858.

⁴ ADN M 349/11, Prefect of the Nord to Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, 21 Dec. 1858.

⁵ Piat, *Quand Mimerel gouvernait la France*, p. 44; 'Mouvement de Population de Roubaix Année 1866', *L'Echo de Roubaix* (Roubaix), 10 Feb. 1867, p. 1.

was affecting his ability to maintain his industrial ambitions. For others, as we shall see, the local issue of housing dealt with social and moral problems as well as economic. To build improved housing was to show how morally enlightened certain industrialists could be. This chapter will draw out what is unique to the local circumstances and elites, and what is shared between these elites by considering three alternate approaches to workers' housing in turn: industrialists who actively did not build; a religious industrialist's scheme that was ambitious but ultimately a failure; and a scheme that was so successful that it shaped international housing reform discussion for a generation.

The chapter will first look at the development of the alleyway (*courée*) housing in Roubaix. Industrialists had a complicated history and relationship with this type of housing by the Second Empire, having been responsible for promulgating the form in the decades prior, but having since retreated from the domain of housing construction. Instead, by the time Louis Motte-Bossut complained to his sons in 1858, it was left to private speculators to meet the housing needs of the booming Roubaisian population. The second part of the chapter turns to Lyon to consider a completely different situation requiring a housing response. Rather than the systemic, sustained population growth in Roubaix that required constant housing construction, a flood in Lyon in 1856 left 20,000 homeless overnight. One industrialist-turned-priest used this as an opportunity to build a self-contained housing scheme around a church to provide for workers rendered homeless. Spiritual and moral salvation were just as central as material salvation here, though despite its lofty aims the scheme failed in the long-term once Lyon recovered from the floods. Analysing how and why the scheme was a failure in the long-term can help us to understand both industrialists and workers of Lyon. The third section examines one of the most successful housing schemes in Second Empire France: the *cités ouvrières* of Mulhouse which we saw briefly in the previous chapter. By tracing the combination of unique local conditions and an internationally-connected and philanthropic

industrial elite, we will see how and why the scheme achieved such sustained success in Mulhouse, and why the scheme became so internationally renowned.

The final, concluding section of this chapter will examine the growth and spread of the reputation of this final, successful scheme – the Mulhousian *cités ouvrières* – throughout the Second Empire, to show how provincial innovations were not limited to the province and, in fact, influenced one another. Industrialists were not just motivated by local conditions regarding tackling the housing problem: emulation of and competition with other industrialists in France helped shape responses in order to assert local pride and identity.

Roubaix: the development of the *courée*

Motte's declaration in 1858 that he and his fellow industrialists would soon be 'forced to build' houses to meet the needs of an ever-growing workforce might appear strange when considering the longer history of industrialist-led housing projects in Roubaix in previous generations. A more accurate statement from Motte might have been to say that he and his peers would be forced to build *again*. In the years before Motte's letter, Roubaix witnessed the rise and development of a distinct form of alleyway housing – the '*courées*' – from their early industrialist-directed days at the beginning of the century, to their private market proliferation by the Second Empire.

The term '*courée*' has become the accepted broad term for a type of Roubaisian working-class housing encompassing a number of subtle sub-groups: *impasses*, *cours*, *cités*, and *forts*. Historians such as Jacques Prouvost, Martine Le Blan, and Philippe Guignet who have focused on housing in Roubaix have each delineated the differences between these groups but, in general, there are a number of shared common features that they agree allow for the use of '*courées*' to

describe a general type of housing.⁶ Housing in *courées* is defined as ranges of houses constructed down alleyways off the main thoroughfares of the city predominantly to house the working-class. These houses were often small, two-room units, with communal toilets and taps at the end of the alleyway. While it is important to use the sub-group titles occasionally to draw out differences, by using the general term '*courée*' to discuss the longer trajectory of a development of a particularly Roubaisian form of housing, we can also move past contemporary inconsistencies and changing trends that meant the same block of houses could be referred to by different designations throughout the nineteenth century. The *Fort Frasez*, for example, was built in 1838, labelled such on the 1847 cadastral map, but was then later referred to as the *Cité Frasez* by an 1869 municipal commission and on the 1884 cadastral map of the city; similarly, the 1826 *Fort Bayart* was later listed as the *Courée Bayart* on an 1855 municipal map, then the *Cité Bayart* by the 1869 municipal commission.⁷ Consequently, using '*courée*' as an overall term avoids falling into a complicated web of unpicking differences in contemporary opinion as well as urban development styles.

Housing in *courées*, or '*choques*' of several houses, were mentioned as early as mid-eighteenth century *Ancien Régime* property records.⁸ The nineteenth century, and the advent of increased urban growth through Roubaix's industrialisation, meant that this form of housing spread to meet the needs of a booming population. As housing in *courées* was built on land behind the main street frontage, often owned by the landlord of one of these fronting houses, *courées* were

⁶ Jacques Prouvost, 'Les courées à Roubaix', *Revue du Nord*, 51, 201 (1969), pp. 307-10; Martine Le Blan, 'L'urbanisation de Roubaix de 1800 à 1850', (Masters thesis, Université Lille 3, 1980), Martine Le Blan, 'Notes sur une étape dans la genèse d'un espace industriel : la construction des "forts" roubaisiens dans la première moitié du XIX^{ème} siècle', *Revue du Nord*, 63, 248 (1981), pp. 67-72; Philippe Guignet, 'Cours, courées et corons. Contribution à un cadrage lexicographique, typologique et chronologique de types d'habitat collectif emblématiques de la France du Nord', *Revue du Nord*, 1, 374 (2008), pp. 29-47.

⁷ Prouvost, 'Les courées à Roubaix', p. 310; ADN P 31/278, Cadastral map of Roubaix, 1847.

⁸ Guignet, 'Cours, courées et corons', p. 30.

subject to fewer planning regulations than other constructions might be.⁹ Therefore, anyone who already owned land could aim to bring in a rental income from the town's growing workforce by adding a group of houses on the plot behind their house, and they could do so without having to jump through too many regulative hoops.

In 1819, in response to a departmental *arrêté* of 13 June 1816, the mayor Etienne Roussel-Grimonprez and his municipal council published a survey of Roubaix's roads and buildings.¹⁰ Listing 914 properties in the urban concentration of Roubaix, the survey and accompanying plans indicate 13 separate *courées*, containing 126 houses in total (fig. 2.1). This document is a useful source for analysing three features of early Roubaisian *courées*: their assortment of shapes and sizes, the significance of the names given to the *courées*, and the presence of notable Roubaisian families amongst the ownership lists.

The 13 *courées* varied in size and shape. Seven contained six or fewer houses, with four having 11 or 12 houses, and only two had 15 or more. However, the shape and size of the urban footprint of these *courées* varied even when they had the same number of houses. Most of these *courées* followed the same blueprint: a narrow entrance between two properties that fronted onto a main road was followed by an opening up and either one row of terraced houses, or two parallel rows. The '*Impasse dite Cour Grimonprez*' was marked by the term '*impasse*' because it was much narrower than other '*cours*' as it did not become wider beyond

⁹ Jacques Prouvost showed that this lack of regulations was evoked by the municipal government of Roubaix when dealing with requests to build throughout the nineteenth century. In August 1834, for example, the mayor of Roubaix responded to a request to build on land behind the street frontage by writing: 'consider article 74 of the communal regulations, which is only applicable to buildings facing public roads. Considering that the building in question is not in such a situation ... [I] declare to authorize Sr. Lamblin-Delplanque to build according to the alignment drawn on his own request and without being constrained to give to the facing walls [a width of] 32 centimeters, or a brick and a half', in Prouvost, 'Les courées à Roubaix', p. 313.

¹⁰ ADN S 439, 'Plan d'alignement de la ville de Roubaix', 21 Oct. 1819.

the entrance. The six houses in this *courée* were arranged into two very close parallel runs of three. The *Cour Boez*, in contrast, had six houses arranged along one terraced row which, except for the first of these houses, opened onto relatively spacious open land behind nos. 20-28 *Rue des Bourbons* (fig. 2.2.). Some of the larger *courées*, such as the *Cour Augustin Prevost* (11 houses) and the *Cour du Petit Lannoy* (18 houses) were built over three or four sides, rather than just two parallel lines, with large internal courtyards where the communal taps and latrines were found (fig. 2.3). What is striking about this variety of shapes and sizes is the sense of opportunism – space was used where it existed behind the main frontage of the streets according to the desires and finances of the builders, rather than following a universal ideal form.

In addition to the range of shapes and sizes, there was also no consistent or logical convention for the naming of the *courées*. Three took the name of the single owner of houses within them (*Cour Legaire*, *Cour Augustin Prevost*, *Cour Bonave*), while a further two that had more than one owner of the houses within them took one of the owners' names (*Impasse dite Cour Grimonprez* and *Cour Selosse*). Three others bear the name of Roubaisian families, but with different owners, suggesting perhaps that the houses had been built by one individual and then sold or inherited by others. The *Cour Boez* was owned by the widow Salembier, the *Cour Desbonnet* by Louis Delcroix, and the 12 houses of the *Cour Malfait* were owned not by the industrialist Duchatel-Malfait, who owned houses in another *courée*, but rather by three other industrialists. The names of the remaining five refer to nearby roads, geographic features, or quarters. The *Cour St Antoine* came off the *Rue du Faubourg St Antoine*, while the *Cour du Petit Lannoy* was built in the quarter of the same name. The *Cour de la Citadelle* and *Cour de la Chapelle de paix* were named after nearby landmarks, while the *Cour des Trépassés* was near the town's cemetery (with *trépassés* translating to 'departed' or 'dead'). Notably, only seven of the *courées* had sole owners (with one of these owners being the local *hospice de Roubaix*). The variety of

naming conventions and prevalence of multiple owners suggests that, by 1819, building *courée* housing was an established practice, but one that did not feature as a primary industrialist activity.

Many of the names listed as owners of *courée* housing are those of powerful industrial and municipal Roubaisian families. A central figure that shows the degree of overlaps and interrelation of these Roubaisian families was the mayor who commissioned the survey, Etienne Roussel-Grimonprez. His double-barrelled name, Roussel-Grimonprez, indicated the union of two of Roubaix's most powerful families in the early nineteenth-century. His father was the industrialist Barthélémy Roussel-Tiers. Etienne's wife, Augustine Joséphe Grimonprez, was the daughter of Pierre Grimonprez-Bayart and sister of two other industrialists, Pierre Grimonprez-Bulteau and Louis Grimonprez-Buisine. In the 1819 survey of Roubaisian properties, 66 were owned by individuals with either Roussel or Grimonprez in their last names, of which 11 were in *courées*. The Tiers, Bayart, Bulteau, and Buisine families, indicated through their marriages above, were also repeatedly found in the property lists as substantial property owners. The industrialist Bayart-Lefebvre, for example, owned 14 properties in total, including five in the *Cour Malfait*.

It is difficult to tell whether industrialists' construction and ownership of houses in these *courées* were motivated by seeking a profit from renting to the growing population, or whether the houses were constructed directly for the workers of individual industrialists' factories. It is likely that it was a mix of these two. All but four of the houses in the *courées* in this early study were owned by individuals who also owned one or both of the buildings that flanked the entrance to the alleyway. For example, the *Cour St Antoine* was located between nos. 14 and 16 on the *Rue Faubourg St Antoine*. No. 14 was owned by M. Bouvier – who owned two of the houses in the *courée* behind his property – while no. 16 was owned by M. Grimonprez-Bulteau,

landlord of the remaining three houses in the *courée*. Augustin Prevost, meanwhile, not only owned all 11 houses in the *courée* that bore his name, but also possessed four properties on the *Rue des Bourbons*, two either side of this *courée* (fig. 2.3).

The years around 1820 signalled a shift in housing construction from the scattergun, opportunistic approach of these early *courées* towards the industrialist-constructed *forts*. While, as covered above, these *forts* would later come to be subsumed under the general labels of *courée* or *cité*, they marked number of different changes to their immediate predecessors that bear noting: most obviously, they were much larger, with the largest (the *Fort Frasesz*) containing 100 houses. Because of this larger size, *forts* were more than just two parallel lines of houses: they were formed into triangular or quadrilateral shapes by three or more ranges of buildings, with large central spaces (hence the allusion to the military fort in their name).¹¹ Unlike earlier *courées* that were built throughout the centre of Roubaix, the size of these *forts* necessitated construction either at the limits of the existing urban agglomeration or in the nearby countryside (fig. 2.4). This meant that, while sharing some common features with earlier *courées*, *forts* were not always built behind the frontage of existing houses or roads, meaning that industrialists had to apply for permission to build elements of their schemes. While containing more houses than previous *courées*, these *forts* were predominantly owned by one industrialist, and their names reflected this. The 46 houses of the *Fort Bayart*, for example, were constructed in 1826 by the same Bayart-Lefebvre who owned five houses in the *Cour Malfait* (fig. 2.5).¹² Finally, while '*cours*' were found in nearby Lille and Tourcoing, as we saw with Thouvenin and Villermé's study in the previous chapter, the *fort* was a uniquely Roubaisian variant.¹³

¹¹ Le Blan, 'La construction des "forts" roubaisiens', p. 68; Guignet, 'Cours, courées et corons', p. 34.

¹² Le Blan, 'L'urbanisation de Roubaix de 1800 à 1850', p. 34.

¹³ Guignet, 'Cours, courées et corons', p. 34.

While earlier *courées* built or owned by industrialists may have been motivated by the profit that could be gained by speculative building, industrialists built *forts* to attract and to let houses to workers for their own businesses: instead of just being landlords, the builders of *forts* were landlord-employers. As such, the factory or workshop was often attached to the *fort*, as well as several other communal facilities that could foster a sense of community amongst the inhabitants. The textile merchant Wattel-Coursier built two *forts*: the *Fort Wattel* and the *Fort Saint Joseph*. This latter *fort*, arranged in a triangle, contained 42 houses, a workshop, and a cabaret.¹⁴ As Le Blan has noted, the *forts* created ‘reciprocal lines of dependence between employer and employee’: the worlds of work, domestic, and leisure life became enclosed within the walls of the *forts*, and as the employee relied on the employer for both employment and housing, the employer too also became doubly dependent on keeping his workers happy, as to lose an employee would also be to lose rental income.¹⁵

The *Fort Frasez*, built from 1838 by François Frasez-Bayart, was not only the largest of these industrialist-built *courées*, but also the most well-known beyond Roubaix (fig. 2.6). This *fort*, containing 90 buildings (with a further 10 in a separate nearby block), was arranged as a trapezoid, with a separate central line of buildings running parallel in the central courtyard.¹⁶ Each house was designed for domestic weavers, and contained four rooms with enough space for four Jacquard looms.¹⁷ What’s more, several of the buildings were dedicated to serve as a bakery, a grocers, and a cabaret.¹⁸ The Jury of the *Exposition Nationale* in Paris in 1839 praised Frasez for the innovations of his housing scheme, stating that the *Fort Frasez* was able to

¹⁴ Le Blan, 'La construction des "forts" roubaisiens', pp. 68-70.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁶ AMR 2 O b 5, Frasez-Bayart to mayor of Roubaix, 25 Jun. 1838.

¹⁷ Le Blan, 'La construction des "forts" roubaisiens', pp. 70-1.

¹⁸ Pierre Deyon, 'La ville et les hommes au XIXe siècle', in Yves-Marie Hilaire and Louis Trénard (eds.), *Histoire de Roubaix* (Dunkerque, 1984), pp. 138-40.

‘reconcile the interests of the *fabricant* and those of the worker’ by presenting a comfortable place where the worker could work with their family, and thereby avoid ‘the dangers of life in the workshop’.¹⁹

As with the rest of these industrialist-built *forts*, Frasez was taking a risk by creating this self-contained workers’ community. In seeking to avoid the ‘dangers’ of factory work by bringing these workers together, Frasez had created what Le Blan called a ‘veritable microcosm’ which had the unintended result of accelerated worker collective identity. As employer-landlord, Frasez was threatened in 1846 when his attempt to lower wages was met by a strike and the potential loss not only of workers and their products, but also of rental income.²⁰

Additionally, although larger and with communal facilities, the *Fort Frasez* still shared some of the negative features of other *courées*. The distance between rows of houses was barely more than an arm-span, and there was very little sense of privacy for the workers who lived there. Still, the innovations made at the *Fort Frasez* were striking, especially when compared with the earlier *courées*, and showed how industrialists in Roubaix might be able to reconcile their desires of economic expansion with a need to house their workforce. The praise heaped on Frasez by the 1839 Jury might have been expected to lead to a plethora of imitations by other industrialists, with the *fort* acting as the Roubaisian industrialists’ response to the housing problem that signalled a development from the older *courée*. In reality, the *Fort Frasez* was one of the last of its kind, as Roubaix’s rate of growth shifted up a gear in the 1840s and housing responses altered in turn. Between 1800-40, Roubaix’s population had increased threefold, from 8,151 in 1801 to 24,802 in 1841. The rate of growth accelerated over the following

¹⁹ The jury’s report was reprinted in full in an 1856 edition of a local Roubaisian newspaper, ‘Industrie Roubaisienne’, *Journal de Roubaix* (Roubaix), 23 Aug. 1856, p. 2.

²⁰ Le Blan, ‘L’urbanisation de Roubaix de 1800 à 1850’, p. 134; Le Blan, ‘La construction des “forts” roubaisiens’, pp. 71-2.

decades. Between 1841 and 1851 the population would jump by almost 10,000 to 34,698; between 1851 and 1861 it would lurch by another 15,000 to 49,274 (fig. 0.1). In the space of twenty-years of 1841-61, therefore, Roubaix doubled in population, with thousands of new workers needing accommodation.

One of the main reasons for this increased rate of industrial and population growth was because of the expansion in scale of factory-work, pioneered by the industrialist who began this chapter, Louis Motte-Bossut. The Mottes were a long-established family from nearby Tourcoing, who were a sort of pre-industrial, semi-aristocratic clan of *marchands-peigneurs* under the *Ancien Régime*.²¹ In the nineteenth-century, the Mottes expanded their business interests into Roubaix, using marriage to important Roubaisian families as a technique to raise the family to a high social level in Roubaix that would match their industrial ambitions. Motte's grandfather Jean-François Motte-Clarisse had made the most of his imprisonment during the Terror in the *Citadelle de Lille* in 1793 when he met and befriended a Roubaisian notable, Brédart-Desaint. Motte-Clarisse would later arrange for his son Jean-Baptiste (Louis's father), to marry Brédart-Desaint's daughter Pauline, thus expanding the Mottes to Roubaix.²² Another of Motte-Clarisse's sons strengthened the Mottes' social standing in Roubaix when, in 1820, Philippe married Stéphanie Roussel-Grimonprez, the daughter of the mayor of Roubaix.²³ This strategy continued into the following generation. Pauline Motte-Brédart, who was a better entrepreneur than her husband, built a powerful business for their eldest son Louis.²⁴ When, in 1841, Louis married Adèle Bossut, he cemented both his economic and

²¹ Jacqueline Grislain and Martine Le Blan, 'L'art de bâtir chez les Roubaisiens. La filature Motte-Bossut (1853-1985)', *Revue du Nord*, 67, 265 (1985), pp. 490-1.

²² Motte, *Les Motte*, p. 34; Pouchain, *Les Maîtres du Nord*, p. 63.

²³ Motte, *Les Motte*, p. 40.

²⁴ Louise A. Tilly, 'Rich and Poor in a French Textile City', in David Levine, Leslie Page Moch, and Gary D. Stark (eds.), *Essays on the Family and Historical Change* (Arlington TX, 1983), p. 73.

social position in Roubaix: Adèle was the daughter of Jean-Baptiste Bossut-Grimonprez, newly-elected mayor of Roubaix and one of the richest textile industrialists in the town.²⁵

It was with Adèle's uncle, Cavois-Grimonprez, and brother-in-law, Wattine-Bossut, that Louis Motte established the company *Motte-Bossut et C^{ie}* on 26 Jan 1843, and his wife's dowry of 80,000 Fr. contributed significantly to the new company's ambitions.²⁶ Inspired by a trip to Manchester in 1842, Louis decided to build an unprecedentedly large factory on land owned by both his father and father-in-law, where he would install thousands of English Sharp & Roberts spindles. The first five-storey factory burned down in 1845 but was rebuilt in ten months, containing 40,000 spindles, which Motte expanded to 52,000 spindles and more than 500 workers by 1853.²⁷ By means of comparison, the average number of spindles in his rivals' factories at the time was only 5,000. The factory Motte had built rightly earned the name of 'the monstrous factory' (*la filature monstre*).²⁸ Looming over five stories, with octagonal towers and distinctive red brick, the *filature monstre* was as much a modern-day castle and symbol of its owner's social power and ambitions as it was a factory.

What is important about Louis Motte-Bossut's creation of the *filature monstre* was not just its scale and how it transformed the relationship between small-scale industrialists and their workers, but how he constantly reinvested his profits in building, rebuilding, and expanding. When the factory burned down again in July 1866, Louis rebuilt it even larger on a new plot, with 110,000 spindles.²⁹ For Motte, therefore, the notion of having to invest money on housing a workforce would have seemed a frustrating distraction away from the possibilities of reinvestment and expansion. Although coming only twenty years after the construction of

²⁵ Barbier, *Le Patronat du Nord*, p. 24; Piat, *Quand Mimerel gouvernait la France*, p. 27.

²⁶ Grislain and Le Blan, 'L'art de bâtir chez les Roubaisiens', pp. 494-5.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 496-7.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 495.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 501.

the *Fort Frasez*, Motte's letter in 1858 about being 'forced to build' shows how his approach to industry meant he considered house-construction as something alien to the modern Roubaisian industrialist.

So, if Louis Motte-Bossut and his peers were not building housing for the thousands of new workers in Second Empire Roubaix, who was? As Jacques Prouvost has put it in his seminal study of Roubaisian housing, the model of the *courée* that was pioneered in the *Ancien Régime* and early years of the nineteenth-century remained an unaltered, easily-replicable blueprint for speculative builders in the nineteenth-century who wanted to make a profit from the increasing number of workers coming to Roubaix.³⁰ The houses of the *Fort Frasez*, with their space for handlooms, were designed to provide a place to work as well as accommodation. The mechanization of industry and growth of factories like Motte's *filature monstre* meant there was no longer the same need for a place to live and a place to work to be the same building, and the focus for new workers coming to Roubaix was to find a place to rest near their factories. These new *courées* were built by individuals from a range of middle-class professions, including butchers, locksmiths, masons, and cabaret owners.³¹ Lacking the funds or motivations of industrialists like Frasez, the builders of these third-wave *courées* focused on minimizing cost and maximizing profit. As a result, these were smaller and narrower than the *forts*. In 1851 there were 33 *courées* in Roubaix, which accounted for 900 houses and housed 14.3% of the population. Ten years later in 1861, there were 156 *courées*, with 3,216 houses and accommodating 32.67% of the population. The number of *courées* had more than doubled again by the end of the Second Empire, with 5,230 houses in 381 *courées*.³² Like the early *cours*, these were a variety of shapes and sizes. For example, a municipal plan from the beginning of December 1871 of the *Rue Epenle* in the south-west of Roubaix has various entrances to *courées*

³⁰ Prouvost, 'Les courées à Roubaix', p. 316.

³¹ Ibid., p. 314.

³² Ibid., p. 311.

labelled, with widths varying from 0.9m to 4.47m.³³ What was different, compared with the early *courées*, was the sheer scale of overall housing in *courées* that increased in the Second Empire.

The sharp rise in the number of *courées* in the Second Empire was not the only drastic change in Roubaix. As this housing construction was driven by the influx of predominantly Belgian migrant workers, this meant that certain areas of Roubaix with a concentration of *courées* also had an extremely high concentration of non-French workers by the 1870s. The *Rue des Longues Haies*, in particular, became notorious for its concentration of *courées* that were constructed throughout the Second Empire: by 1872, it was known as the ‘Flemish headquarters’ of the town as it had thirty-eight *courées* leading off from it, with three-quarters of its residents being Belgian.³⁴

This third wave of *courées* has become the defining representation of workers’ housing in nineteenth-century Roubaix. The cramped, airless, and filthy conditions of life in the *courées* has attached to these houses what Guignet has termed a ‘stigmatic identity’.³⁵ Leslie Page Moch calls the *courées* that were built from 1850s a ‘quite horrible form of housing unique to the area’, while Paul Delsalle titled a subsection on working-class life in nineteenth-century Roubaix ‘the misery of the *courées*’ (*la misère des courées*), and claimed that the term ‘*courée*’ in the nineteenth century ‘rapidly became synonymous with deplorable workers’ housing’.³⁶ While Louis Motte-Bossut and his peers were no longer building to the extent of a generation

³³ AMR 1 O b 33, 'Plan d'alignements: Rue de l'Epeule', 1 Dec. 1871.

³⁴ Judy A. Reardon, 'Belgian and French workers in nineteenth-century Roubaix', in Louise A. Tilly and Charles Tilly (eds.), *Class Conflict and Collective Action* (Beverly Hills CA, 1981), p. 177.

³⁵ Guignet, 'Cours, courées et corons', p. 29.

³⁶ Leslie Page Moch, 'Infirmities of the body and vices of the soul: migrants, family, and urban life in turn-of-the-century France', in Levine, Moch, and Stark (eds.), *Essays on the Family and Historical Change*, pp. 49-50; Paul Delsalle, *Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing : la communauté urbaine et ses environs: terroir, histoire, patrimoine, traditions* (Condé-sur-Noireau, 1991), pp. 143-4.

earlier, they were not completely insensitive to the condition of new houses, as we shall see later in this thesis. But, by focusing on their factories and businesses and making a conscious decision not to intervene and build, the industrialists of Roubaix placed the responsibility for building on the shoulders of private entrepreneurs who, for their part, turned to the established and financially remunerative model of the *courée* to meet the needs of the growing town.

In the two decades of 1841-61, over 25,000 new workers came to Roubaix and had to find housing. The long-established model of the *courée* provided private entrepreneurs with a way to meet the constant and steady demand for housing. In the next section of this chapter, we will examine a drastically different demand for housing when, in Lyon, natural disaster rendered 20,000 homeless overnight. The lack of existence of a replicable mass housing model like the *courée*, combined with the blank slate that this disaster offered, meant that one response from a pious member of an established Lyonnais family radically re-envisaged what industrialist-constructed housing could aim to achieve.

Lyon: housing after the floods of 1856

Heavy rain throughout May 1856 left the threat of flood hanging over Lyon. The Saône and Rhône rivers had both reached the level of the bridges that spanned them by 17 May; when the water lowered in the following days, a sense of relief spread throughout Lyon as it appeared that the worst had passed.³⁷ However, the weather had turned again by the end of the month, and the over-saturated land upstream of Lyon could not cope.³⁸ On the 26 May,

³⁷ ADR I M 348, Inspector of bridges in Les Brotteaux (Roussin) to Prefect of the Rhône (Vaïsse), 17 May 1856; Ch Stephen, *Récit des inondations en France pendant les mois de mai et juin 1856* (Lyon, 1856), p. 43.

³⁸ Ibid.

386 workers were forced to leave their work due to flooding, while damages on 28 May to a steam engine at the crystal factory in La Guillotière put another hundred workers out of work.³⁹ The *Rue Tête d'Or* in the north of town 'resembled a lake' by the morning of the 30th and violence broke out throughout the day as panicked residents, seeing houses starting to collapse around them, sought to stem the deluge in their own houses by throwing water into their neighbours'.⁴⁰ The level of the Rhône surged from 1.90 metres at midday on 28 May to 5 metres by six in the evening on the 30th.⁴¹ M. Roussin, *commissaire* of the police in the Brotteaux quarter of Lyon, wrote a note to the Prefect of the Rhone at eleven in the evening of the 30th, where he declared:

The Rhône is constantly rising; the *quai d'Albert* is completely overrun and the populace is agitated and worried; Many have abandoned their homes... There are no casualties to report at this point, but I fear a great deal for the night.⁴²

Roussin's fears were well-founded. During the night, the dikes of the Rhône burst. 'It is impossible to give you a comprehensive report of the events that occurred since midnight', wrote the commandant of the Brotteaux gendarme on the morning of the 31st. Roads were completely submerged and houses were collapsing with 'a frightful crash'.⁴³ Meanwhile, cries of '*au secours!*' rang out as families fled the destruction: a contemporary report noted that 'while no-one perished, the damages... were substantial'.⁴⁴ A group of 'brave soldiers' who had been sent to reinforce the dike were left stranded when the fast-flowing water surrounded them, and frantic attempts to rescue them took place in the early hours of the morning.⁴⁵

³⁹ ADR 1 M 348, Report by the commandant of the gendarme du Rhône, 28 May 1856.

⁴⁰ ADR 1 M 348, Commissaire de police des Brotteaux to Vaisse, 29-30 May 1856.

⁴¹ ADR 1 M 348, Measurements taken at Pont Lafayette by the bridge inspector, 28-30 May 1856.

⁴² ADR 1 M 348, Roussin to Vaisse, 30 May 1856, 11pm

⁴³ ADR 1 M 348, Overnight report by commandant of the brigade des Brotteaux, 30-31 May 1856

⁴⁴ Stephen, *Récit des inondations*, p. 55.

⁴⁵ Overnight report.

The early photographer Édouard Baldus, who had been documenting buildings in Paris slated for demolition by the Baron Haussmann, travelled to Lyon and the other towns that were hit by the floods to record the immediate aftermath. One of the photos he created shows the stone church of Saint-Pothin in the Brotteaux standing alone amongst the wooden wreckage of its surrounding neighbourhood, while another in the same quarter shows a row of houses ripped in two (fig. 2.6).⁴⁶ In spite of this destruction, casualties were surprisingly low. In November 1856, the *curé* of Saint-Pothin wrote to M. Charbonnier (mayor of the third arrondissement of Lyon and president of the commission of support for those affected by the flood), stressing that ‘in this woeful time we have had many houses destroyed and, consequently, many families plunged into the deepest misery, but we have only had a single man buried in the rubble’.⁴⁷ The biggest impact of the floods was therefore the mass unhousing of thousands of working-class Lyonnais in the Brotteaux, Guillotière, and Chapennes quarters. Contemporary estimates put the number of unhoused at 20,000: a sizeable proportion of the overall population of 255,000 in Lyon, and one that was disproportionately working-class.⁴⁸

To put this number in context, over a period of mere days in mid-1856, the city of Lyon found itself with a group of newly-homeless working-class people that amounted to over half of the contemporary total population in Roubaix. Like Roubaix, Lyon’s population had swelled over the previous half a century, though as a much larger city to begin with the

⁴⁶ Édouard Baldus, ‘The Floods of 1856, Church of Saint-Pothin, Lyon’ <http://metmuseum.org/exhibitions/view?exhibitionId={5992e04c-2a5a-4d34-9e0d-929a263289e6}&oid=288843> accessed 16 Nov. 2017; Édouard Baldus, ‘The Floods of 1856, Brotteaux, Lyon, from ‘Salt and Silver: Early Photography 1840-1860 – Tate Britain’ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02kpvfp/p02kpvfn3>, accessed 16 Nov. 2017.

⁴⁷ AML 4 WP 52, Curé of Saint-Pothin to mayor of 3^e arrondissement of Lyon (Charbonnier), 28 Nov. 1856.

⁴⁸ AML 744 WP 075, *Adjoint au maire* of the 3^eme arrondissement of Lyon to Vaïsse, ‘Rapport sur la Cité de l’Enfant Jésus’, 17 Jun. 1857; Bruno Benoit and Roland Saussac, *Histoire de Lyon* (Brignais, 2001), p. 204.

proportional increase was much lower: from just under 90,000 in 1800 to 177,190 in 1851 (fig. 0.1). The annexation of the three surrounding suburbs of La Croix Rousse, La Guillotière, and Vaise in 1853 brought Lyon's overall population to 255,000 by the 1856 census, but the growth of Lyon was at a much slower rate than Roubaix.⁴⁹ Another contrast was that, while the workers of Second Empire Roubaix flocked to the large factories of industrialists like Motte-Bossut, in Lyon the predominant silk industry was still undertaken at home, in high-ceilinged apartments like those that populated the hill of La Croix Rousse from the early years of the century.⁵⁰

The pressing housing question in the summer of 1856 was therefore not the longer-term, systemic housing shortage that factory-towns like Roubaix experienced, but rather it was a question of how to provide for a large group of de-housed working-class people in a short period of time. The responses therefore offer a different approach to answering a different housing question; an approach shaped as much by natural disaster as it was by anything peculiar to Lyon.

Charitable support during this crisis of homelessness came from a wide variety of sources. In the face of such an incomprehensibly large number of victims, one trend was to single out individuals worthy of support. The Paris-based *Œuvre des Saints Anges* instructed Vaïsse, the prefect of the Rhône, to find a young girl who had been orphaned by the flood who could be sent to Paris. This girl would receive a Christian upbringing, elementary education, and the

⁴⁹ William B. Cohen, *Urban Government and the Rise of the French City: Five Municipalities in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 1998), p. 8.

⁵⁰ Louis-Auguste Rougier, *Hygiène de Lyon, compte-rendu des travaux du conseil d'hygiène publique et de salubrité* (Lyon, 1860), p. 31; Jacques Vergely, 'Le logement populaire avant le XXème siècle : Quelques repères historiques à travers les plans', *Bulletin de la Société académique d'architecture de Lyon*, 22 (2015), pp. 15-8.

skills necessary to support herself through work.⁵¹ Similarly, the consulate for the King of Sardinia petitioned Charbonnier for support for a specific number of his subjects who had been left homeless after the flood. One of these, Claude Deschamps, was a Savoyard whose family of eight had lost everything when their house was destroyed, and had yet to receive any support. The blind Piedmontais Antoine Blessente-Canton and his family, meanwhile, deserved close consideration for aid as he was one of the ‘very unfortunate for whom we must urgently provide’.⁵²

Where individuals could not be singled out for direct aid, charitable support also came in the form of donation of material possessions to replace those destroyed in the floods. The *Société de bienfaisance des Dames israélites de Lyon* donated shirts, hats, and other items of clothing for the children of families affected by the floods.⁵³ The rabbi of the *Consistoire de Lyon*, passing on the details of this donation to Charbonnier, conveyed his regrets that they lacked the means to help in any greater way.⁵⁴ The mutual support society for silk workers in Lyon was also busy with distributing aid to those affected, though there was a limit to how much could be provided. Nicolas Charpin, a silk dyer who had been forced to abandon his home at 22 *Rue Tête d’Or*, received 300 Fr. from the society to reimburse him for the furniture he lost to the disaster; for the loss of his physical residence, the society were forced to direct him towards the prefecture for support.⁵⁵

⁵¹ AML 4 WP 52, Vaïsse to Charbonnier, with details of the offer made by *l’œuvre des Saints Anges*, 31 Oct. 1856.

⁵² AML 4 WP 52, *Consulat général* of the King of Sardinia to Charbonnier, 11 Jun., 7 Jul., and 11 Jul. 1856.

⁵³ AML 4 WP 52, Rabbi of *consistoire israélite de Lyon* to President of *comité des secours*, 25 Jun. 1856.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ AML 4 WP 52, List of twenty members of *Société de secours mutuels des ouvriers en soie de Lyon* who received support after the floods, 30 Jun. 1856.

These examples highlight the limited nature of charitable reactions to the flood. In providing new clothes or furniture, or singling out isolated individuals for support, these charitable actions barely scratched the surface of the immediate problem that hundreds of lodgings had been destroyed, and rebuilding on flooded land would not be viable for a long time. At the small-scale, personal level, people opened their doors to the homeless. The *police de Lyon* published advertisements of those who had spare beds in their apartments (for a cost) in the immediate aftermath of the floods.⁵⁶ On a larger, but no more permanent, scale, the director of the nearby military fort at Sainte-Foy-Lès-Lyon, was quick to respond to calls for help from a special commissioner when he offered five hundred temporary beds on 2 June 1856 for those left homeless.⁵⁷ But as far as long-term housing solutions go, the most notable response was pioneered by Camille Rambaud.

Camille Rambaud (1822-1901) is a prominent figure in the history of social Catholicism in nineteenth-century Lyon, especially for his impact on a generation of Third Republic Lyonnais bourgeois.⁵⁸ He was born into a rich silk manufacturing family, with his father running a business specialising in the production of tulle.⁵⁹ In 1848, when Rambaud was only 26, his father died, leaving him a small fortune, as well as partial control of the family business, Potton-Rambaud.⁶⁰ Beyond his business interests, Rambaud was struck by the plight of the working classes, especially in the aftermath of the 1848 Revolution. He read the works

⁵⁶ AML 4 WP 52, Police de Lyon, 5e arrondissement, 3e quartier, 'Etat nominatif des appartements vides à louer de suites, pour les inondées du Rhône', s.d. (1856)

⁵⁷ AML 4 WP 52, Director of Fort Sainte-Foy-Lès-Lyon to special commissioner, 2 Jun. 1856.

⁵⁸ Rambaud had an important impact on later social Catholic reformers in the Third Republic: Régis Ladous, 'Catholicisme bourgeois, catholicisme social', in Jean-Dominique Durand et al. (eds.), *Cent ans de catholicisme social à Lyon et en Rhône-Alpes* (Paris, 1992), p. 113 and Maurice Berthault, 'Les oeuvres charitables ou d'intérêt public de Félix Mangini (1836-1902)', *Bulletin de la Société historique, archéologique et littéraire de Lyon*, 32 (2002), pp. 355-7.

⁵⁹ Jean-Baptiste Martin, *Histoire des églises et chapelles de Lyon*, 2 vols. (2; Lyon, 1909), p. 180.

⁶⁰ Francisque Bouillier, 'L'Abbé Rambaud et la cité des vieillards de Lyon', *La Revue du Lyonnais*, 519 (1895), p. 382.

of the utopian socialists, Saint-Simon and Charles Fourier, and was instrumental in setting up the mutual support society for silk workers in that year.⁶¹ He also began running religious and elementary education classes in a rented room on Sundays for children who rarely went to school; the classes proved so popular that, in autumn 1850, he built a small house with a chapel behind the church of Saint-Pothin specifically dedicated to these classes.⁶²

Rimbaud became more and more interested in his Catholic charitable actions: the combination of several of the Potton family members leaving the business for the Dominican or Capuchin orders between 1850-3 and the death of Rimbaud's mother in 1854 led to him terminating his contract with the remaining Pottons to focus his attentions exclusively on charity. This decision alienated him from his social peers in the industrial bourgeoisie of Lyon, but he was able to convince Paul de Bourg, another 'young man from a great family' to 'sacrifice his future to devote himself to the common good'.⁶³ Together with de Bourg, Rimbaud leased a 13,000 m² plot of land from the *Hospices de Lyon* in La Guillotière on which he began to construct a quadrangle of buildings, with the aim of expanding his focus on education for working-class children with separate schools for boys and girls.

The floods of 1856 changed his focus for the project. The waters had reached the first storey of the single school block that he had constructed by that point, and surrounding houses were destroyed.⁶⁴ In the immediate aftermath, Rimbaud originally planned to help the desperate by constructing temporary accommodation; after consultation with other like-minded

⁶¹ Bernadette Angleraud, *Lyon et ses pauvres : des œuvres de charité aux assurances sociales, 1800-1939* (Paris, 2011), p. 94; Martin, *Histoire des églises et chapelles de Lyon*, p. 180; Timothy B. Smith, 'Public assistance and labor supply in nineteenth-century Lyon', *Journal of Modern History*, 68, 1 (1996), pp. 17-8.

⁶² Martin, *Histoire des églises et chapelles de Lyon*, p. 180.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 181.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 181.

individuals, this original plan grew, until Rambaud ‘dreamed of constructing an entire *Cité*, a veritable little town, with its own church, schools, walkways... able to contain between a thousand to twelve hundred souls’.⁶⁵ This *cité* was to be called the ‘*Cité de l’Enfant Jésus*’.

Rambaud and de Bourg funded construction through their own personal funds as well as through 200,000 Fr. of initial donations. Similar to Henry Roberts’s approach in London, those who purchased one or more of the shares of 500 Fr. would receive a five percent return on their investment; while Rambaud’s motivations were moralistic and charitable, this return was included to entice his less altruistically-minded peers. Donations came from some of the leading industrialists of Lyon and, even though the scheme was overtly Catholic (see below), prominent Protestants also contributed to the financing. Édouard Frossard, a Protestant who was the director of the nearby *Chantiers de La Buire* construction company, bought 35,000 Fr of shares.⁶⁶ A donation of 5,000 Fr. also came from François-Barthélemy Arlès-Dufour, a Saint-Simonian who was fiercely interested in improving working-class conditions and had attempted a small *cité ouvrière* of his own in 1854 near his factory in Oullins, just south of Lyon.⁶⁷ Rambaud also applied for a government subvention from the fund that Napoleon III set up on 22 January 1852 for the construction of working-class housing in industrial towns, yet this application was rejected.⁶⁸ Despite this lack of government funding, the Minister of

⁶⁵ AML 744 WP 075, Camille Rambaud, ‘Construction de la Cité de l’Enfant Jésus’, s.d. (c. 1856-7)

⁶⁶ Ibid.; Angleraud, *Lyon et ses pauvres*, p. 94.

⁶⁷ C. L., *Arlès-Dufour* (Paris, 1874), pp. 74, 106-17; Jacques Canton-Debat, ‘Un homme d’affaires lyonnais Arlès-Dufour (1797-1872)’, (PhD thesis, Université Lumière Lyon 2, 2000), pp. 412-3.

⁶⁸ It is not clear why Rambaud was unsuccessful in this application, though it may have been indicative of a general lack of funds available from Napoléon III’s donation by 1856/7. In a letter to Rambaud on 22 June 1857, the Prefect of the Rhône, Vaïsse wrote ‘the situation of the credit opened by the decree of 22 January 1852 for the improvement of workers’ housing, no longer permits grants for enterprises of this nature in the *département* [of the Rhône]’, AML 744 WP 075, Vaïsse to Rambaud, 22 Jun. 1857.

the Interior asked to be sent a detailed report on the progress of the construction and operation of the *cité*.⁶⁹

The report that was prepared in response went into great detail about the architectural style of the *cité*. Separate apartments of between one and three rooms were distributed throughout the three main buildings that had been constructed at the time, designed to house no more than one family per apartment. Each of the five main buildings that would finally be built in the *cité* was named after a different saint: Saint-Joseph, Saint-Pierre, Saint-Paul, Saint-François, and Saint-Louis.⁷⁰ The report was also clearly influenced by the hygienist language of the 1840s. The author praised the 3.5 m. ceiling heights for giving a high ‘quantity of atmospheric air that each family can enjoy’.⁷¹ Moreover, while this airy isolation for each family was key, so too was the positive influence of communal surveillance. The covered galleries that connected the apartments allowed parents to keep an eye on their children as they played in the common below, but the author of the report also stressed that this meant that they ‘provide... so to speak, a solidarity of surveillance between all the inhabitants of the *cité* for the observation of order and the maintenance of good manners’.⁷²

The overall plan for the *Cité de l'Enfant Jésus* reflected Rimbaud's reading of the utopian Charles Fourier. In the 1820s, Fourier had envisaged a ‘*phalanstère*’ housing plan that would accommodate around 1,600 workers.⁷³ In this utopian model, housing would be communal, as

⁶⁹ AML 744 WP 075, Minister of the Interior to Vaïsse, ‘Cité de l'Enfant Jésus à Lyon’, 11 Mar. 1857.

⁷⁰ Daniel Pagès, ‘Félix Mangini et les premières réalisations d'habitat social à Lyon’, *Bulletin de la Société académique d'architecture de Lyon*, 22 (2015), pp. 45-7.

⁷¹ ‘Rapport sur la Cité de l'Enfant Jésus’.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Bullock and Read, *The Movement for Housing Reform*, p. 291.

the strife of current civilisation would be replaced by an absolute order.⁷⁴ The architectural layout, importance of covered galleries connecting the interior and exterior, and focus on communal living in the *Cité de l'Enfant Jésus* were all strongly reminiscent of the 'phalanstère' (fig. 2.7).⁷⁵

But unlike Fourier, who saw his utopian society as outstripping or supplanting traditional religion, Rambaud perceived the Christian nature of the *Cité de l'Enfant Jésus* as essential.⁷⁶ The 1856 flood may have provided him with the incentive and justification for building his little town, but the purpose that this *cité* was to serve went far beyond just providing a bed and shelter for those rendered homeless by the catastrophe. In his call to the Lyonnais bourgeoisie for a further 600,000 Fr. in donations to fund the construction, Rambaud asserted that:

Our goal has become not only to accommodate our industrial class in the most convenient and cheap manner, but also to gain a genuine moral good by uniting many families around a religious centre... [and therefore making them] eagerly seize opportunities to place themselves and their children safe from bad examples.⁷⁷

This religious centre was literal: in addition to the religious education and general direction provided by Rambaud, the four-sided *cité* was to contain a large church at its heart. The report that was prepared for the Prefect Vaïsse on the orders of the Minister of the Interior noted that this church, when finished, would be large enough to hold the entire population of the *cité*, and that all ceremonies would be free for inhabitants to attend. The report went on to say that the presence of this church meant that '[e]verything needed for the practice of Christian charity is therefore provided and evangelical virtues can be operated without retribution'.⁷⁸

The importance of community and of ensuring positive behaviour along religious lines in the

⁷⁴ Benevolo, *The Origins of Modern Town Planning*, pp. 56-62; Charles Fourier, *Cités Ouvrières : des modifications à introduire dans l'architecture des villes* (Paris, 1849), pp. 17-25.

⁷⁵ Angleraud, *Lyon et ses pauvres*, p. 94; Fourier, *Cités ouvrières*, pp. 17-25; Jonathan Beecher, *Charles Fourier : the Visionary and His World* (Berkeley CA, 1987), pp. 244-6.

⁷⁶ Ibid. pp. 313, 454-7.

⁷⁷ Rambaud, 'Construction de la Cité de l'Enfant Jésus'.

⁷⁸ 'Rapport sur la Cité de l'Enfant Jésus'.

workers was highlighted by Rambaud himself, when he noted that ‘notoriously immoral people’ would be excluded from the *cité*, that there would be a rigid adherence to attending church services, and that he and the fathers of the church would live amongst the workers and therefore exert a positive influence.⁷⁹

The religiosity of the project was obvious in its name. The veneration of the infant Christ was an old Catholic tradition that, in France, saw a concerted reinvention from the mid-nineteenth century as a motif for a new, widespread education for children.⁸⁰ This was a logical name, then, coming from Rambaud’s earlier focus on classes for working-class children in Lyon. In the post-flood context, however, when the *cité* was expanded and took in whole families, the name took on a new meaning. The first twenty families were able to move in by August 1857, and over three hundred workers were housed by the end of the 1850s.⁸¹ The writer of the report for the Minister of the Interior asserted that the name of the *cité* seemed to say to these hundreds of homeless workers, adults and children alike: ‘Come friends, under the veil of my cradle, witness the birth and growth of the happiness of mankind’.⁸² These workers were now to be under the protection not only of a Catholic church, but also of the father figure of Rambaud himself. The fatherly role played by Rambaud is perhaps best highlighted, however, by the fact that in 1861 he was ordained as a priest by the archbishop of Lyon, followed by de

⁷⁹ Rambaud, 'Construction de la Cité de l'Enfant Jésus'

⁸⁰ Sandra La Rocca, *L'Enfant Jésus : histoire et anthropologie d'une dévotion dans l'occident chrétien* (Toulouse, 2007), p. 18.

⁸¹ Lori R. Weintrob, 'Mutuellisme Lyonnais à la mutualité républicaine : espaces et valeurs de la solidarité, 1804-1914', in Pierre Vaisse (ed.), *L'esprit d'un siècle : Lyon, 1800-1914* (Lyon, 2007), p. 315.

⁸² 'Rapport sur la Cité de l'Enfant Jésus'.

Bourg in 1864.⁸³ Indeed, when the *cité* is discussed in historical works, it is invariably referred to as the project of the ‘abbé Rambaud’.⁸⁴

This dominance of the figure of the *abbé* Rambaud came to influence the people’s views of the *cité* itself. According to Francisque Bouillier’s 1895 history of the project, the ‘abbé Rambaud gave it the name of *cité de l’Enfant Jésus*, but the people called it the *Cité Rambaud*’.⁸⁵ This dual identity of the *cité* reflects the dual identity of its founder: he was born into a class where industrial paternalism could be utilised to place the figure of employer as father and provider in the minds of the workers, yet he rescinded this life when he entered the religious orders where a higher father was to be more important for the well-being of the working classes.⁸⁶ Bouillier finished his history, which was designed to serve as a supporting report on whether Rambaud should be awarded the *prix Audiffred* for his charitable work, with the line ‘In the interest of... confirming my studies, I asked lots of people in all the different classes of society in Lyon about the abbé Rambaud; all replied: he is an admirable man; some [even] said: he is a saint’.⁸⁷

Despite its early successes, the *Cité de l’Enfant Jésus* was not to be a long-term *cité ouvrière*. It was blighted in part due to financial problems in construction, as well as by a reluctance on the part of the tenants to adhere to some of the stricter regulations, such as the attendance at

⁸³ Martin, *Histoire des églises et chapelles de Lyon*, p. 182.

⁸⁴ Bouillier, ‘L’Abbé Rambaud’, pp. 381-92; Angleraud, *Lyon et ses pauvres*, pp. 94-5; Berthault, ‘Les oeuvres charitables ou d’intérêt public de Félix Mangini’, p. 357; Cayez and Chassagne, *Lyon et le Lyonnais*, p. 202.

⁸⁵ Bouillier, ‘L’Abbé Rambaud’, p. 385.

⁸⁶ Donald Reid has explored this idea of the industrialist as father of his workers in nineteenth-century France: Donald Reid, ‘Industrial paternalism: discourse and practice in nineteenth-century French mining and metallurgy’, *Comparative studies in society and history*, 27, 4 (1985), p. 581; Donald Reid, ‘In the name of the Father: a language of labour relations in nineteenth-century France’, *History Workshop*, 38 (1994), pp. 1-2.

⁸⁷ Bouillier, ‘L’Abbé Rambaud’, p. 392.

mass.⁸⁸ The immediate housing crisis that the floods had wrought on the working classes of Lyon saw a temporary saviour in Rambaud and his *cité*, yet once the immediate danger had passed, there was a disconnect between the intentions of the founder and the willingness to adhere to these intentions by the workers. Eventually, in 1866, Rambaud converted his little town into a charitable '*Cité des Vieillards*', housing the elderly at no cost.⁸⁹

What is notable, however, is that even in its failure, the *Cité de l'Enfant Jésus* is the only example of a large-scale industrialist-led housing project in Second Empire Lyon. The continued prevalence of domestic silk work meant that there were no *filatures monstres* in Lyon around which cheap accommodation needed to be constructed. Additionally, the age and size of Lyon, combined with its slower rate of growth compared to cities like Roubaix, meant that there was less urgency for industrialists to build for their workers. The immediate housing crisis that came from the 1856 floods was an anomaly, and Rambaud's response was one that could only have come with the blank slate provided to him by the destruction of so much existing housing.

In spite of its long-term failure, the *Cité de l'Enfant Jésus* offers us an example of a Second Empire industrialist's approach to solving the housing problem different to that seen in the profit-driven *courées* and *forts* of Roubaix. The *Cité de l'Enfant Jésus* was not motivated by profit, and crossed the lines of charity and industry in four different ways: in the figure of Rambaud, who was the heir to an industrial family, yet later became an ordained priest; in the financing of the project, which was spearheaded by Catholics, yet which received donations from prominent Protestant industrialists; in the architectural plan of the *cité*, which was an

⁸⁸ Angleraud, *Lyon et ses pauvres*, p. 96.

⁸⁹ AML 744 WP 075, Commissaire de police administrative, 'Rapport à Monsieur le Sénateur, Préfet du Rhône', no. 1334, 3 Nov. 1869.

interpretation of utopian, Fourierist plans, yet which placed a Church building at the core; and in its very name, which was intended to convey a Catholic message of charity, yet was popularly overridden by a name that stressed the founder's individual paternalism. This project therefore blurs the lines between industrial philanthropy and Catholic charity. The flood of 1856 and the overnight unhousing of 20,000 workers had forced people to build with much greater urgency than in Roubaix, and Rambaud's response was a unique product of his view of industrial paternalism.

Mulhouse: transforming workers into homeowners

So far in this chapter, we have seen two different approaches to the housing problem from Second Empire industrialists. On the one hand was the leading Roubaisian industrialist Louis Motte-Bossut, who eschewed previous generations' experiments with housing their workers in favour of reinvesting profits into expanding his business. The exasperation of potentially being 'forced to build' houses in order to attract workers was indicative of Motte-Bossut's views on industrialists' role in housing, and instead it was left to the private market to continue the Roubaisian tradition of *courée* housing to meet the needs of an ever-growing workforce. On the other hand, Rambaud's response in Lyon was not motivated by profit at all; in fact, the former silk manufacturer had left the industrial world of his peers in favour of engaging in acts of charity. His housing scheme was instead focused on immediate physical relief, and long-term spiritual and moral salvation, literally placing religion at its centre.

Funded by shareholders with limited five percent returns, the *Cité de l'Enfant Jésus* was the only large example of an industrialist-led housing scheme in Second Empire Lyon. And yet, it failed. It was in Mulhouse that the industrial elite managed to reconcile profit, philanthropy, and moralizing motivations in one of the largest and most successful housing schemes in nineteenth-century Europe: the simply-titled *cités ouvrières*.

In many ways, Mulhouse and Roubaix bear a striking resemblance to one another. The two had the rapid rates of proportional growth in nineteenth century France; both led the way in large-scale, factory-based textile work; both have been referred to by contemporaries and historians alike as the ‘French Manchester’; both had an industrial elite who used marriage to cement business ties and social position. The major difference, however, was the presence in Mulhouse of the SIM since the late 1820s, and the philanthropic activities pursued by this *société* in the decades before the Second Empire. As we saw in the previous chapter, the Mulhousian elite, through the SIM, took an active interest not only in housing workers locally, but were also deeply engaged with international developments in housing reform.

We left the SIM in the previous chapter having repeatedly come together to discuss the work of British housing reformer Henry Roberts between 1845-52. Members of SIM had experimented with housing their workers in the decades prior to the discussion of this British reformers’ models and recommendations, and drew upon a combination of these experiments and Roberts’s writings to pioneer their own large-scale housing scheme. The result was the foundation on 10 June 1853 of the *Société mulhousienne des cités ouvrières* (SOMCO) by Jean Dollfus.

Before turning to details of the housing scheme, it is important to pause on the figure of Jean Dollfus (1800-87). In the same way that there are similarities between the cities of Roubaix and Mulhouse, there are also a number of striking biographical features shared by Louis Motte-Bossut and Jean Dollfus. Both men inherited textile businesses that had been established by previous generations, and helped turn them into the leaders in their prospective towns. Jean’s great-uncle, Jean-Henri Dollfus, was one of the three founders of the first

textile-printing factory in Mulhouse in 1746.⁹⁰ Jean's father, Daniel Dollfus-Mieg, renamed the firm *Dollfus-Mieg et Cie* (DMC) on 21 March 1800, six months before Jean was born.⁹¹ Over the early years of the nineteenth-century, Daniel Dollfus-Mieg brought in the next generation to help expand and run the firm: his son-in-law, André Kœchlin (1789-1875), and four sons, Daniel Dollfus-Ausset (1787-1870), Mathieu Dollfus (1799-1887), Émile Dollfus (1805-1858) as well as Jean. On Daniel's death in 1818, the five men became equal shareholders of the company.⁹² When Jean took control as director in 1850, DMC held over 39 hectares of land in Dornach, just north of Mulhouse, including several different textile factories with tens of thousands of spindles; in terms of workers, DMC employed 700 in 1800 and 2,419 by 1865.⁹³ Jean Dollfus did not have a single *filature monstre* in the style of Louis Motte-Bossut but, rather, was head of a sprawling industrial enterprise that was easily the most powerful in Mulhouse.

Alongside this industrial prowess, the Dollfus family also had a long history of municipal power in Mulhouse. Eleven Dollfus family members ruled as *bourgmestre* or mayor between 1618 and 1869 covering 125 of the 251-year span, while ten of the twenty-one mayors between 1798 and 1870 bore the names of Kœchlin, Dollfus, or a combination of the two.⁹⁴ The two longest-serving mayors of Mulhouse under the July Monarchy were André Kœchlin and Émile Dollfus, Jean's brother-in-law and younger brother respectively, while Jean himself would succeed Joseph Kœchlin-Schlumberger as mayor in 1863.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Hau and Stoskopf, *Les Dynasties alsaciennes*, p. 30.

⁹¹ Nicolas Schreck, 'Dollfus-Mieg et Cie: histoire d'une grande industrie cotonnière des origines à la Première Guerre Mondiale', in Pierre Fluck (ed.), *DMC: Patrimoine mondial?* (Colmar, 2006), p. 14.

⁹² Ibid., p. 20.

⁹³ Ibid., pp. 17, 22; Claude Fohlen, *L'Industrie textile au temps du second empire* (Paris, 1956), p. 219.

⁹⁴ Société industrielle de Mulhouse, *Histoire documentaire*, pp. 31-2; Max Dollfus, *Histoire et généalogie de la famille Dollfus de Mulhouse : 1450-1908* (Mulhouse, 1909), p. 27.

⁹⁵ There were three other short-term or provisional July Monarchy mayors besides André Kœchlin and Émile Dollfus: Sébastien Spoerlin governed between July-September 1830, André Baumgartner interrupted André Kœchlin's two terms as mayor between April-August

Like Louis Motte-Bossut, therefore, Jean Dollfus held a prominent industrial and municipal position by the Second Empire. However, unlike the Roubaisian industrialist, Jean and his family had been central to shaping debate about industrialists' role in building houses for their workers in the decades before the Second Empire. Jean's brothers, Daniel Dollfus-Ausset and Émile Dollfus, were two of the 22 founding members of SIM in 1826.⁹⁶ It was Jean's brother-in-law, and fellow shareholder of DMC, André Kœchlin who had built 36 apartments for his workers between 1835-6 which had drawn Villermé's praise, and it was Daniel Dollfus-Ausset who had first brought the work of Henry Roberts to the attention of SIM at a meeting in 1845.

When Jean Dollfus founded SOMCO in June 1853, therefore, he was not only one of the most powerful men in Mulhouse, but he was also continuing a tradition established by his family of making direct interventions into the housing problem. The housing scheme itself outstripped any of the previous attempts in Mulhouse, and innovated in a number of distinct strands when compared with other contemporary schemes in Europe: the architectural designs of the houses, the funding model of the society, and the ability for workers to become homeowners.

When Dollfus founded SOMCO, there was a central debate as to what form the houses of the *cités* should take. There were two dominant models of housing in French *cités ouvrières* by mid-century, one motivated by cost efficiency, the other by idealistic moral reform. The former were large blocks of individual dwellings or apartments; the latter was the isolated single house. The apartment block made sense in large cities like London, Paris and

1832, and Jean George Weiss was provisional mayor was mayor between March-July 1843, after which Émile Dollfus governed until September 1848.

⁹⁶ 'Règlements de la Société industrielle de Mulhausen'.

Marseilles, where the price of land was a key factor. The *Cité Napoléon* in Paris, built from 1849 to house around five hundred workers, was a prominent example of this form, but it was deeply unpopular amongst workers and reformers alike. Workers rejected the overt security motivations of such schemes, which were often accompanied by strict regulations; reformers, meanwhile, feared the immorality and fermentation of socialism that would, apparently, come from workers sharing a staircase.⁹⁷ The scheme was ultimately a failure, and plans to build similar models throughout Paris were abandoned. As we saw above, workers' concerns about overt security and over-surveillance were also part of the reason why the *Cité de l'Enfant Jésus* block in Lyon failed later in the century.

The block form was not always motivated by maximizing the use of land. Just like Camille Rambaud was influenced by the utopian plans of Charles Fourier and his *phalanstère* when building the *Cité de l'Enfant Jésus* in Lyon, there were others who used the block form to reform working-class living conditions. From 1859, the iron-works industrialist Jean-Baptiste André Godin created a Fourier-influenced '*Familistère*' for his workers at his factory at Guise. Godin's *Familistère* was a housing block tied to a factory, unlike Fourier's complete self-sufficient autonomy or Rambaud's charitable intervention following natural disaster.⁹⁸ However, central to Godin's plan was a focus on communal facilities and worker satisfaction, with the creation of a crèche (1862) and even a theatre (1869). Perhaps most importantly, in 1880 Godin handed management of the scheme to his workers.⁹⁹ Though its construction was begun after that at Mulhouse, the *Familistère* is an important example of how contemporary

⁹⁷ Louis René Villermé, *Sur les cités ouvrières* (Paris, 1850), pp. 15-16; Armand Audiganne, *Les Populations ouvrières et les industries de la France* (Paris, 1860), pp. 315-16; Shapiro, *Housing the Poor of Paris*, pp. 48-50; Babelon, 'La rencontre de l'utopie', pp. 27-28.

⁹⁸ Bullock and Read, *The Movement for Housing Reform*, pp. 315-6.

⁹⁹ Benevolo, *The Origins of Modern Town Planning*, p. 65.

reform thought could conceive of using the accommodation block to tackle the housing problem, for reasons other than social control.

The British reformer Henry Roberts, despite building some of his models in the block form, held the individual house as the absolute ideal. The isolated house would be able to improve hygienic conditions as well as restoring the sanctity of the working-class family unit. The moralising motivations of the isolated form were extremely prominent in the debates on architectural form in SIM between the meeting convened by Jean Zuber *fils* in 1851 to discuss Roberts's work, and the foundation of the SOMCO in the summer of 1853.¹⁰⁰ Land was much cheaper in Mulhouse than in the larger, older cities; therefore, the economic factors that made the block model attractive did not apply.

The models that SOMCO eventually chose for construction were designed by the local architect Émile Muller. Muller wrote in an 1856 treatise that: 'The [housing] question leads to different resolutions for the worker: the life of the cabaret or the life of the family'.¹⁰¹ This dichotomy, and the role that single-family housing units played in it, is one that we shall examine at greater depth in Chapter 4 below. But it was evident that Muller shared this widespread belief that housing was more than an architectural question: improving the physical condition of workers through better housing would improve the moral and social conditions as well.¹⁰² Muller decided on two different forms for the houses in the *cités*. The first was inspired by the models that Jean Zuber *fils* had built near his paper factory between 1849-51s: rows of terraced houses, back to back, each with its own strip of garden at the front

¹⁰⁰ 'Projet d'habitations pour les classes ouvrières', *Bulletin De La Société Industrielle De Mulhouse*, 1852, pp. 136-40.

¹⁰¹ Émile Muller, *Habitations ouvrières et agricoles: cités, bains et lavoirs* (Paris, 1856), p. 7.

¹⁰² Ott, *La Société industrielle de Mulhouse, 1826-1876*, p. 515; Jonas, *Mulhouse et ses cités ouvrières*, pp. 88-89.

(fig. 2.8). The second style was a block of four houses, which became known as the '*carré Mulhousien*'. This style involved a plot of land with a central building of either one or two storeys divided into four equal sections, so that each individual dwelling had two outward-facing walls and access to a garden (fig. 2.9).¹⁰³ While evidently influenced by Roberts's call for single-family dwellings as an ideal, the architectural style of these houses was also influenced by local vernacular styles, combining the previous housing innovations of Zuber with old Alsatian rural cottages.¹⁰⁴ Again, we see how the Mulhousians combined international reform debates with distinctly local characteristics. By building in the single-family house style, SOMCO was already realizing reformers' ideals.

After the designs had been finalised, SOMCO worked quickly. As Mulhouse was a growing city surrounded by undeveloped, rural land, SOMCO was able to build on a large scale for a relatively cheap price. The *société* built almost two hundred houses by the spring of 1854, and eight hundred by 1867, all in the area in the north of the town close to Dornach and to the DMC factories (figs. 2.10, 2.11).¹⁰⁵ There were two clear *cités*, divided by the north-south canal that ran through Mulhouse. The first *cité ouvrière* comprised 186 houses, built between 1853-4 on a plot of land of five hectares.¹⁰⁶ While the back-to-back style was cheaper to build, SOMCO preferred building in the '*carré Mulhousien*' style. Offering two outward faces, a larger garden and a greater circulation of air and light, the '*carré Mulhousien*' was believed to be a more

¹⁰³ ADHR 9 M 24, Émile Muller, 'La Société Mulhousienne des Cités Ouvrières: Devis descriptif', 15 May 1854; ADHR 9 M 24, Plans for houses, s.d. (c. 1853).

¹⁰⁴ Stéphane Jonas, 'Les villages ouvriers et Mulhouse, 1830-1930', *Villages ouvriers, mythe ou réalités*, 24-25 (1994), pp. 1-20.

¹⁰⁵ Jonas, *Mulhouse et ses cités ouvrières*, p. 133; ADHR 8 M 32, Sub-prefect of Mulhouse to prefect of Haut-Rhin, 19 Jan. 1867.

¹⁰⁶ Achille Penot, 'Des institutions pour prévoyance fondées par les industriels du Haut-Rhin en faveur de leurs ouvriers. Rapport présenté au nom du comité d'économie sociale, dans la séance du 30 Mai 1855', *BSIM* (Mulhouse, France), 1855, p. 412; ADHR 9 M 24, 'Locataires aux cités ouvrières de Mulhouse', 21 Apr. 1856; ADHR 9 M 24, Jean Dollfus to prefect of Haut-Rhin, 26 Jul. 1854.

hygienic design. When SOMCO began construction on the second *cité* of fifty-five hectares to the west of the canal in 1855, both styles were adopted, though the terrace ceased to be used after 1857 in order to maximise the ameliorating benefits of the houses of the *cités ouvrières*.¹⁰⁷ Alongside houses, SOMCO built extensive bathing and washroom facilities, as well as a restaurant and bakery, which offered food at subsidised prices.¹⁰⁸ Dollfus and Muller had effectively built a new town north of the city of Mulhouse with their *cités ouvrières*.

The second innovative factor of SOMCO was its financing model. Jean Dollfus adopted a similar model to Roberts's 'five percent philanthropy'. Instead of being tied indelibly to Dollfus and DMC, SOMCO was a separate company, funded by shareholders. Initially, there were twelve shareholders, accounting for sixty shares of 5,000 Fr. each; this number grew to twenty shareholders and seventy-one shares, totalling 355,000 Fr.¹⁰⁹ Of the original sixty shares, Jean Dollfus held a majority of thirty-five; the others belonged to other prominent members of SIM.¹¹⁰ Dollfus even went one step further than Roberts when he limited returns to just four percent. Rambaud's *Cité de l'Enfant Jésus* in Lyon would be funded along similar lines three years later.

Also, like Rambaud, Dollfus applied to Napoléon III's January 1852 housing fund. While Rambaud would be unsuccessful in 1856, SOMCO received two government subventions of

¹⁰⁷ Jonas, *Mulhouse et ses cités ouvrières*, p. 170.

¹⁰⁸ AMM O1 Ab 22, 'Société alimentaire des cités ouvrières', s.d.; AMM O1 Ab 22, 'Bains et lavoirs des cités ouvrières de Mulhouse', 14 Jan. 1858; Muller, *Habitations ouvrières et agricoles*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁰⁹ Achille Penot, 'Les Cités ouvrières du Haut-Rhin', *BSIM* (Mulhouse, France), 30 Aug. 1865, p. 394; Achille Penot, *Les Cités ouvrières de Mulhouse et du département du Haut-Rhin* (Mulhouse, 1867), pp. 11-12.

¹¹⁰ ADHR 9 M 24, Statutes of SOMCO, 10 Jun. 1853.

150,000 Fr. in autumn 1853 and spring 1854.¹¹¹ It is worth noting that SOMCO's requests for a third government subvention in 1856 were denied by Billaut, the new interior minister. Justifying his decision, Billaut wrote 'the government, in [already] according 300,000 Fr. to this city to help create the new quarters, has arrived at the extreme limits of the offerings [*sacrifices*] which it is able to make on this occasion'.¹¹² This failure in 1856 might perhaps explain Rambaud's rejection in Lyon in the same year: rather than there existing any particular deficiency in Rambaud's application for funding for his *Cité de l'Enfant Jésus*, instead there was a broader tightening of government purse strings from the new interior minister compared to his predecessor.

SOMCO therefore relied only partly on government funding, and only in its early stages. The primary method of funding housing construction came from the four percent philanthropy of its shareholders. This financing model differentiates the Mulhouse scheme from other nineteenth-century paternalist housing schemes that had single industrialist patrons, such as the Familistère at Guise. The housing scheme was pioneered by the majority shareholder Jean Dollfus, but it was funded by a group of industrialists who, were it not for the close interfamilial ties of the fabricantocracy, would otherwise have been industrial rivals. Unlike Rambaud's scheme in Lyon, where the banding together of industrialists to fund a housing scheme could be explained by charitable motivations following the devastating floods, SOMCO of Mulhouse was a genuinely shared scheme, supported by a 'fabricantocracy' who were used to working together on philanthropic schemes in the town's SIM. Indicative of this difference is the name of the scheme: it was named the *cité ouvrière* of Mulhouse, rather than the *Cité Dollfus*. This ironically contrasts with the Roubaisian *forts* and *courées*: in Mulhouse, the

¹¹¹ ADHR 9 M 24, Persigny to prefect of Haut-Rhin, 20 Sep. 1853; ADHR 9 M 24, Arrêté formally allocating 150,000 Fr. to the SOMCO, 8 Nov. 1853; ADHR 9 M 24, Persigny to prefect of Haut-Rhin, 26 May 1854.

¹¹² ADHR 9 M 24, Billaut to prefect of Haut-Rhin, 2 Oct. 1856

innovative and hygienic housing scheme bore a humble name whereas, in Roubaix, the deleterious and cramped *courées* proudly bore the name of their creators.

This is not to say that the *cités ouvrières* were completely divorced from the name of their main founder. Just as the *Cité de l'Enfant Jésus* became known as the *Cité Rambaud*, the Mulhousian housing scheme was referred to occasionally as the *Cité Dollfus* by contemporary observers beyond Mulhouse, and has been so named by some historians of housing as well.¹¹³ Moreover, although the name “Dollfus” was absent from the official name of the scheme, one of the first streets within the *cités ouvrières* was named the *Rue Dollfus*, running parallel to the *Rue Kœchlin* and *Rue Napoléon*.¹¹⁴ Paternal naming overtones were obviously not completely absent, therefore, but the direct ties between the shareholder-funded housing scheme and its main founder were far subtler than others at the time.

Bullock and Read, in their study of nineteenth-century housing reform, argued that French municipalities failed to take direct action on new housing in the nineteenth century, so the onus fell on isolated industrialists or philanthropic societies like the SOMCO.¹¹⁵ However, as we have seen above, in Mulhouse the lines between individuals and societies, and between industrial and municipal were blurred due to the domination of power by the fabricantocracy. Two of the original shares of the SOMCO were purchased by Joseph Kœchlin-Schlumberger, mayor of Mulhouse between 1852-63. He was succeeded as mayor by Jean Dollfus, the main shareholder of the SOMCO, who remained as mayor until 1869.¹¹⁶ While this overlap did not have any direct bearing on the foundation or operation of SOMCO – this was still a private

¹¹³ 'Faits divers', *La Presse* (Paris), 2 Mar. 1860, p. 2; Butler and Noisette, *Le Logement social en France*, p. 20.

¹¹⁴ ADHR 9 M 24, 'Plan de la cité ouvrière de Mulhouse', s.d. (c. 1853-54).

¹¹⁵ Bullock and Read, *The Movement for Housing Reform*, p. 282.

¹¹⁶ Statutes of SOMCO; Société industrielle de Mulhouse, *Historie documentaire*, p. 32.

initiative rather than a municipal one – the mayors’ roles as major shareholders meant that the *cités ouvrières* were a source of high priority in Mulhousian municipal government. As we shall see in the following chapter, the overlap between the municipality and SOMCO had direct consequences on the operation of the municipal *commissions des logements insalubres*.

The single-house architectural model and shareholder ‘four percent philanthropy’ financing were two realizations of ideals that had been proposed or executed on a smaller scale by reformers like Roberts. The third major innovation in the *cités ouvrières* of Mulhouse was unprecedented. Part of the problem with the rapid growth of Mulhouse’s population through migration was in the transitory lack of attachment of these poorly-paid migrant workers to the city. In 1866, the reformer Eugène Véron described the condition that resulted from this lack of long-term attachment to the city in Mulhouse as ‘an incessant renewal of misery’. Once migrant workers from surrounding rural Alsace or German and Swiss lands gained sufficient skills in Mulhouse, Véron argued, they would leave Mulhouse in the knowledge that they could command a higher wage further afield in France. But because of the continuously growing industry of Mulhouse, for every skilled worker who left, there was ‘a constantly rising stream of poor, without work or bread’ flowing into the town to take their place at the bottom rungs of the social ladder.¹¹⁷ Therefore, improved housing could offer a solution that could retain qualified workers in the city.

The solution was not just in the attractive and hygienic form of the houses, but from the innovative feature that SOMCO offered their workers to become homeowners. Yearly rental rates for a house in the *cités ouvrières* varied depending on which style they were, but even the more expensive *carré Mulhousien* houses could be let for as little as 190 Fr., due to the four

¹¹⁷ Eugène Véron, *Les Institutions ouvrières de Mulhouse et des environs* (Paris, 1866), p. 9.

percent philanthropy of the investors.¹¹⁸ Yet, for only six or seven additional francs a month, the worker was able to become the owner of his home. After a down payment of between 250-300 Fr., the workers would typically pay between 20-30 Fr. per month, which represented between 11.4%-17.1% of a qualified Mulhousian worker's salary.¹¹⁹ After fifteen years, the renter became a homeowner.¹²⁰

The inclusion of homeownership in this paternalist scheme was unique to Mulhouse. While other schemes aimed to improve the moral and social condition of workers through more salubrious dwellings, the idea of giving the opportunity of homeownership to the workers removed the overt socially controlling elements that employer-owned housing embodied. Social control was exerted differently at Mulhouse: whilst ownership was ceded to the workers, they were tied to remaining in Mulhouse long enough to pay off their fifteen years of payments, solving Véron's 'incessant renewal of misery'. Evidently, this scheme was aimed at an elite strata of workers who would be able to afford the down payment and increased monthly payments that the homeownership contributions necessitated. But it was this elite strata that the Mulhousian industrialists like Jean Dollfus were so concerned with keeping tied to the city and their factories.

Like savings societies or pension funds, the introduction of this let-to-buy feature aimed at inspiring thrift and savings in the working classes. By 15 September 1857, 158 families had committed to buy a house, with this figure rising to 320 by the end of 1859, and 548 by the

¹¹⁸ Émile Muller and Émile Cacheux, *Les Habitations ouvrières en tous pays, situation en 1878, avenir* (Paris, 1878), plates 1-6.

¹¹⁹ Bullock and Read, *The Movement for Housing Reform*, p. 436; Guerrand, 'De Mulhouse à Passy-Auteuil', p. 48.

¹²⁰ Muller and Cacheux, *Les Habitations ouvrières*, plate 1.

end of 1863.¹²¹ The ability to anchor skilled workers to Mulhouse for the fifteen years required to pay towards house ownership provided the stability that had been missing during Mulhouse's turbulent early growth, and meant that leading industrialists would be able to retain their skilled workers. Although the price of these houses meant that only skilled workers could afford to live in them, the idea was that these houses could also serve as an inspiration for those lower down the social ladder.

Jean Dollfus's *cités ouvrières* were not wholly altruistic, nor were they primarily motivated by turning a profit from the rapidly increasing population. They benefited the finances of Mulhousian industrialists who could now retain skilled workers, but they ceded ownership of the houses to the workers. They provided houses that improved hygienic conditions but equally placed an emphasis on the moral and social benefits of single-family households. Successfully straddling all these categories, SOMCO showed that industrialist-built workers' housing was not only achievable, but also had the ability to transform peripatetic workers into grounded homeowners.

Reputation and emulation

Within the context of industrialist-built housing schemes in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, Jean Dollfus's *cités ouvrières* soon became some of the most well-known throughout Europe. The successes of the Mulhouse scheme in turning workers into homeowners quickly made it famous beyond the Alsatian town as a source for inspiration and emulation. By the time of the 1867 *Exposition Universelle* in Paris, which was to be the first international exhibition to dedicate an entire section to the subject of workers' housing,

¹²¹ ADHR 9 M 24, 'Congrès de Francfort: Note sur les Cités Ouvrières. Communication faite par M. Jean Dollfus', 15 Sep. 1857; Audiganne, *Les Populations ouvrières*, p. 320.

onlookers eagerly awaited the opportunity to see the famous *carré Mulhousien* model.¹²² All contributors to *Groupe X – Classe 93* – the dedicated housing section – were encouraged to exhibit examples of ‘Housing characterised by cheapness united with conditions of hygiene and well-being’.¹²³ When this section was announced, the special correspondent for the British *Daily News* declared that ‘Saltaire may compete with Mulhausen [sic]... MM. Dollfus... Titus Salt, and others may cross swords’.¹²⁴ Dollfus and his scheme were famous enough to be positioned as the French equivalents of the British philanthropist Titus Salt and his textile workers’ town of Saltaire near Bradford, and onlookers eagerly awaited the opportunity to see a model of Dollfus’s houses for themselves.

Dollfus built a full-scale model of four houses, arranged in the *carré Mulhousien*, on the Champ de Mars outside the main Exposition pavilion (fig. 2.12). To prove that this was more than just a theoretical model – that it was evidence of a successful, existing scheme – Dollfus brought a family from his factory in Mulhouse to live in one of the houses for the duration of the exhibition, with visitors able to see the worker at home in these houses.¹²⁵ This had the desired effect of evoking the impact of his houses on the daily lives of his workers in Mulhouse. Dollfus and his scheme won a gold medal for the section, and the model was widely praised by visitors. One of these visitors, Paul Laurencin, noted that Mulhouse deserved praise not only for ‘the excellent moral and social principles which it has spread’ but

¹²² Rabinow, *French Modern*, pp. 93-4.

¹²³ E. Degrand and J. Faucher, ‘Classe 93 – Habitations caractérisées par le bon marché uni aux conditions d’hygiène et de bien-être’, in Michel Chevalier (ed.), *Exposition universelle de 1867 à Paris: Rapports du jury international: Groupe X - Classes 89 à 95* (Paris, 1868), p. 881.

¹²⁴ ‘The Universal Exhibition of 1867’, *Daily News* (London, England), 28 Sep. 1866, p. 4.

¹²⁵ ‘Paris’, *Le Petit Journal* (Paris, France), 8 Mar. 1867, p. 2; ‘L’Exposition Universelle’, *Le Petit Journal* (Paris, France), 9 May 1867, p. 3.

also because it ‘has demonstrated the practical solution [to the housing problem] by the construction of the *cité ouvrière* in the suburb of Mulhouse’.¹²⁶

In Laurencin’s comments, we see the attractiveness of Mulhouse to contemporary reformers: the housing scheme appealed because it united idealistic principles with practical implementation, it merged utopia with reality. The model on the Champ de Mars was indicative both of a uniquely successful, localised scheme in Mulhouse, but also of the possibility that housing schemes could realize the lofty visions of social reformers. At a time when other philanthropic housing schemes in Europe were limited in their scale, architectural designs, and homeownership elements, observers could point to the successes of Mulhouse as evidence that the dream of healthily-housed, home-owning workers was not unattainable. ‘These [housing] companies are difficult’, wrote the author of an article about a nascent Belgian housing scheme in 1866 Liège, ‘but the Society of Mulhouse proves that they are possible’.¹²⁷ The Mulhousian *cités ouvrières* came to be held up as the ideal solution to the housing problem beyond Alsace and even France, and the scheme’s successes became evidence that this ideal was achievable. By the early Third Republic, when reformer Jules Simon was asked to write an entry on ‘*cités ouvrières*’ for Maurice Block’s *Dictionnaire générale de la politique* in 1873-4, he described Mulhouse as the absolute ideal form of *cité ouvrière*, precisely because of the transformation from ‘*prolétaire*’ to ‘*propriétaire*’ that worker homeownership offered.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Paul Laurencin, ‘Les maisons ouvrières de l’étranger’, in Gabriel Richard (ed.), *L’Album de l’Exposition Illustrée, histoire pittoresque de l’Exposition universelle de 1867* (Paris, 1867), p. 251.

¹²⁷ ‘Habitations ouvrières’, *La Meuse* (Liège, Belgium), 26 Apr. 1866, p. 2.

¹²⁸ Jules Simon, ‘Cités ouvrières’, in Maurice Block (ed.), *Dictionnaire générale de la politique* (Paris, 1873), p. 347.

The reputation that Dollfus's *cités ouvrières* had earned by 1867 was in no small part due to the proselytizing efforts of Dollfus and his architect Muller at international reform congresses throughout Europe. At the 'Exposition d'économie domestique' in Brussels in September 1856, those present described the *cités ouvrières* of Mulhouse as 'the most complete' realization of workers' housing in France. Attendees were able to examine a 1/100 scale cardboard model of the first *cité ouvrière*, as well a copy of Muller's book, *Habitations ouvrières et agricoles*, which contained several detailed architectural plans.¹²⁹ In the same year, Jean Dollfus served as vice-president of the 'Congrès de bienfaisance' at Frankfurt in 1856.¹³⁰ Both Muller and Dollfus had an opportunity to share their work with Henry Roberts, who had been such a source for inspiration. At the 1856 'Congrès international de bienfaisance' in Brussels, Muller spoke to an audience that included Henry Roberts about his achievements at Mulhouse.¹³¹ Dollfus presented a paper at a later congress in London in June 1862, which led Henry Roberts to proclaim to the audience that he 'considered the arrangements at Mulhouse surpassed everything of the kind that had been attempted elsewhere'.¹³² He went on to praise the innovative let-to-buy system and called for its emulation in England.¹³³ Dollfus and Muller were leading the housing reform discussion in mid-century Europe. More than just the best that France could produce, the Mulhousian *cités ouvrières* became the best example of reformed housing in Europe.

¹²⁹ 'Exposition d'économie domestique', *L'Indépendance Belge* (Brussels, Belgium), 10 Sep. 1856, p. 1; 'The Philanthropic Congress at Brussels, and the Dwellings of the Labouring Classes', *The Bradford Observer* (Bradford, England), 9 Oct. 1856, p. 3; Muller, *Habitations ouvrières et agricoles*.

¹³⁰ 'Nouvelles d'Allemagne: Congrès de bienfaisance à Francfort', *L'Indépendance Belge*, 18 Sep. 1856, 2.

¹³¹ 'Congrès international de bienfaisance', *L'Indépendance Belge*, 21 Sep. 1856, p. 3.

¹³² 'Congrès international de bienfaisance', *The Morning Post*, 13 Jun. 1862, p. 3.

¹³³ Roberts, 'Model Lodging-Houses in France', *Illustrated Usk Observer and Raglan Herald*, 16 Aug. 1856; Henry Roberts, *The Essentials of a Healthy Dwelling, and the Extension of its Benefits to the Labouring Population* (London, 1862), pp 26-7.

As a result of this growing reputation, requests flooded in for plans of the *cités ouvrières*, so that its success could be replicated elsewhere. Notably, the closest imitations of SOMCO were installed in the surrounding industrial towns in the Haut-Rhin: at Guebwiller (1854), Beaucourt (1864), and Colmar (1866).¹³⁴ These towns also tended to be dominated by Protestant industrialists with a mostly Catholic migratory workforce, and many of these Alsatian industrialists were honorary members of SIM. These similarities facilitated an easier introduction of the Mulhouse scheme.

Each of these Alsatian imitations were funded by subscriptions, with one major shareholder, like Jean Dollfus at Mulhouse. At Guebwiller, Jean-Jacques Bourcart alone drove the initial building before the *Société des cités ouvrières de Guebwiller* was founded in 1860. In a tract published by Bourcart in 1866, the aim of providing a unifamilial house form and garden at the *cité ouvrière* was to instil in the worker ‘the love of property and the desire to save’.¹³⁵ This Guebwiller example allowed the extra monthly payments towards homeownership that were so inherent to the Mulhouse scheme.¹³⁶ At Beaucourt, a similar document detailing establishments for the workers of *Japy Frères et Cie* showed how houses were made available for purchase at 20.10 Fr. a month for eleven years.¹³⁷ These houses were built in lines, completely isolated, or in the Mulhouse style of four units grouped together.

When other industrialists from further afield sought to emulate the scheme, however, they often neglected to include the key feature that made the Mulhousian scheme so famous and innovative in the first place: worker homeownership. The director of the glassworks of St.

¹³⁴ Guerrand, *Les Origines du logement social en France 1850-1914*, p. 124.

¹³⁵ AMM 96 A 3398, ‘Rapport sur l’organisation de la filature Bourcart fils et Cie’, 1866, p. 9.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹³⁷ ADHR 8 M 32, ‘Note sur les Ouvriers de Beaucourt et sur les Institutions créés en leur faveur’, c. 1866, p. 18.

Gobain at Chauny sent a letter to the mayor of Mulhouse in December 1857, stating his company's intention to build a large *cité ouvrière*, and requesting details of the Mulhouse scheme.¹³⁸ He went on to build 1,256 houses in the Mulhousian style, though they were not sold to workers: they remained under company ownership.¹³⁹ Similarly, at Noisiel-sur-Marne in the 1870s, while the houses for 1,700 workers in the *cité ouvrière* resembled those at Mulhouse, ownership remained with the Menier chocolate factory.¹⁴⁰ Both companies were happy to imitate the scale and hygienic and architectural innovations of such an internationally-renowned scheme as Mulhouse, but these were not pan-company building societies like SOMCO or Roberts's SICLC. As a result, the industrialists wanted to retain a more direct control over their workforce by not selling their houses. They were content with well-housed workers, rather than morally-elevated *prolétaire-propriétaires*.¹⁴¹

SOMCO was a private company, but it was supported by and closely tied to the municipality of Mulhouse. As a result, it was not just industrialists like those above who wanted to emulate the scheme: municipal and prefectural authorities requested plans from their Mulhousian peers. Applications also came from Grenoble as early as 22 July 1854, for the purpose of building in the town in a related style.¹⁴² Similarly, in November 1860, the prefect of the Gironde wrote to his Haut-Rhin colleague, declaring that the municipality of Bordeaux 'has just begun to study the question of the creation in Bordeaux of workers' *cités* on the model of

¹³⁸ AMM O1 Ab 22, Lacroix to mayor of Mulhouse, 20 Dec. 1857.

¹³⁹ William Henry Hurlbert, *France and the Republic; A Record of Things Seen and Learned in the French Provinces During the "Centennial" Year 1889* (London, 1890), pp. 129-30.

¹⁴⁰ Guerrand, 'De Mulhouse à Passy-Auteuil', p. 46.

¹⁴¹ For more on this paradox of the success and widespread reputation of the Mulhouse scheme compared to its failure to inspire long-lasting imitations, see Clement, 'The 'unrealizable chimera'', pp. 80-5.

¹⁴² AMM O1 Ab 21, Mayor of Grenoble to mayor of Mulhouse, 22 Jul. 1854.

those already installed in Mulhouse'.¹⁴³ None of these requests resulted in any largescale imitations.

Part of what made the Mulhouse scheme so successful in Mulhouse was the shared desire of the overlapping municipal and industrial elites to improve housing. When prefects and mayors requested plans, they were unsuccessful in inspiring the industrialists of their towns to build to a similar extent. There were examples of small-scale implementation, such as the nineteen houses in the *carré Mulhousien* style encircled by gardens constructed between 1861-3 in Bordeaux by M. Patto or the fifty-five houses that were built in 1875 in Nancy and sold to the workers by monthly payments.¹⁴⁴ The limited scale of these projects, however, shows how important the overlap between business and municipal leadership at Mulhouse was to larger expansion. Nowhere had the same local conditions that had facilitated SOMCO's conception and successes and, as a result, any imitation beyond Alsace had to be drastically changed or scaled down to match different situations or industrialists' desires.

Housing and local pride

In December 1858, when the police commissioner of Roubaix wrote that he had heard that 'all of the principal industrialists of Roubaix' were planning to build a *cité philanthropique* in the city, the description he gave of the scheme bore a lot of similarities to Jean Dollfus's Mulhousian housing scheme. The *cité philanthropique* was to be ambitiously large, with around one thousand houses planned – over ten times the size of the *Fort Frasez*. It was to be funded by a collection of leading Roubaisian industrialists, rather than just one. These industrialists were also to receive a five percent return on their investment, like the investors of Rambaud's

¹⁴³ ADHR 9 M 24, Prefect of Gironde to prefect of Haut-Rhin, 2 Nov. 1860.

¹⁴⁴ Arthur Raffalovich, *Le Logement de l'ouvrier et du pauvre* (Paris, 1887), pp. 341-42, 363.

Cité de l'Enfant Jésus in Lyon, and only slightly more than SOMCO's shareholders. Even though this scheme was never realised, the description of it that the police officer outlined is both very similar to the Mulhouse scheme, and very dissimilar to anything else being built by industrialists in Roubaix at the time.

These similarities were almost certainly not a coincidence. The prefect of the Nord was one of the government authorities who wrote to his Haut-Rhin colleague in the years following SOMCO's foundation for copies of the *cités ouvrières*' plans, so that he might encourage similar developments in the textile hubs of Lille and Roubaix.¹⁴⁵ This call for plans did not result in any meaningful imitations in Roubaix, but the experience in nearby Lille was a different story.

From the mid-1840s, the Scrive family had built houses for two hundred workers in Marquette, just outside Lille and, shortly after the prefect of the Nord encouraged new workers' housing construction in 1854, the *Compagnie de Fives* constructed the *Cité Saint-Maurice*.¹⁴⁶ This Lillois activity continued throughout the 1850s, with the town's *bureau de bienfaisance* beginning construction on a '*cité philanthropique*', known as the *Cité Napoléon* in 1859.¹⁴⁷ Similarly, a large block of workers' housing, the *Cité Saint Vincent de Paul*, was planned in early 1859 by the same *bureau*.¹⁴⁸ Lille was a much larger town than Roubaix in the middle of the nineteenth century, and these housing schemes by no means solved the town's housing problem, but it would have been evident to Motte-Bossut and his peers that industrialist-supported and philanthropically-minded housing construction was a viable option.

¹⁴⁵ ADN M 349/7, Prefect of the Nord to prefect of the Haut-Rhin, 11 Apr. 1854.

¹⁴⁶ Marcel Scrive, *Antoine Scrive-Labbe et sa descendance* (Angers, 1945), pp. 17-8; ADN J 2319, Shares for construction of Cité Saint-Maurice, Lille, 20 Sep. 1853.

¹⁴⁷ AMLi 3 M 3/1, Clauses of construction for the Cité Napoléon, Lille, 14 Oct. 1859.

¹⁴⁸ ADN 56 Fi 503, Plans for Cité Saint Vincent de Paul, Lille, 4 Apr. 1859.

Simple geographic proximity is not the only reason why developments in Lille might have played a role in triggering Roubaisian activity. Comparison with the overshadowing city of Lille was central to the social, economic, and cultural motivations of Second Empire Roubaisian industrialists. As we saw in the introduction, David Landes has termed the Roubaisian attitude towards their Lillois neighbours as an ‘inferiority complex’, whereby success in business was a way to move out from under Lille’s shadow. We could extend this rivalry to the domain of philanthropic housing as well. Seeing the extent of activity of their Lillois equivalents in constructing new housing, it is certainly conceivable that the Roubaisian elite would have at least felt the appeal of building as a means to assert their social, cultural, and economic parity (or even superiority).

But the link between the unrealized *cité philanthropique* in Roubaix and the *cités ouvrières* may have been even more direct and immediate to the end of 1858 when the police commissioner submitted his report. The police commissioner’s report on the planned housing scheme came just weeks after the textile magnate Louis Motte-Bossut returned from a trip across the Vosges. During this trip, Motte and his wife visited a range of industrial towns, including Mulhouse.¹⁴⁹ There, he almost certainly would have met with his Mulhousian equivalent and rival, Jean Dollfus, with whom he exchanged letters at various points in the Second Empire.¹⁵⁰ If he had visited Dollfus’s factories in Dornach, Motte would have seen the nearby *cités ouvrières*, with the expansion across the canal in full construction. The fact that, within a month, Motte wrote to his sons about the need to build housing and, within two months, the ‘leading industrialists’ of Roubaix had banded together to plan a sprawling *cité philanthropique* makes this scenario certainly plausible.

¹⁴⁹ Motte-Bossut to his sons, 31 October 1858.

¹⁵⁰ Barbier, *Le Patronat du Nord*, p. 319.

Whether Motte was directly influenced by Dollfus and his *cités ouvrières* in the autumn of 1858 or not, he never became engaged with direct housing intervention in the form of new constructions. He did, however, become a vocal critic of the Roubaisian municipality's approach to managing the existing housing situation in Roubaix. In October 1866, five leading industrialists, including Louis Motte-Bossut, stressed the continued insufficiency of housing in Roubaix in a report to the municipal council. Twenty thousand foreign workers had moved to Roubaix in the short period of five years, the group highlighted, and Roubaix 'was not ready to receive them'. The construction of numerous houses in this period was 'far from being able to suffice to all the needs' and many families were therefore forced to live under the same roof. This group called for a commission to consider the construction of houses that would adequately provide one 'salubrious house at an affordable rental price' per working class family.¹⁵¹

For Motte-Bossut and his peers here, who had spent the previous quarter of a century ploughing their resources into their factories rather than housing, the duty to manage and improve housing conditions lay with the municipal council. It was almost inconceivable, for Motte, that industrialists who had built innovative housing schemes just a generation prior should now be responsible for new housing. The short-lived 1858 plan for the *cité philanthropique* was quickly forgotten as the private market surged to replicate the *courées* and meet the constant demand for new housing, while the local government was unable to intervene and regulate these new constructions.

In Lyon, meanwhile, the group who banded together around Camille Rambaud in the aftermath of the flood of 1856 showed that there was support for a religiously-motivated and

¹⁵¹ AMR 4 Q e 1, Extract from Roubaisian municipal council meeting, 5 Oct. 1866.

philanthropic solution to an immediate housing problem: a solution that was wholly private and unrelated to local and national government. But this scheme was also unrelated to the longer-term housing needs of the workers in Lyon, and it was no surprise that, once Lyon recovered from the flood, the workers left this highly-regulated attempt at reforming the morals of those who lived there.

In Mulhouse, there existed a unique combination of an enlightened industrial and municipal caste, a peripatetic yet constantly growing workforce without any ties to the city, and an unparalleled engagement with international housing reform discourse in the *Société industrielle*. The *cités ouvrières* that resulted were not tied to a single industrialist, factory, or entrepreneur like the *forts* and *courées* of Roubaix or housing projects elsewhere. They were also not wholly divorced from profit and the private market – with shareholders receiving a return on their investments – but neither were they entirely separate from the national and municipal governments, nor from philanthropic motivations. The Mulhousian *cités ouvrières* became internationally renowned for their successes and promoted as the ideal solution to the housing problem; and yet, at the same time, direct emulation was near impossible without compromising on one of the features that made this scheme so successful in the first place.

But even in the failures and inaction displayed in Roubaix and Lyon, we see that local housing issues played a key role in industrialists' concerns and priorities. In the following chapter, we will examine how individuals in the three cities who did not necessarily intervene to build reformed housing were still actively engaged in interacting with, managing, and improving existing poor quality housing, through the *commissions des logements insalubres* that were founded as a result of the Melun Law of 1850.

CHAPTER 3: UNHEALTHY HOUSES AND UNHEALTHY BEHAVIOURS:

THE *COMMISSIONS DES LOGEMENTS INSALUBRES*, 1850-74

The first two chapters have shown the rise of the ‘housing question’ by the middle of the nineteenth century in the three cities of Roubaix, Lyon, and Mulhouse, as well as varying degrees of success in the ‘housing solutions’ proposed for the workers. However, while the previous chapter finished with attempts to intervene in the domain of reformed housing mired in failure and inaction in two of the three cities, this does not mean that housing was unimportant for the industrial and municipal elites in each of these cities.

In the period after 1850, municipal commissions that tried to inspect, regulate, and improve existing poor quality housing stock were more prevalent than isolated attempts to build new and reformed houses. These commissions were created at the local level as a result of the passage of the Melun Law of 13 April 1850 (see Chapter 1). Each of the three cities had active commissions by the end of 1850. In theory, every commune in France was to have a commission, staffed by the same range of experts, equipped with the same legislative powers, and interacting with local and national government in the same ways. In practice, as I will demonstrate in the chapter that follows, the work of the *commissions des logements insalubres* (CLI) instead provided an outlet for figures in local government to pursue distinctly local housing agendas without directly engaging with building projects themselves.

Armed with varied, if vague, powers, and staffed by middle-class volunteers from a range of professions including doctors and architects, these commissions offered towns a way to tackle both existing and new poor working-class housing throughout the following decades. The CLI sat therefore at the crossroads of national policymaking and local implementation, of

individual and collective descriptive experience, and of objective professional research and subjective motivations.

The first section of this chapter uses the example of a report from an early CLI in the La Croix Rousse suburb of Lyon in 1850-1 to show how inconsistent and subjective early local commissions could be in the aftermath of the Melun Law. The law gave legislative powers to those who wanted to deal with poor quality housing, but these local commissions operated with very little central oversight in the 1850s, so their priorities and successes relied on engaged individuals. The second section puts this early Lyonnais report in a wider context by analysing the patchwork implementation of the Melun Law in early 1850s France and examines the different ways the CLI in Roubaix, Lyon, and Mulhouse were founded and operated in these early years. The third section moves beyond these early years, and explores the paradox of increasing uniformity emerging alongside distinct localism throughout the Second Empire: on the one hand, as these commissions developed their operations throughout the 1850s and 1860s, they moved away from visceral, olfactory description and towards more ‘professional’ and ‘scientific’ language in comprehensive reports, reflecting what was being promoted from Paris and central government; on the other hand, however, this increased professionalism was inspired by and mobilized towards distinctly local concerns that reflected differing conceptions of an ‘unhealthy’ house. As a result, the various commissions of the CLI both increasingly resembled one another while at the same time focusing on markedly diverse local concerns. The fourth and final section of the chapter looks beyond the actions of the commissioners who staffed the CLI to the landlords and lodgers in the *logements insalubres* of these cities. In submitting appeals to the CLI, they drew on the same kind of language about healthy or unhealthy housing employed by the CLI, in order to avoid or invite inspection respectively.

By the early years of the Third Republic, the CLI in these towns had developed from providing piecemeal, evocative descriptions of individual poor quality houses to constituting scientific bodies, concerned with making conclusions about the salubriousness of whole quarters of their cities. The resulting impact of this development was a reinforcing of classed notions of hygiene, as workers' behaviour, as well as their housing in general, was regarded as 'unhealthy'. Studying the development and work of the different CLI moves us away from idealistic discussions of reformed, new housing as seen in the previous two chapters and, instead, shows how potent debates about reforming the behaviours of landlords and tenants emerged throughout the Second Empire.

'The state of these dwellings is difficult to describe': an early commission in action, 1850-1

Doctor Louis Duviard took his seat at the municipal council meeting of La Croix Rousse on 13 February 1851 for the first of several discussions about the terrible state of certain poor quality houses in the town. Joining him in the room, alongside the assorted councillors, was M. Forest, the architect of the commune; M. Souzy, the *bureau de bienfaisance* member responsible for dispensing charity to the local poor; and M. Barbier, representing the *conseil des prud'hommes* that settled disputes between workers and employers in Lyon's independent suburb of La Croix Rousse. This group had been called together at the end of the previous August to form, along with five municipal councillors, a *commission des logements insalubres* (CLI) in the wake of the passage of the Melun Law in April 1850. These men were to use their varied expertise to judge the state of salubriousness of the houses in an area of La Croix Rousse which had been the site of a cholera outbreak in the winter of 1849-50.¹ At this meeting in February 1851, and over the course of the following months, the CLI conveyed

¹ AML 3 WP 127, 'Extrait du Reigistre des délibérations du Conseil Municipal, La Croix Rousse', 28 Aug. 1850.

the results of the 42 houses they had visited in the Lyonnais suburb. Their findings focused on individual houses, including both sprawling descriptions of the failings as well as lists of recommendations for improvement.

Frequently, the reports on the worst houses contain an exasperated sentence or phrase on the general state of the places visited. As a result, these supposedly strictly objective reports read like contemporary 'slumming' fiction that used the gloom of cities to make a social commentary.² At no. 1 *Montée de la Boucle*, the commissioners found a collection of maisonettes where: 'The state of these dwellings is difficult to describe; it is a complicated labyrinth where the need for important modifications increases every step'.³ Similarly, the report for no. 31 *Cours d'herbouville* stretched to three pages, and began 'This hovel is in such a state of disrepair that it is embarrassing to report one repair sooner than another. The best of all would be a complete reconstruction'.⁴ Following the footsteps of the commissioners as they made their way up the floors of the tall building, the report noted the 'completely degraded' walls, the 'dirtiness with no remedy' caused by broken floor tiles, the numerous wooden beams that were needed to support the floors above, including a curved and 'worm-eaten' beam at the third-floor. At this third floor, the description in these reports suggests the commissioners would have gagged as they noted that:

² This was particularly true of nineteenth-century fiction based in Paris, where the city itself was as much a character and a commentary on social conditions as the protagonists. Sara James, 'Detecting Paris: the character of the city in Eugene Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris* (1842-1843)', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 8, (2000), pp. 305-13. We will explore this in greater depth by looking at Zola's *L'Assommoir* in Chapter 4. The language used by these Croix Roussian commissioners ties into the kinds of nineteenth-century middle-class 'slumming' narratives that Alan Mayne and Seth Koven have explored at length, as these middle-class volunteers ventured into working-class quarters with a 'messier mingling of good intentions and blinkered prejudices' Alan Mayne, *The Imagined Slum: Newspaper Representation in Three Cities, 1870-1914* (Leicester, 1993), pp. 1-10; Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton, NJ, 2004), p. 3.

³ ADR 5 M 111, 'Commission des logements insalubres de La Croix Rousse', 20 Feb., 3 Apr., 8 Apr. 1851.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 3 Apr.

The danger of this state of affairs is increased by a stinking humidity which covers the steps from the third floor. There, built against the walls of the staircase itself, are the only toilets [*lieu d'aisance*] in the house. Urine flows out and maintains the odour and slippery humidity we have pointed out.⁵

The intermingling of olfactory, visceral description and structural commentary continued down the street at no. 16, where the commissioners found another toilet, this time in a courtyard, which had neither ‘a door nor a ventilation pipe’. The toilet also did not have a concrete cesspit beneath it either, meaning that the waste was ‘lost in ground of the court and corrupts the walls of the house’. ‘You cannot’, wrote the commissioner midway through this entry, ‘get more disgusting than this place’.⁶

The language and style in this early CLI report was different from the statistical reports of the early hygienist movement we considered in Chapter 1. Smell and subjective opinion played a more obvious and unapologetic role. This use of smell as a primary sensory descriptor has been studied at length by historians of eighteenth and nineteenth century France. Alain Corbin’s landmark 1986 work *The Foul and the Fragrant* has helped bring what Mark Jenner has termed ‘historical smellscape’ into greater consideration.⁷ Focusing on France, Corbin revealed how, from the 1770s, French chemists and doctors in who were concerned with hygiene forged and refined a vocabulary that would permit them to ‘transcribe observations of the sense of smell’, and that this new ‘olfactory vigilance’ tied into the later nineteenth-century tendency for odour to be socialised – the ‘stench of the poor’.⁸ When Dr Duviard and his other Croix Roussian commissioners used phrasing like ‘stinking humidity’ in their 1851

⁵ Ibid., 8 Apr.

⁶ Ibid., 8 Apr.

⁷ Alain Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination* (Leamington Spa, 1986); Mark S. R. Jenner, ‘Follow your nose? Smell, smelling, and their histories’, *American Historical Review*, 116, 2 (2011), p. 335.

⁸ Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant*, pp. 5, 14, 142.

report, they were in keeping with an established tradition that used subjective olfactory description to express a negative judgment of working-class housing.⁹

If these reports are striking for the way the personality of the commissioners and the smell of poor housing comes across, they are also notable for the near-complete omission of any mention of people living in these houses. Specific lodgers are sometimes mentioned by name or profession, but this is to distinguish between separate apartments within a single building (e.g. at the *Maison Bonafous*, ‘the apartments occupied by the lodgers Masselin and Vasseur’; at no. 30 *Cours d’herbouville*, ‘chez le mécanicien’) rather than to focus on inhabitants’ actions contributing to insalubrity.¹⁰ The impact of the poor state on the lodgers is hinted at, such as at the dormitory for a mill in the Gloriettes quarter of La Croix Rousse. Here, the commissioners found twelve beds for fourteen workers; the commissioners worked out that this meant that each worker only had seven cubic metres of air at night when sleeping, which they deemed insufficient. The commission, in blunt mathematical terms, ordered the landlord ‘to diminish either the number of beds or of workers; or to increase the space by raising the ceiling’.¹¹ Even in houses with multiple families, the commissioners only note the hygienic and structural failings of the building, with little reference to who caused the failings or who would be impacted by them.¹²

⁹ This was not a phenomenon isolated to the provincial commissions. Parisian commissions in the 1850s and early 1860s also overemphasised the olfactory in their reports; it was also through discussing smell that many complaints were sent to the commissions as well. Kalff, *Le Logement insalubre*, pp. 65-71.

¹⁰ ‘Commission... 20 Feb., 3 Apr., 8 Apr. 1851’, 8 Apr., 3 Apr.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 20 Feb.

¹² At no. 31, for example, where the commissioners had recommended a ‘complete reconstruction’, there were thirteen people recorded in four households in the 1851 census. One of these households contained a widow, while the other three contained three families of weavers. Separate police records of foreigners living in La Croix Rousse from 1851 also indicate an 18-year-old cutler and a 30-year-old merchant, both Swiss, lived at this house. ADR 6 MP 108, Census, Cour d’herbouville, 1851; ADR 4 M 407, ‘La Croix Rousse. 2e arrondissement. État des étrangers n’ayant pas de domicile ou sans travail ou sans moyens

Animals, unlike the absent lodgers, are present in some of these reports as sources of insalubrity. However, not all treatment of animals is equal. At no. 17 *Cours d'herbouville*, next-door to the building with an awful external toilet, the commissioners went to inspect the terrace behind the building. Walking onto this terrace, they were 'suffocated by the miasmas emanating' from a small wooden shed. Inside the shed was a pig that the landlord, M. Payot, was keeping. In the list of four recommendations for improvements to be made at the house, the third point declares coldly that the landlord must 'kill his pig, and cannot store it [the carcass] in his house.'¹³ This report treats the pig as just another cause of insalubrity to be improved. However, this detachment was not found in an earlier inspection. At the same mill with the overcrowded dormitory, the commissioners commented that 'the workshop of the mill is perfectly well-kept' but, before moving along, adds 'a single observation [which] is to be made'.

Would it not be possible to substitute another engine for the current process? It is incontestable, from the physical point of view, that the laws of hygiene are exposed to the work of beasts of burden, who work for an entire day without rest, turning the drive wheel: From the moral point of view, conscience revolts, human dignity moans to see the degradation imposed on God's creatures by the need to eat!¹⁴

The compassion extended to the beasts of burden in this mill is not only at odds with the detachment shown when telling someone to kill their pig, but it is also at odds with the lack of attention or compassion paid to the houses' human inhabitants elsewhere in the report. This inconsistency, combined with the mixture of emotive description with mathematical hygienic measurement, shows how, in the early years following the Melun Law, CLI had a degree of flexibility as to how they defined and described 'unhealthy' housing.

d'existence assurés', s.d. (1851); ADR 4 M 407, 'La Croix Rousse. 2e arrondissement. Registre des étrangers', 16 Oct. 1851.

¹³ 'Commission... 20 Feb., 3 Apr., 8 Apr. 1851'.

¹⁴ Ibid.. 20 Feb.

The early CLI report of 1851 is in marked contrast to one produced almost two decades later in 1869 by the CLI of Roubaix which we will consider in greater depth later in the chapter. The latter, rather than targeting a small number of houses in a section of town, instead covered 5,230 houses in all of the city's *courées*.¹⁵ Where the 1851 report was sensory-driven, unapologetically subjective, and at times contradictory, the 1869 report was clipped, focusing almost wholly on scientific measurement and a sense of totality (i.e. analysing *every* house in the *courées*, rather than just unhealthy ones). By focusing on the *courées*, however, this report was a uniquely Roubaisian product, showing how the development of the CLI throughout the Second Empire was both a story of increased scientific professionalism but also of intense localism. To see how and why CLI in France developed this way through the Second Empire, we need to go back to the immediate aftermath of the Melun Law and see how individuals in the three cities of Roubaix, Lyon, and Mulhouse embraced the new legislation in different ways to tackle their local housing problems.

The uneven application of the Melun Law, 1850-59

When Dr Duviard and his colleagues set out on their inspection of the area around La Croix Rousse's *Cours d'herbouville*, they were doing so because of a recent cholera outbreak that had been isolated to this area. Other CLI used their powers in similar ways in the early 1850s to focus on issues and areas that were particular to their own local conditions. This intense localism did not emerge slowly in the years following the passage of the law of 13 April 1850 but was, in fact, embodied in the vagaries of its original statutes, the lacklustre immediate

¹⁵ AMR 5 I 307, 'Tableau indiquant l'état de salubrité des Forts, Cours et Cités de la ville de Roubaix, leur situation, le nombre des maisons, des habitants, le cube total d'air contenu dans les maisons, etc. etc.', 9 Jul. 1869.

enforcement across all French departments, and the pre-existing momentum of individuals in provincial cities who were already dealing with housing issues.

As we saw in Chapter 1, the law on unhealthy housing emerged from a complex set of debates that considered the social, moral, and hygienic ills caused by poor housing. The law that was finalised on 13 April 1850 (fig 1.1), perhaps reflecting these multiple influences, was ambiguous in explaining what exactly constituted an ‘unhealthy house’ (*logement insalubre*), as well as the kinds of improvements that could be recommended by a CLI. Article 1 of the law defined *logements insalubres* as those ‘which are in conditions that threaten the life or health of their inhabitants’.¹⁶ Yet Articles 2 and 3 indicated that it was up to the discretion of the commissions to visit these houses and to decide what these conditions precisely were, whether a house could be described as unhealthy, what caused this insalubrity, and what remedies could be proposed.¹⁷ The stipulation that each commission should contain a doctor and an architect alongside representatives from the town’s *bureau de bienfaisance* and *conseil des prud’hommes* emphasised the elision of architectural, hygienic, and social concerns. As such, what could be deemed as ‘unhealthy’ extended beyond purely structural failings of a house: the behaviour of landlords who owned these houses, or that of the workers who lived in them, contributed to what the commission decided was unhealthy and could be punished.

In terms of solutions and penalties, the wording of the law was even more elusive. Article 8 concerned a three-year exemption from the tax on doors or windows for any new openings created in houses because of the commissions’ rulings, suggesting that the commissions had

¹⁶ AN F 8 210, 'Dépot des lois et actes du gouvernement: B. 252, No. 2068, Loi relative à l'assainissement des Logements insalubres des 19 janvier, 7 mars et 13 avril 1850 (promulguée le 22 avril 1850), 1850, article 1.

¹⁷ Ibid., Articles 2-3.

power to order the creation of these openings to improve circulation of light and air.¹⁸ But beyond this, the law remained open to the interpretation of commissioners regarding improvements to be ordered. Articles 7, 10, and 13 suggested three different cases of dwellings a commission might deem unhealthy: one where the causes of insalubrity were the fault of the landlord and subject to improvement by these landlords; one where the causes of insalubrity were irreparable and inherent to the physical structure of the dwelling, meaning the rental of the dwelling must be prohibited; and one where the insalubrity was a result of neighbouring or permanent factors, meaning that the municipality is empowered to acquire the house and to undertake general works.¹⁹ But, again, the autonomy given to the commissions and the municipalities that appointed them was remarkable, leading to a variety of different styles of report and conditions contributing to insalubrity in the early reports of local commissions.

Combined with this lack of clarity in the original statutes of the law, it was also unclear as to how much independence from central government, or from other regional CLI, these local bodies would have. A meeting of the Public Health Advisory Committee (*Comité consultatif d'hygiène publique*) in Paris on 8 July 1850 began by outlining that 'This law is entirely municipal in character; but, as it is closely related... to the general interests of public health, the government thought it was its duty to supervise and direct its application'.²⁰ With fresh memories of the cholera outbreak in 1848-9, the need to regulate the operation of local commissions was justified as stemming the spread of a future epidemic:

The question of the sanitation of dwellings is not exclusively a municipal affair. There exists, in respect to health, a real connection between the diverse parts of the land; for if a municipality finds itself in conditions that favour the development of an epidemic, this disease can easily spread into neighbouring communes.²¹

¹⁸ Ibid., Article 8.

¹⁹ Ibid., Articles 7, 10, 13.

²⁰ AN F 8 210, 'Comité consultatif d'hygiène publique: Projet pour l'exécution de la loi relative à l'assainissement des logements insalubres', 8 Jul. 1850.

²¹ ADHR 5 M 39, 'Ministre de l'Agriculture et du Commerce, Circulaire no. 41', 11 Aug. 1850.

Jean-Baptiste Dumas, the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce charged with this supervision, issued several circulars to the departments throughout the course of 1850 with details of the law, and urging them to encourage the formation of commissions. On 11 August 1850, Dumas warned prefects to ensure that the law was being imposed, otherwise it would remain ‘a dead letter in the hands of local authorities, if they do not understand the importance of it, or if the fear of crushing certain interests or of imposing such new changes to the commune’.²² Two years later, when the departments were notified of Napoléon III’s 22 January 1852 housing fund, questionnaires were also sent out accompanying this notice, asking the prefects to report back on the activities of the local unhealthy housing commissions. In addition, the first report of the Parisian commission was circulated to serve as a model.²³

Despite the pressure from Paris, the founding and operation of unhealthy housing commissions was not taken up uniformly across the country. The prefect of the Hautes-Alpes department responded to the repeated central directives on 22 October 1852 with a short letter questioning the relevance of such a law in his department. ‘There are no factories or industries around the Hautes-Alpes,’ he wrote, after the customary polite opening. ‘Agriculture alone occupies the workers. The dwellings, dispersed in the mountains... are not of the nature of those who can profit from [this law]’.²⁴ Hautes-Alpes was not alone in ignoring the implementation of the law. Between 1857-8, the *Comité consultatif d’hygiène publique* undertook a survey into the actions of commissions in every department. In the final report, published in October 1858, of the 67 departments whose prefects had returned information,

²² Ibid.

²³ AN F 8 210, 'Ministre de l'Agriculture et du Commerce, Circulaire no. 87', 2 Oct. 1852.

²⁴ AN F 8 210, Prefect of the Hautes-Alpes to Ministre de l'Agriculture et du Commerce, 22 Oct. 1852.

only 11 could be said to have ‘very remarkable’ application of the law.²⁵ For the great majority of departments, including the 19 that did not return information at all, the law had been met with a ‘most unfortunate indifference’.²⁶ When the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce communicated these results to the departments on 27 December 1858, he declared that even when commissions tried to operate, they were frequently stopped ‘in their good dispositions, in their intelligent and zealous efforts, by an overly exclusive concern with the inviolability of the domicile and of property, as well as the charges to impose on well-off landlords’.²⁷

This inconsistency of response shows that the Melun Law was not the hugely successful intervention of the state into solving the housing problem throughout France that the social Catholic northern councillor Anatole de Melun might have hoped it would be. Indeed, far from marking a new beginning, the law actually did little more than encourage existing eager individuals to expand their interactions with local housing problems. In this context of a patchwork implementation of the law of 13 April 1850 across 1850s France, the municipalities in Roubaix, Lyon, and Mulhouse all displayed different degrees of bureaucratic entanglement or isolation in terms of creating and encouraging the local commissions. Each city had a functioning CLI by the summer of 1850, though these CLI varied in action or notability depending on the surrounding enthusiasm for the law in their respective departments.

The Nord was one of the 11 departments singled out for praise in the 1858 report.²⁸ In fact, the Nord was second only to the Seine in terms of successes in operation of the commissions:

²⁵ AN F 8 210, ‘Rapport du Comité consultatif d’hygiène publique sur l’exécution de la loi du 13 avril 1850 - 1858’, Oct. 1858.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ ADHR 5 M 39, ‘Ministre de l’Agriculture et du Commerce, Circulaire no. 40’, 27 Dec. 1858.

²⁸ The other nine departments were the Somme, Pas-de-Calais, Ile-et-Vilaine, Rhône, Gironde, Nièvre, Seine-Inférieure, Moselle, Calvados, and Loire-Inférieur. Yankel Fijalkow, ‘La notion d’insalubrité. Un processus de rationalisation 1850-1902’, *Revue d’histoire du XIXe siècle*, 20/21 (2000), p. 138.

almost 400 northern communes had their own regularly-operating commissions by 1858, which was unmatched by any other department.²⁹ Hazebrouck, Douai, and Lille were mentioned by name in this report, with the latter having made 4,351 individual visits in the eight-year period.³⁰ The fierce activity in the Nord is not surprising, considering the related facts that this department had a high concentration of working-class housing, and that it was the *député du Nord*, Anatole de Melun, who was one of the key figures in pushing for the law of 13 April 1850 in the first place.³¹ Though not explicitly referred to in the 1858 report, Roubaix had displayed a similar early fervour. Roubaix's commission had visited 52 houses by 26 December 1850, and 91 in total by 19 February 1851.³² The passing of this law acted as a starting pistol for municipalities in the Nord who had been on their marks for years, and the municipality of Roubaix followed the lead of that of Lille and its other northern neighbours.

As part of the administrative unit of the arrondissement of Lille, the work of the Roubaix commission was only rarely mentioned in this arrondissement's annual reports of housing commissions' activities. It was only by 1855 that Roubaix's commission was mentioned by name in one of these reports, though even then it is part of a group of four commissions deemed worthy of a sentence in praise.³³ A year later, Roubaix's commission was given more attention: 'In Lille and in Roubaix, the commissions have dealt with the functions given to

²⁹ 'Rapport... sur l'exécution de la loi du 13 avril 1850', p. 4.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 4-6.

³¹ Bourillon, 'La loi du 13 avril 1850', pp. 118-22.

³² AMR 5 I 307, 'Relevé sommaire des travaux de la commission de salubrité de la Ville de Roubaix, avec indications des mesures d'assainissement qui ont été exécutées. 1er tableau des opérations', 26 Dec. 1850; AMR 5 I 307, 'Relevé sommaire des travaux de la commission de salubrité de la Ville de Roubaix, avec indications des mesures d'assainissement qui ont été exécutées. 2e tableau des opérations', 19 Feb. 1851.

³³ ADN M 349/8, 'Conseil d'arrondissement de Lille: Logements insalubres, 1855', 26 Jul. 1855.

them with the greatest zeal and devotion'.³⁴ Roubaix's commission was working efficiently enough to deserve praise, yet still remained secondary to its larger neighbour of Lille.

To the south, the Rhône department was another of the 11 singled out for praise in the 1858 report; however, the city of Lyon had a different early experience with CLI compared to Roubaix and the other fervent northern towns. It would only be in March 1852 that Lyon's surrounding suburbs of La Croix Rousse, La Guillotière, and Vaise were to be subsumed into one large city, with the prefect of the Rhône serving as *de facto* mayor.³⁵ Before this reunion, the three suburbs operated with their own mayors and municipal councils: they therefore had the ability to form their own separate CLI.

This is exactly what the municipality of La Croix Rousse did on 28 August 1850 when M. Vallier urged his Dr Duviard and his colleagues to take action.³⁶ As we saw earlier in this chapter, immediately after its formation, the new commission launched their first set of inspections. Rather than waiting to be approached with complaints of insalubrity, the unhealthy housing commission of La Croix Rousse instead followed the path of an earlier group of inspectors. Following an outbreak of cholera at the *hôpital militaire* of Lyon in December 1849, the municipality of La Croix Rousse had charged a special commission to survey areas thought of as dangerous to public health and to order, as far as possible within the confines of the law, any improvements to be made.³⁷ As the threat of epidemic quickly passed, this special commission was disbanded before having the chance to check whether

³⁴ ADN M 349/8, 'Conseil d'arrondissement de Lille: Logements insalubres, 1856', 28 Jul. 1856.

³⁵ 'Décret sur l'agglomération lyonnaise', *Le Salut Public* (Lyon), 27 Mar. 1852.

³⁶ AML 3 WP 127, 'La Croix Rousse. Conseil municipal, session ordinaire', 28 Aug. 1850; AML 3 WP 127, 'La Croix Rousse, Extrait du register des délibérations du conseil municipal', 28 Aug. 1850.

³⁷ 'Commission... 20 Feb., 3 Apr., 8 Apr. 1851'.

such changes had been implemented. Thus, the creation of a CLI gave the municipality an opportunity to return to these areas, endowed with new legal clout by the law of 13 April, and continue the earlier work. The resulting surveys of the houses on the *Cours d'herbouville* and other roads in this area came because this area had been singled out for study even before the formation of a CLI. Again, as in the Nord, we see in La Croix Rousse the creation of a mechanism to act on pre-existing concerns, rather than the creation of the desire to act on these concerns.

Unlike Roubaix, however, the CLI of La Croix Rousse was acting in local isolation compared to its larger neighbouring towns and cities. Roubaix was just one of many active municipalities in a department that was firmly committed to pursuing the law of 13 April, but, in the Rhône, other communes did not share the fervour of their Croix Roussian colleagues. To the east of Lyon was the suburb of La Guillotière. Although considered a 'suburb', and later annexed to Lyon in March 1852, La Guillotière was not only larger overall than the densely-packed suburb of La Croix Rousse, but also had a greater population in 1851 than the textile cities of Roubaix and Mulhouse (fig. 0.1). However, despite the size and population of La Guillotière, it seems that there was no CLI in this area until after the suburb was united with the city of Lyon in 1852.

This is not to say, however, that there were no unhealthy houses in pre-1852 La Guillotière. A letter sent by the police commissioner of the 3rd arrondissement of La Guillotière to the mayor on 23 April 1851 implored the latter to pass on details of a house at 5 *Rue Hoche* onto the *Comité de Salubrité*. Even without a formal CLI, the language employed by this police officer reveals the pervasiveness of the notion of insalubrity in the early 1850s. The letter began: 'This *garni* presents two distinct characteristics: immorality and insalubrity'. The police officer went on to describe how, in a single room, there were 'people of all ages and sexes,

lying pell-mell on straw-filled mattresses thrown on the floor; a fetid odour derived from the uncleanness and lack of air'.³⁸ The focus was less on the structural or hygienic failures on the houses as much as it was on the stench and immoral dangers that were inherent. There were evidently individuals like this police officer who were engaged with the housing problem but, for whatever reason, the municipal council did not take up the call to found a CLI. The mayor was repeatedly questioned by the prefect of the Rhône throughout 1851-2 as to whether they had finally followed instructions and set up their own commission.³⁹ In the years following the passage of the law of 13 April 1850, while there was evidently an interest in reporting and improving poor housing in La Guillotière, the municipality seemed uninterested in utilising the new legislative power to create a dedicated commission.

La Guillotière may have been following the lead of the main municipal council in Lyon, whose initial reaction to the law of 13 April was limited at best. When it came to the national report of 1858, it was only the commission in La Croix Rousse that was singled out for praise in discussing the activities in the Rhône department. 'We only learn', wrote the Parisian author when discussing the limited detail of the Rhône report, 'that the commission of La Croix Rousse is remarkable for a very commendable initiative and activity which has perhaps sometimes failed in Lyon, where the commission has visited only a limited number of dwellings'.⁴⁰ The central commission in Lyon, while displaying praiseworthy 'goodwill and zeal', had not executed work 'commensurate with the sanitary requirements of such a large city'.⁴¹ Drawing conclusions from the language of the letter that the prefect of the Rhône had submitted, the author of the report decided that the commission of Lyon was reluctant to

³⁸ AML 4 WP 48, Commissioner of police, 3e arrondissement, La Guillotière to Mayor of La Guillotière, 23 Apr. 1851.

³⁹ AML 4 WP 48, Prefect of the Rhône to Mayor of La Guillotière, 20 Jun. 1851; AML 4 WP 48, Prefect of the Rhône to Mayor of La Guillotière, 19 Jul. 1852.

⁴⁰ 'Rapport... sur l'exécution de la loi du 13 avril 1850', p. 9.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 10-1.

overcome the ‘inviolability of the home’, as well as lacking the comprehension that the law enabled commissions not only to ‘protect the tenant against an indifferent landlord’ but also ‘to protect the tenant against his own negligence’.⁴² This focus on negligence and behaviour of tenants is one we will revisit later; what is notable here is the contrast in attitudes towards the role and duty of CLI between two neighbouring commissions in the same city.

Why was the La Croix Rousse commission so remarkably active when compared with Lyon and La Guillotière? Poor housing conditions existed in the latter two, but the members of the municipal councils had greater hesitancy than their peers on the ‘hill that worked’ in overcoming the sanctity of property. This hesitancy echoes the opposition we saw Anatole de Melun faced when he first raised the issue of housing legislation in the departmental council meeting in Lille in November 1849: the rights of private property were too deeply-engrained to be overcome by a concern with unhealthy housing.⁴³ This preoccupation with private property rights was not a peculiar local default in Lyon and La Guillotière. Rather, it was the prolific activity of the CLI in La Croix Rousse which is more notable. There are two possible reasons for this: La Croix Rousse’s history of recent epidemics as well as its history as the site of the *canut* revolts in the 1830s and in 1848 (covered in greater detail below; see Chapter 5). In a predominantly working-class town where disease and political intrigue both played on the minds of the municipal council, it is unsurprising that the Croix Roussian councillors eagerly seized on a legal opportunity to inspect workers’ homes.

To the north-east, Mulhouse also saw the foundation of a CLI shortly after the passage of the Melun Law (on 1 July 1850). Notably, as in Roubaix, this was before Dumas’s national circular of 11 August 1850 that served as a secondary spur to encourage the creation of

⁴² Ibid., p. 9.

⁴³ See above, pp. 30-2; Bourillon, ‘La loi du 13 avril 1850’, pp. 123-6.

commissions. On the surface, the experience in Mulhouse was similar to that of Roubaix and La Croix Rousse: an enthusiasm to make an early engagement with the new powers created by the law. From what we have already seen in this thesis regarding the activity of Mulhouse's municipality and industrial elite regarding housing, this early adoption in Mulhouse is not surprising. What is remarkable, however, is how Mulhouse's CLI stood isolated in the Haut- and Bas-Rhin departments. Unlike in Roubaix, where the early establishment of a commission in 1850 might be in part explained by the momentum of Lille and other nearby towns, Mulhouse's commission was formed in a period of stark indifference on the part of both neighbouring communes as well as prefectural authorities. The circular of 11 August 1850 was the subject of discussion at a meeting in Colmar of the Haut-Rhin prefectural council of 28 August 1850. The councillors declared that, while they applauded the work of some local commissions that had already been created in the department, 'the financial state of the department, the needs of other services, and the uncertainty of the figures of the works to be executed do not permit us to take any engagement in this regard'.⁴⁴

This response, or lack thereof, from the Haut-Rhin prefecture is one we have already seen. It was at this same meeting on 28 August 1850 that the Haut-Rhin prefectural council also discussed the distribution of the translation of Henry Roberts's housing treatise, concluding that they had no money in their budget to propagate it.⁴⁵ Just as this departmental inactivity failed to stop the Mulhousian industrialists from discussing Roberts's work in their *Société*, it also did not stop them from founding and operating an active CLI. The Haut-Rhin prefect signed off on several early requests from the Mulhousian commission to render certain houses

⁴⁴ ADHR 5 M 39, 'Extrait du register des délibérations du conseil général du département du Haut-Rhin', 28 Aug. 1850.

⁴⁵ Prefect of Haut-Rhin to Minister for Agriculture and Commerce; Extract of register of deliberations of general council the department of Haut-Rhin, 28 Aug. 1850.

inhabitable, but he does not have seemed to have taken a greater interest in the actions of the commission until prompted by further intervention from Paris.⁴⁶

In 1853, after urging from the central government, the prefecture finally took a more active interest. In January, the prefect passed on the exemplary report of the Parisian commission to the only three CLI that he knew were in operation in the department (Mulhouse, Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines, and Ribeauville), thinking that they might find it useful to use the Paris CLI as a model.⁴⁷ Throughout the rest of 1853, he also sent letters to the mayors of other towns to urge them to set up their own commissions.⁴⁸ These letters received lukewarm response at best; the Mulhousian commission was evidently operating in a vacuum in the Alsace.⁴⁹

In the 1858 nationwide report, both Rhin departments were among the 19 that did not return any information at all. In March 1859, the Haut-Rhin prefect sought to remedy this lack of data by issuing a letter to all the mayors of the department, in which he berated the ‘great number’ of communes that had no commission, whilst calling for the immediate creation by municipal councils of new commissions where none existed.⁵⁰ There is no mention in this letter of pre-existing commissions such as the Mulhousian example, nor are there recommendations to look to such commissions for examples on how to operate, which

⁴⁶ ADHR 5 M 39, 'Conseil de préfecture du Haut-Rhin... l'interdiction absolue des plusieurs logemens reconnais insalubres et non susceptibles d'assainissement', 25 Jun. 1852.

⁴⁷ ADHR 5 M 39, Prefect of the Haut-Rhin to mayors of Mulhouse, Ribeauville, and Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines, 3 Jan. 1853.

⁴⁸ ADHR 5 M 39, Prefect of the Haut-Rhin to mayors of the department, 4 Oct. 1853; ADHR 5 M 39, Prefect of the Haut-Rhin to mayor of Guebwiller, 13 Dec. 1853.

⁴⁹ This vacuum extended north to the Bas-Rhin department, where the prefect issued a circular to all sub-prefects and mayors on 20 October 1855 that declared that ‘the law of 13 April 1850... has not received a sufficient execution in this department’, and called for a renewed push. ‘To remain inactive’, he went on to write, ‘[and] to suffer the unfortunate who are piled up in unhealthy places by the greed of an owner, would be a grave mistake’, ADHR 5 M 39, Prefect of the Bas-Rhin to sub-prefects and mayors of the department, 20 Oct. 1855.

⁵⁰ ADHR 5 M 39, Prefect of Haut-Rhin to mayors of the department, 1 Mar. 1859.

suggests a continued disconnect between prefectural and municipal authorities in the Haut-Rhin. Instead, a printed questionnaire was distributed to all communes. This included questions such as ‘What is the current composition [of the commission]? (Give names, first names, professions and functions of the members)’, and ‘How many times has the commission visited... dwellings deemed in an unhealthy state?’.⁵¹ For the most part, the replies to the prefect were blank questionnaires, save for the phrase ‘There does not exist a commission’ in answer to the first question. Others revealed that, while there may exist a commission, it met infrequently and made very few visits. In Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines, whose commission had been active since at least 1853, the members only met once a year, and had only visited a grand total of around 30 houses. But this prefectural circular might also have served its purpose to pressure certain communes into setting up new commissions. The commune of Sickert, only comprising around 340 residents in 1859, created a commission at the urging of the prefect, and had inspected a grand total of six houses by the time the questionnaire was returned.⁵²

When the municipal council of Mulhouse received this circular and questionnaire, they might have been understandably frustrated at the sudden interest from the prefecture in their work, which had been under way for almost a decade now. The reply from the mayor Joseph Kœchlin-Schlumberger on 20 April 1859 contained unmatched detail in each of its answers, but the mayor also included a terse letter to accompany the printed questionnaire.⁵³ In this letter, Kœchlin-Schlumberger lamented the fact that ‘neither the commission nor the

⁵¹ ADHR 5 M 40-1, Questionnaire results on the work of unhealthy housing commissions, Mar.-May 1859.

⁵² Ibid.; Sickert’s population was recorded as 337 in 1856 and 340 in 1861, ‘Notice communale - Sickert’ http://cassini.ehess.fr/cassini/fr/html/fiche.php?select_resultat=36295#, accessed 29 Jan. 2018.

⁵³ ADHR 5 M 41, Questionnaire on the work of unhealthy housing commissions: Mulhouse, 20 Apr. 1859.

municipal council is armed with sufficient powers to prescribe measures that the law has not provided for, and on which the superior administration has never issued any instructions'.⁵⁴ In Mulhouse, the commissioners felt that the Melun Law did not go far enough in helping them to inspect and regulate poor housing.

The experience in Mulhouse therefore contrasts with both Lyon and Roubaix. In Lyon, the prefect castigated the central commission for its hesitancy in using the provisions of the Melun Law to overcome the 'inviolability of the home'; in Mulhouse, the commissioners thought that the law did not go far enough in helping them realise their goals. Equally, the Mulhousian commission, as represented by mayor Kœchlin-Schlumberger's 1859 letter, seemed frustrated at a general lack of attention from prefectural authorities. In Roubaix, there had been a similar lack of specific acknowledgement of the town's commission in the early 1850s from the prefecture. This was not because of a general lack of departmental interest but, rather, it was indicative of Roubaix's position as just one active commission in a department teeming with CLI, encapsulated by the Lille commission. Once again, as we saw in the previous chapter, the older, larger city of Lille overshadowed Roubaix and its elite milieu.

This variety of experiences in the Nord, Rhône, and Haut-Rhin departments and the Roubaisian, Lyonnais, and Mulhousian municipalities shows how we should not treat the implementation of the Melun Law as a simple top-down, centre-out directive from Paris. Just as local and regional factors played a key role in the formation and passage of the law, when it came to implementation, the pre-existing will and desire of local individuals to deal with the housing problem facilitated the degree of adoption in these three cities. Once the

⁵⁴ ADHR 5 M 41, Kœchlin-Schlumberger to sub-prefect of Mulhouse, 20 Apr. 1859.

commissions were established, the following years saw them develop to focus on specific housing needs that were unique and localised to the cities in question.

Pursuit of professionalism and personal agendas, 1859-69

In terms of the content produced by the CLI following their inspections in the three cities in the early 1850s, the kind of socialised stench that existed in the early Croix Roussian report endured as these volunteers crossed the threshold into poor quality housing for the first time. However, as the years of CLI operation went on, reports rarely displayed the lurid description of the Croix Roussian 1851 exploration and its ‘stinking humidit[ies]’. Instead, as commissions worked their way through the *logements insalubres* of their towns and created longer lists, description was cut and language sanitised to the bare minimum. Individual cases still formed a large part of the day-to-day operation of the commissions but, in addition to this, certain CLI made efforts to make wholesale conclusions and changes to the management of housing in their cities. There are still plenty of mentions of broken toilets or overflowing drains, but these are, for the most part, treated with a greater degree of analytical neutrality; the subjective sensory experience of these objective faults were left to the interpretation of the reader of these reports. In Mulhouse, for example, the CLI drew up a table of the fourteen houses they had visited on 30 June 1855 in the labyrinthine medieval centre of the city, as well as the area to the south-west.⁵⁵ A common fault in most of the individual reports were to do with external drainage, with issues ranging from ‘blocked *pissoirs*’ to ‘overflowing cess-pits’. Two of the houses’ recommended changes were highlighted as ‘urgent’, while a further was identified as ‘very urgent’; yet, beyond this, there was no sense of disgust or of smell explicitly mentioned in the report. Part of this shift came from the simple fact that, as the 1850s drew

⁵⁵ AMM O1 Ab 20, ‘Commission des logements insalubres - Résumé de la tournée faite le 30 juin 1855’, 30 Jun. 1855.

on, commissions became both more experienced as well as more adventurous in their inspections. A weary familiarity now replaced the early shock from the reports of when the commissions first visited the houses of the poor.

In La Croix Rousse, the commissioners continued to operate after the ‘reunification’ with Lyon in March 1852, now serving as the CLI of the newly-created 2nd arrondissement of Lyon. Records of their activity in the Second Empire have not been as well preserved as their early inspections in 1851, but we know from the Parisian survey of 1858 that this commission continued to put the work of the central Lyon commission to shame. However, from March 1853, the city of Lyon received a boost in their lacklustre efforts regarding housing, with the arrival of the new prefect of the Rhône and *de facto* mayor, Claude Marius Vaïsse.

Vaïsse was more than familiar with the concerns surrounding poor housing. As prefect of the Nord from November 1849 to March 1851, Vaïsse had overseen and encouraged the zealous work first of Anatole de Melun in pushing for legislation between 1849-50, and then of the early inspections of the northern CLI that followed. In November 1850, Vaïsse had written to all the mayors in the Nord to ask for an update on their commissions be sent to him within a month. Expressing the necessity of this request, Vaïsse wrote: ‘It is urgent to give the people the benefit of the advantages that the law of 13 April aims to ensure and, I would like to believe, to achieve such a desirable result, you will have neglected none of the means of action and influence you have’.⁵⁶ He was also enthusiastic in his encouragement of new housing construction in Lille and Roubaix and, as we saw in Chapter 1, had requested additional copies of Henry Roberts’s work to distribute to northern communes in 1850.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ ADN M 349/7, Vaïsse to mayors of the Nord, 15 Nov. 1850.

⁵⁷ Minister for Agriculture and Commerce to Vaïsse.

He brought this housing-related drive with him to his new role as prefect of the Rhône in Lyon. On 17 January 1854, Vaïsse wrote to the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce about the lack of progress made in Lyon in response both to the Melun Law as well as to Napoleon III's 22 January 1852 fund for new housing construction.⁵⁸ 'I have proceeded to undertake a study', he wrote, 'aimed at improving, through the reconstruction of unhealthy houses in the oldest quarters of Lyon, where mainly workers live'.⁵⁹ This report, motivated no doubt at least partly by Vaïsse's plans for the impending urban redevelopment of Lyon (see Chapter 5), went into a great degree of detail about the issues Lyon faced: 'The city of Lyon, and particularly the old neighbourhoods, is made up of narrow, dark streets, and very high houses only allow the air and the light to penetrate with much difficulty and an almost inadequate quantity'.⁶⁰

To the commissioners of the Croix Roussian CLI, the arrival of Vaïsse appeared to vindicate their work over the previous years. Identifying poor toilets as a common theme of insalubrity in their inspections, the CLI lobbied Vaïsse for a city-wide intervention on the issue. On 13 September 1854, Vaïsse announced that he had heeded the advice of the Croix-Roussian CLI and passed an *arrêté* intended to tackle 'the causes of insalubrity... in communal latrines in a large number of workers' houses'.⁶¹ This CLI had built on its visceral, first-hand experience from visiting individual houses, and, with help from an engaged prefect, had managed to implement change at the general, city-wide level.

But many of the problems identified by the first inspection of 1851 were still prevalent almost two decades later in the late 1860s. The *Cours d'herbouville* was the site of many complaints and

⁵⁸ AN F 8 210, Vaïsse to Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, 17 Jan. 1854.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ AN F 8 210, 'Département du Rhône: Assainissement des logements insalubres', s.d. (1854).

⁶¹ AML 3 WP 127, Vaïsse to mayor of 2nd arrondissement, 13 Sep. 1854.

inspections throughout the 1860s, including a detailed study of no. 32 in 1869, next-door to the worst offender in the 1851 report.⁶² The CLI may have been successful in getting the attention of the prefectural authorities to rule on poor quality houses and toilets, but there was obviously a difference in the degree to which this legal success was reflected in realities of implementation.

When comparing the similarities in the reports of no. 31 *Cours d'herbouville* in 1851 and no. 32 *Cours d'herbouville* almost two decades later, it would be easy to forget that the CLI in these three cities were not operating in a static vacuum, where there was a finite number of unhealthy houses to be dealt with. The rapid growth of these cities, particularly Mulhouse and Roubaix, meant that the work of the CLI in managing existing poor housing was far outstripped by the construction of new, low quality housing to meet the needs of the growing population. On 7 July 1859, the Roubaisian CLI inspectors highlighted this when reporting their latest findings. They had been 'struck by the deplorable state of the *rues de la Tuilerie, des Longues Haies* and *de la Banque*' primarily because of the poor salubriousness of many new *courées* that ran off these roads.⁶³ The report highlighted the negative impacts of the 'defects in the construction of new houses, notably in their lack of solidity, the narrowness left between parallel façades, and consequently the lack of air'.⁶⁴ Here, the Roubaisian CLI inspectors were not just judging individual houses anymore; they were taking aim at the particularly Roubaisian form of new workers housing as found in the narrow, airless *courées* that were spreading so vociferously through the 1850s.

⁶² ADR 5 M 116, 'Salubrité publique - Malpropreté de la maison cours d'herbouville 32', 13 Jul. 1869.

⁶³ AMR 5 I 307, 'Ville de Roubaix. Commission d'assainissement des logements insalubres', 7 Jul. 1859.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the spread of the *courées* in the Second Empire was facilitated by a lack of legislation on new constructions behind the main street frontages. Reflecting the concerns of his municipal CLI in 1859, the Roubaisian mayor Louis-Gabriel-Joseph Tiers-Bonte tried to take on a greater regulatory role in managing the rapid construction of these *courée* houses by petitioning the prefectural authorities. The prefect of the Nord responded on 9 December 1859, writing that, although there existed legislation from 1852 and 1853 concerning road and housing regulation, ‘where an individual raises buildings on his land that is beyond the main roads, urban road regulations cease to be applicable and the owner of the land is free to build as it suits him’.⁶⁵ The prefect reiterated in January 1860 that all the municipality was able to do in this regard was to ‘proceed... to make owners appreciate the consequences which would result for them from the letting of unhealthy houses’, but they could not proactively intervene.⁶⁶ Hamstrung by the limits of their powers, the commission’s reports through the 1860s repeatedly make reference to the difficulties of tackling such rapid construction of poor housing. The report presented at the municipal council on 22 May 1863 begins by lamenting that ‘despite the zeal with which the Commission performs its very difficult functions, it is debilitated by the constantly rising flood of infractions of the laws of humanity’.⁶⁷ The frustration that the Roubaisian municipality expressed here echoed the exasperated tone of Mulhouse’s mayor’s letter in 1859, when he complained to the prefect of the Haut-Rhin about the limits of Mulhousian CLI’s powers.

Faced with the legal restrictions of managing the distinctly local housing issues associated with the *courées*, the Roubaix municipality and CLI found to work around these limitations in the

⁶⁵ AMR 5 I 307, Prefect of the Nord to mayor of Roubaix, 6 Dec. 1859.

⁶⁶ AMR 5 I 307, Prefect of the Nord to mayor of Roubaix, 18 Jan. 1860.

⁶⁷ AMR 5 I 307, ‘Rapport de la commission des logements insalubres’, 22 May 1863.

1860s, focusing their attention, inspections, and reports directly on *courées* in general. Thus, in 1866, the CLI of Roubaix took a ground-breaking new step by publishing a printed general report.⁶⁸ Since late 1852, commissions throughout France had received updates of the CLI of the Seine in the form of printed reports; now in Roubaix, the CLI responded with a report of their own, prepared by the commission's designated architect, Jean-Baptiste Godey. Rather than just a list of insalubrious houses intended for consideration in the confines of municipal council meetings, Godey's printed report sought to place the Roubaisian CLI as one of the most comprehensive and important commissions in France. 'Since its foundation', Godey wrote in his introduction, 'the commission has had to face major obstacles, as in all other large population centres'. However, according to Godey, Roubaix's problems were greater than other industrial centres due to the rapid population growth, unmatched by any town, and the subsequent construction of *courées*, *forts* and *cités*.⁶⁹ This report, stretching to 96 printed pages, was optimistic overall about the progress made in Roubaix in countering the inherent architectural and hygienic failings of the *courée* housing. The report spent a significant amount of time defining the differences between *courées* and *forts*, and in outlining the common failings (e.g. ventilation, overcrowding) that resulted from this local architectural form. Far from being a general treatise on unhealthy houses, on first reading this is very much a Roubaisian report on Roubaisian houses.

Yet, what is most remarkable about this report is that the second half was not dedicated to the findings of the Roubaisian CLI but, rather, was a detailed analysis of all the different forms of *cités ouvrières* in France and beyond to that date. Not surprisingly, Jean Dollfus's Mulhousian *cités* are given pride of place, and the longest report. 'If we have spent such a long time

⁶⁸ Jean-Baptiste Godey, *Département du Nord. Ville de Roubaix. Commission des logements insalubres. Rapport général sur les travaux de la commission* (Lille, 1866).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

discussing the *cités ouvrières* of Mulhouse', Godey concluded, after the six detailed pages and four accompanying plans, 'it is because we find in this enterprise a great similarity with those who are trying this in Roubaix'.⁷⁰ According to Godey, 'despite [the Mulhousian scheme's] merited success, it is not the last word in the question of workers' housing'. That honour belonged to individuals such as M. Carlos Cordonnier who were attempting to build large-scale housing projects in Roubaix which, while reflecting certain characteristics of *courées*, would be vastly improved in terms of hygiene.⁷¹ This parallels the calls that we saw in the previous chapter by the leading industrialist Louis Motte-Bossut and his colleagues later in the same year: both the municipality and the industrialists were frustrated at the poor quantity and quality of houses in Roubaix and advocated a radical new form of *cité ouvrière* to tackle this issue. In what was otherwise a balanced, professional report on housing conditions, this assertion that Roubaisian reformed housing would soon outstrip all others stands out as a strong declaration of local patriotism.

This report imitated the formal, professional nature of the Parisian printed annual reports whilst, at the same time, it offered evidence that Roubaix had both the worst housing conditions in the country as well as the most promising solutions. This bold claim that Roubaix also had the most encouraging examples of industrialist-led improved building was premature as, as we saw in the previous chapter, the mooted new constructions in Roubaix never reached the same levels of hygienic merit, nor the local or international prestige as their Mulhousian counterparts. Yet this model of large, all-encompassing general reports focusing on uniquely Roubaisian conditions set the tone for the Roubaisian CLI in the following years. While the reality of housing conditions did not improve, then the bureaucracy concerned with inspecting them certainly did.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 78.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 90-1.

At the end of the decade, in 1869, the Roubaisian CLI took what they perceived to be the worst feature of the *courée* housing, the low volume of air per individual, and created an extensive report titled: 'Table indicating the state of salubrity of the *Forts, Cours* and *Cités* of the town of Roubaix, their state, the number of houses, the inhabitants, the total cubic air contained in these houses, etc. etc.'⁷² This handwritten table, extending to well over a hundred pages, covered all 381 *courées* in the town, comprising 5,230 individual houses and 26,100 inhabitants. The notion of a 'healthy' volume of air per person was central. Before the report went into details house-by-house, the introduction stated that 'the total volume of air contained in these dwellings [i.e. all houses in all 381 *courées*] is 661,135.05m³... each inhabitant therefore has an average cube of air of 25.35m³ in the interior of their home'. But the report did not stop there. Going into more detail, the authors divided this overall average into 8.68m³ per person in rooms designated for sleeping, and 16.67m³ per person in other areas of the houses. This painstaking quantification served to provide a measure whereby *courées* that fell below the average for Roubaix could be condemned, whilst those that were above the average could be praised; however, this was all proportional, and there was no recourse to considering whether above the average of 25.35m³ was objectively 'healthy', or just 'healthy' in comparison to those that are worse in Roubaix. This was perhaps illustrative of a shift in approach to the *courées*. It had been proven near-impossible to regulate building in this style; however, by creating this comparative scale of *courée* healthiness, the CLI could simultaneously damn the worst offenders while showing it was possible to build *courées* in a hygienic manner.

The language used in this mammoth report was clipped and clinical. While priority was given to assessing the quantity of air per house and per inhabitant (by dedicating a column to

⁷² "Tableau indiquant l'état de salubrité...".

number of houses, number of people, and volume of air), each entry also analysed other familiar elements of a CLI report, such as the state of the toilets, drainage etc. Yet these entries were concise and weighted evenly: that is to say, every element was recorded with equal attention whether negative or positive. For example, the *Cour Vve Taupe* off the *Rue de Postillon* was described as ‘entirely paved, [but] leaves a lot to desire in regard to cleanliness, the wells give very little water, the width of the *cour* is 5m00. [The] latrines are well-kept, but poorly arranged. Houses are two storey, dirty walls, poorly kept’.⁷³ Meanwhile, a *courée* off the *Rue St Maurice* was described: ‘the floor of the *cour* is not paved, but it is tidy and well-kept. Width = 4m50. One well, the water is good and in a sufficient quantity. The lavatories are dirty, not ventilated... Two-storey houses passably kept’.⁷⁴ One of these *courées* was paved but dirty; the other was tidy but not paved. One had a bad well, the other a good well, while the former had well-kept toilets and the latter poorly-kept ones. By clinically analysing these factors, alongside the quantified volume of air, with very little personal opinion, this report illustrated the development of CLI commissioners throughout the Second Empire. The causes of insalubrity – air quantity, toilet quality etc. – had not changed. But gone were the sensory-driven, near-literary descriptions found in early reports like the Croix Roussian report. Replacing this language was a clipped, analytical vocabulary. Additionally, the shift in scale from covering mere scores of houses in certain quarters to thousands of houses throughout the city demonstrates the way that CLI developed from examining isolated cases to forming a key part of municipal conceptions of the city as a whole.

The one area where subjective description crept into this report was when considering the ‘healthy’ *courées*. The newly-built *Cité Cordonnier*, praised in the 1866 report, was once again also hailed here. This new *cité* had 50 houses for 225 people, with a rough average of 33m³ per

⁷³ Ibid., p. 3.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 21.

person. It was praised for therefore having ‘the best conditions of aeration and cleanliness... all the houses are clean [and] arranged in sufficient proportions’.⁷⁵ By once again praising this *courée* – an outlier when compared to the average narrow and airless *courées* – the CLI were making a case for a positive interpretation of elements of Roubaisian housing, rather than a singularly grim image of the misery of the *courées*.

Overcrowding and subsequent lack of air was used in this 1869 report as a measurable, quantifiable means to assess hygienic conditions in Roubaix. In Mulhouse, the CLI also used this factor in a similar way in its inspections: for example, a Mulhousian report of October 1863 ruled against numerous properties whose sleeping chambers had as little as 4.16m³ per person in some cases.⁷⁶ But a specific charge of overcrowding levelled against two workers in 1859-60 reveals the ways that these scientific, hygienic concerns overlapped not only with local political and social issues, but with personal and financial interests of CLI commissioners and municipality in Mulhouse.

One of the first roads to be built in Jean Dollfus’s *cités ouvrières* between 1853-4 was the road that bore his name, the *Rue Dollfus*. In 1854, the *frappeur* Jaques Rosenblatt and the *fileur* Balthasar Stisi moved into numbers 2 and 6 respectively with their families.⁷⁷ On 17 February

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 53.

⁷⁶ For example, at 4 *Rue de la Justice*, one room had five beds, ten people, but a volume of only 50m³. Meanwhile, in the *mansarde* room at 18 *Rue de Paille*, 18 people slept in nine beds with a total volume of only 75m³ of air. ADHR 5 M 39, 'Extrait de la conseil municipal de Mulhouse', 18 Aug. 1863.

⁷⁷ Nos. 2 and 6 *Rue Dollfus* were both ‘carré Mulhousian’ style houses, rather than terraces. Rosenblatt and Stisi are both listed as renting their houses in an 1856 report, though it is possible that one or both of the men had started making monthly payments towards becoming homeowners by 1859. AMM B 246, ‘Société mulhousienne des cités ouvrières. Grande livre, 1853-59’, 1859; ADHR 9 M 24, ‘État: locataires et acheteurs’, 17 Apr. 1856; ADHR 9 M 24, ‘Plan des cités ouvrières de Mulhouse’, Dec. 1866; Achille Penot, ‘Rapport du comité d’économie sociale sur la construction d’une cité ouvrière à Mulhouse, présenté par M. le Docteur Penot, dans la séance du 30 Novembre 1853’, *BSIM* (Mulhouse, France), p. 310.

1859, following an inspection, the CLI's architect François Lin Winterer described both houses as in need of a thorough cleaning, and highlighted that both had a closet-sized unventilated room (*'un réduit non aéré'*) as well as a *'mansarde inhabitable'* on the first floor, neither of which had been built for habitation in the original plans for the houses (fig. 3.1). Stisi's house at 6 *Rue Dollfus* was also noted as having an overcrowded main room on the ground-floor due to the presence of an extra bed.⁷⁸ The implication of these findings was that the two men were either subletting or merely overcrowding their houses to the extent that the health of the inhabitants as well as the integrity of the houses were both threatened. Winterer's official recommendation was that both the *'réduits'* and mansards were to be declared unfit for habitation and that, unless Stisi removed the extra bed that crowded his ground floor, so too would this room. The men were informed of the decision shortly after the meeting. At the next meeting of the CLI on 9 June, the mayor Joseph Kœchlin-Schlumberger was irritated to discover that Stisi's promise to enforce these changes had not been followed up upon; more frustratingly, Rosenblatt had not even responded to the initial rulings.⁷⁹ The mayor instructed the commission to revisit the houses and, on 22 July, Rosenblatt and Stisi were issued with a formal notice that once again informed them of the conclusions reached by the commission and giving them another six months to make the necessary improvements.

And yet, by the end of the year, the two workers remained either obstinately opposed or just uninterested in the rulings of the commission and the municipal council: Kœchlin-Schlumberger was forced to escalate the case to the prefecture in Colmar in mid-December

⁷⁸ ADHR 5 M 39, 'Mairie de Mulhouse: Logements insalubres', 17 Feb. 1859.

⁷⁹ ADHR 5 M 39, 'Extrait du registre des délibérations du conseil municipal de la ville de Mulhouse', 9 Jun. 1859.

1859, to gain a formal interdiction on the two men.⁸⁰ As a sign of his waning patience with the case, and with the sub-prefect of Mulhouse currently on leave, the mayor stepped into the temporary role of sub-prefect and wrote yet another letter to the prefect in January 1860, reiterating the need to take action. After laying out the men's violations and refusal to adhere to the commission's rulings, Kœchlin-Schlumberger finished his letter with:

The *cités ouvrières* have been built in the interests of the health of the workers and it is essential that they are maintained in this condition for this purpose and, for these reasons, I would particularly urge the full adoption of the conclusions reached by the commission.⁸¹

Finally, at a meeting of the prefectural council on 22 February 1860, over a year after the commission had first visited the two houses, the prefect passed an *arrêté* that declared the *réduits*, the mansards, and Stisi's ground-floor room all to be unfit for habitation.⁸²

On the surface, this year-long pursuit of the two men seems to be fairly standard, both in terms of what the commissioners targeted for improvement, as well as in terms of inefficiency in translating these targets into changes. The fact that it took the Mulhousian CLI a year to gain a formal interdiction on the two men shows the legal restrictions of these commissions that Kœchlin-Schlumberger had complained about earlier in 1859. But it is not just inefficiency that the above case illustrates. The Mulhousian municipality's pride in the *cités ouvrières* motivated their dogged pursuit of the two men.

One feature of this case that emphasises its connection to Mulhousian civic pride is how entangled the fates of Rosenblatt and Stisi are: throughout the course of the investigation from 1859-60, the two houses were always referred to as part of the same problem and the

⁸⁰ ADHR 5 M 39, 'Tableau indiquant l'état des lieux [2 Rue Dollfus and 6 Rue Dollfus]', 15 Dec. 1859.

⁸¹ ADHR 5 M 39, Kœchlin-Schlumberger to prefect of the Haut-Rhin, 18 Jan. 1860.

⁸² ADHR 5 M 39, 'Conseil de préfecture : Logements insalubres de Mulhouse', 22 Feb. 1860.

men and their houses are never dealt with individually. Equally, the two cases were not subsumed into a greater summary list of houses inspected by the commission that we have seen in other CLI reports both in Mulhouse and elsewhere. The reason for this must be that both houses were in the *cités ouvrières*, and both sets of offences violated the aims of the *cités*. Just as the Roubaisian commission would later target the houses of the *courées* for special attention, here the fact that these two are set aside reflects the shared ‘different’ nature of these houses. However, unlike in Roubaix where *courées* were notoriously poorly ventilated and constructed, the *cités ouvrières* of Mulhouse were meant to be a shining light of reformed housing. The Roubaisian CLI’s attempts to highlight the positive *courées* like the *Cité Cordonnier* was intended to overcome the stigma of poor Roubaisian housing; here, we find the opposite, as the CLI attempted to stop these two bad apples from tarnishing the overall image of the *cités ouvrières*. In the meeting of the prefectural council, the case begins with ‘there exist two houses in the *cité ouvrière* of that town’, rather than just stating that there were just two houses in Mulhouse. The violations of the two men could be grouped together not because they went against salubrity in general, but because they went against salubrity in the quarter of the town that had been built explicitly for the benefit of the workers.

The way that this case was doggedly pursued over a year and was repeatedly pushed by the mayor for prefectural intervention – because of this violation of the ideals of the *cités ouvrières* – shows once again how the CLIs could act to amplify local concerns, rather than just to judge impartially the state of health of a house. The role played in the case by the mayor, Joseph Kœchlin-Schlumberger (1796-1863), emphasised this relationship between CLI and pre-existing housing concerns. No other figure, perhaps not even SOMCO’s founder Jean Dollfus, bridged the worlds of industry, municipality, and philanthropy more effectively than this mayor. His grandfather Samuel Kœchlin was one of the three main originators of the cotton industry in Mulhouse. In 1826, Joseph was one of the twenty-one founders of the

Société industrielle de Mulhouse, serving as librarian, and he would play an active role in its many philanthropic endeavours throughout the following years.⁸³ Shortly after this founding, Joseph married Caroline Schlumberger, the daughter of his employer, and added her family's name to his own, thereby cementing his own position in the Mulhousian fabricantocracy.⁸⁴ Joseph Kœchlin-Schlumberger became an active member of the municipal council. In the half-century before he became mayor in 1852, there were four other mayors bearing the last name Kœchlin: his father Josué (between 1811-14), his cousins Jean-Jacques (1815 and 1819-21) and André (1830-32 and 1832-43), and his nephew Émile (1848-52).⁸⁵ One of his myriad responsibilities as a member of the council was to serve on the first Mulhousian CLI when it was formed on 1 July 1850, explaining his later commitment to the works of the commission when he became mayor.⁸⁶

But Joseph Kœchlin-Schlumberger's pursuit of resolution in the case of Rosenblatt and Stisi may have had a further motivation than just his past involvement with the CLI. Having seen how Joseph combined his family's position with an active engagement with industry, municipality, and philanthropy, it is not surprising to find his name listed prominently as one of the initial shareholders of the SOMCO. Jean Dollfus, as pioneer of the scheme, held a majority of thirty-five of the original sixty shares of 5,000 Fr., but in the official statutes of SOMCO's foundation on 10 June 1853, it is Joseph Kœchlin-Schlumberger's two shares in the scheme that are listed second, as opposed to the ten held by Jean Dollfus's younger brother Matthieu.⁸⁷ The fact that Kœchlin-Schlumberger purchased these shares while he

⁸³ 'Règlements de la Société industrielle de Mulhausen'

⁸⁴ Charles Grad, 'Kœchlin-Schlumberger, Joseph (1796-1863)', in Ant. Meyer (ed.), *Biographies alsaciennes avec portraits en photographie* (Colmar, 1888).

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ ADHR 5 M 39, 'Extrait du registre des délibérations du conseil municipal de la ville de Mulhouse', 1 Jul. 1850.

⁸⁷ Statutes of SOMCO.

served as mayor showed how his pursuit of resolution of this case of two houses in the *cités ouvrières* was both a municipal and a personal interest. When the mayor emphasised how ‘it is essential that [the houses in the *cités*] are maintained in this condition’ in his letter to the prefect, it was not only because he was mayor of the town where they were built, not only because he had founded the industrial society where the debates leading to SOMCO’s establishment had taken place, but also because he was technically one of the landlords of the scheme in question.

This overlapping role that the mayor played in this case also helps explain another peculiarity. While it is possible that both Stisi and Rosenblatt had begun the process of paying yearly annuities to become owners of their houses by 1859, in 1856 they were still listed as only tenants, so they would not have been able to take full ownership of the houses by the time of the commission’s inspection.⁸⁸ In spite of this, they are consistently listed as ‘*propriétaires*’ in the records of the case. In theory, unhealthy housing commissions served ‘in a position of arbitrator between the *locataire plaignant* and the *propriétaire*’.⁸⁹ Rosenblatt and Stisi were neither full landlords nor, judging by their reticence to comply with the commissions’ rulings, were they complaining tenants. Instead, this case seems to show the unhealthy housing commission acting as an arbiter between *propriétaire plaignant* and the *locataires*. Rather than a focus on negligent landlords creating unhealthy housing conditions, this case instead targeted lodgers who were jeopardising their health through their behaviour. Moreover, by overcrowding these houses that had been designed explicitly to improve hygienic conditions, Rosenblatt and Stisi placed themselves in direct opposition to the interests of the Mulhousian fabricantocracy. It is therefore unsurprising to find Kœchlin-Schlumberger interpreting legal reach of the CLI quite freely to seek resolution in this case.

⁸⁸ ‘État: locataires et acheteurs’.

⁸⁹ Fijalkow, *La Construction des îlots insalubres, Paris, 1850-1945*, p. 84.

At the same time as Kœchlin-Schlumberger was using his position of mayor to pursue better maintenance of these two houses in the *cités ouvrières*, the administration of SOMCO was in the process of cracking down on those that violated the terms of the philanthropic housing scheme. Whether the infringements of Rosenblatt and Stisi played a motivating role in this crack-down is difficult to ascertain, but it is safe to assume that SOMCO was aware of the case against those who lived in 2 and 6 Rue Dollfus. SOMCO had always prohibited subletting for those who lived in the houses of the *cités ouvrières*. Dr Achille Penot, the local hygienist and statistician, reported to SIM on the progress of construction in November 1853 and stressed that ‘in the interest of order and morals, the shared dwelling of two families in the same house is forbidden’, whilst there was also a clause in the conditions of sale that promised the good-keeping of the house in order to preserve uniformity.⁹⁰ Rosenblatt and Stisi were evidently not the only ones to break these rules, however, as on 18 July 1859 SOMCO issued a notice in both French and German that began: ‘The administration reminds people who have acquired houses, most of whom violate the conditions of use imposed on them’ about subletting. The notice went on to condemn the ‘greed or lack of attention for the health and tranquillity of the family’ of those who sublet their houses, with the example of the family who had to be removed from 11 *Rue du Travail* for violating this rule serving as a warning for others.⁹¹ The publication of this notice, four days before Rosenblatt and Stisi were issued with their final formal notice by the municipality, sheds light on some of the motivations for pursuing this case. And yet, SOMCO was never mentioned in the records of the unhealthy housing commission’s meetings – the two breaches were strictly pursued in terms of salubrity. The moral benefits of the single-family household that were woven

⁹⁰ Penot, ‘Rapport du comité d’économie sociale’, *BSIM*, , pp. 312-3.

⁹¹ AMM Q 3 K 1, Official notice concerning subletting, 18 Jul. 1859.

into the foundation charter of SOMCO were here enforced by the legal process of the CLI via the language of health, cleanliness, and overcrowding.

The archival trail of the CLI dries up after the prefectural *arrêté* of 22 February 1860, so it is difficult to ascertain whether the ruling had its desired impact of stopping the two men subletting in the immediate term. The SOMCO ledger for the years 1862-66 still lists both Jacques Rosenblatt and Balthasar Stisi, with regular monthly payments from both men indicating they escaped eviction from the notice condemning subletting of July 1859.⁹² Yet, Rosenblatt's record has a strike through it. The census record of 1866 suggests that, even if the men may have heeded the ruling in 1860, they had started overcrowding and subletting once again by mid-decade. Stisi's house at 6 *Rue Dollfus* was recorded as having two families living there – Stisi, his wife and their five children, and another husband and wife with a young child. Down the road at 2 *Rue Dollfus* and, if the census records are to be believed, a total of 12 families and 47 people shared the house intended just for one family.⁹³ Once again, the gulf between intention and implementation of the CLI are evident.

The CLI through the 1850s and 1860s in these towns were active, despite the vagaries of what constituted an 'unhealthy house'. Smell, volume of air, and the immorality of overcrowding reflect just three different ways that these commissions describe poor housing. But, just as the local variance of these CLI show how the centre-periphery image of relations between state and local commissions is a flawed model, at the local level the CLI also did not operate smoothly as top-down dictators of laws. Rosenblatt and Stisi's silence in the above case is not indicative of all CLI judgements. In the final section of this chapter, it is time to turn our attention to the ways that landlords and their tenants interacted with the commissions and, in

⁹² AMM B 239, 'Société mulhousienne des cités ouvrières : Grande Livre, 1862-66', 1866.

⁹³ ADHR 6 M 202, Census of Mulhouse, 1866.

so doing, adopted the language of healthy and unhealthy housing that the law of 13 April 1850 sought to instil.

Landlords, lodgers, and the language of insalubrity

Until now, we have seen how the commissions acted in relation to their interactions with central authorities, and how the commissions were limited in their action. But a crucial missing element of this discussion of how the unhealthy housing commissions operated is the voices of the landlords and tenants whose houses were subject to inspection by these commissions. It would be all too easy to see these commissions as acting didactically – setting ideals and trying to communicate these top-down to landlords and workers. In this sense, when we see cases such as the *Rue Dollfus* or the unimproved houses on the *Cours d'herbouville*, when changes were not implemented, it is tempting to agree with the commissioners and to blame this or ignorance or laziness on the part of those singled out by the reports. But David Barnes has offered a useful approach to considering these moments of ‘failure’ or opposition. Public health histories are not just histories of imposition of laws and regulation; these studies must also be a ‘history of *meaning*’. Those who the laws intended to regulate may have refused injunctions not just because they were resisting authority or exhibiting ignorance; they were, according to Barnes, ‘expressing – and enacting – their own local knowledge, their own mores about bodily well-being and cultural integrity’.⁹⁴ In this context, then, we must consider the lived realities of those inhabiting the houses or being subjected to the rulings alongside the frustrations of commissioners who saw their impositions challenged or ignored. The way landlords and tenants reacted to, or even prompted, CLI rulings show that this is a story of interaction, rather than just top-down intervention.

⁹⁴ David S. Barnes, *The Great Stink of Paris and the Nineteenth-Century Struggle Against Filth and Germs* (Baltimore, 2006), p. 8.

When considering the landlords who were instructed to make changes to their houses, it is important to remember that these people occasionally belonged to the same social milieu as the commissioners. We have already seen with the 1866 Roubaisian CLI report and Louis Motte-Bossut's petitions to the municipal council that, in Roubaix, there were some leading industrialists whose views on poor housing and the need for local government intervention aligned with the aims of the CLI inspectors. However, there were also instances where members of this same elite industrial class – complicated by complex intermarriage and business partnerships – were also responsible for building and managing poor quality *courée* housing on land they owned behind the street frontage. This meant that, often, the CLI dealt out reprimands to their cousins or business partners.

In the extensive list of rulings that the Roubaix CLI made in the 1850s, we find, peppered amongst lower-middle-class landlords, the names of prominent Roubaisian industrial families such as Brédart, Dazin, Grimonprez, and Mulliez either alone or in a double-barrelled form by marriage.⁹⁵ Some of these names will be familiar from the discussion of the early *courées* in Chapter 2. Louis Motte-Bossut, as head of the largest factory and business in Second Empire Roubaix, is a useful figure for assessing the prestige of these families in mid-century Roubaix. Louis's mother was Pauline Brédart; his sister Adele married their cousin Clément Dazin-Brédart; their brother Alfred married Léonie Grimonprez and paired her family's name to his.⁹⁶ As for Mulliez, a M. Mulliez-Delemasure was on the CLI in 1859 which ordered a group of men, including another M. Mulliez, to build an aqueduct near their properties as soon as possible to avoid unhealthy dangers to the road's inhabitants.⁹⁷ We cannot just treat the

⁹⁵ AMR 5 I 307, Assorted CLI reports, 1851-5, 1859-60.

⁹⁶ Motte, *Les Motte*, pp. 53-55; 66-70; 90-92.

⁹⁷ 'Ville de Roubaix. Commission d'assainissement des logements insalubres', 7 Jul. 1859.

rulings of the Roubaisian CLI as dictating ‘downwards’ to a lower class of landlords: there was also a sense of educating and scolding their peers.

In this vein, there was also a degree of shaming the landlords who were caught out by the CLI in the local middle-class press. On page two of the 17 November 1867 edition of the weekly newspaper *L'Echo de Roubaix*, the editor published the results of the latest *courées* deemed unfit for habitation, alongside a comment on whether work had started on improving them or not. This list of twenty *courées* had several houses per record, and each had recorded next to it the name of the landlord responsible for making the required changes.⁹⁸ The result was a public airing of previously private dealings between municipality and landlord. Less than a year later, on 17 May 1868, another report was printed in the same paper. This time, rather than forming a list buried amongst other *Chronique Locale* stories on the second page of the four-page paper, the reports formed a separate table that spanned two columns at the bottom of the front page.⁹⁹ Again, each landlord was named, but the report had taken greater prominence in the paper. As each landlord was mentioned directly by name, this would have served to draw the reader's attention to those in their midst who were responsible for contributing to the continued epidemic of poor housing in the town. Unlike other outputs prepared by the CLI, such as Godey's printed report of 1866 that discussed ideal *cités ouvrières* or the study on volume of air in all the city's *courées*, these newspaper articles connected the dealings of the CLI to the wider public. Their increased prominence would also indicate that this was something that the editors believed their readers would want to know.

⁹⁸ 'Chronique locale', *L'Echo de Roubaix* (Roubaix), 17 Nov. 1867, p. 2.

⁹⁹ 'Rapports de la commission d'assainissement des logements insalubres', *L'Echo de Roubaix* (Roubaix), 17 May 1868, p. 1.

However, while there was some overlap in terms of social milieu between commissioners and landlords, this was not typical for all CLI operation. Some landlords felt they were being imposed upon by municipal superiors in their dealings with the CLI, which comes across in the archival records of certain cases. The Mulhouse *Rue Dollfus* case considered above was unique because of the home-ownership elements of the *cités ouvrières*: the landlords were also the workers who lived there. More often, in examining archival records of CLI activities, there were three key parties, separated by class difference: the commissioners, the landlords, and the working-class inhabitants. When called upon to make improvements to their houses, landlords were prone to shifting the blame for the poor condition either ‘upwards’, in the direction of superior municipal authorities and public works, or ‘downwards’, towards the behaviour of the tenants themselves.

One example of landlords blaming superior authorities for a house’s state occurred in Mulhouse between 1852-9. A two-roomed ground floor of 16 *Rue de Manchester* was one of fifteen properties that were formally deemed unfit for habitation in an *arrêté* of 25 June 1852.¹⁰⁰ Seven years later, however, the CLI had to launch another charge against the landlords of the two houses located at 16 *Rue Manchester*, for the same reason again. ‘Every room in this house’, asserted the inspectors at the end of 1859, ‘is always overcrowded... The ground floor of these two dwellings is much below the street level, meaning they are very damp’.¹⁰¹ But the two culpable landlords, Rueff and Fabing, bitterly fought against this ruling. On 7 August 1859, Rueff wrote to the subprefect of Mulhouse, stating that he had been the landlord of this property for many years. When he first owned the house, Rueff asserted, the floor of the ground-floor was above the level of the pavement. It was, according to Rueff, only following successive municipal repaving works that had significantly raised the level of

¹⁰⁰ 'Conseil de préfecture', 25 Jun. 1852.

¹⁰¹ ADHR 5 M 39, 'Tableau indiquant l'état des lieux [16 Rue Manchester]', 15 Dec. 1859.

the street outside that the present condition had occurred, which was therefore not his fault.¹⁰²

Not only did Rueff attempt to absolve himself of any responsibility for the humidity of these rooms, he demanded compensation for the loss of rent resulting from the interdiction.

Rueff's claim against the municipality resulted in the prefecture asking mayor Joseph Kœchlin-Schlumberger to defend himself. The mayor, in a long report, pointed out that when the house had been built in 1834, it was not only built on an old ditch, but that its ground floor was below the level of the road outside.¹⁰³ Ironically, the municipal works on *Rue Manchester* to which Rueff had referred had been carried out as part of a city-wide scheme under Kœchlin-Schlumberger's orders from 1856-7, when he had been informed by an engineer that they were 'necessary to ensure the viability and salubrity of an overpopulated quarter'.¹⁰⁴ Rueff's claim was dismissed and the interdiction remained, but in this case we see the prefectural council's role as mediator of disputes. The CLI did not always have the final say, and the municipality was a target for landlords to shift the blame onto. Notably – and this distinction is key – Rueff was not denying the insalubrity of this overcrowded and humid room, he was merely denying his fault for it.

Later in Mulhouse, in 1863, the baker Joseph Mansbendel lodged an appeal against a CLI ruling which had stated that he was overcrowding the rooms he owned above his shop.

Unlike Rueff, however, Mansbendel sought to dispute the fact that there were insalubrious conditions at all. He asserted that yes, there were several beds in the rooms which had been the area for concern, but that that more often than not these beds remained empty as he did

¹⁰² ADHR 5 M 39, Rueff to sub-prefect of Mulhouse, 7 Aug. 1859.

¹⁰³ ADHR 5 M 39, Kœchlin-Schlumberger to sub-prefect of Mulhouse, 15 Nov. 1859.

¹⁰⁴ ADHR 3 O 964 (1), 'Ville de Mulhouse. Plan d'alignement des nouvelles rues existantes de part et d'autre de la chaussée de Dornach', 20 Oct. 1857.

not have permanent lodgers.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, he went on, ‘these lodgings are not dangerous to health!’. Here is the crucial contrast to the curiously tenant-less 1851 CLI report in La Croix Rousse, that paid greater attention to animals than to human inhabitants. Mansbendel was challenging the link between beds (a structural indicator of overcrowding that CLI inspectors could note down on their isolated visits) and tenants (the actual contributors towards, and potential victims of, airlessness on a day-to-day basis, who rarely factored in CLI reports). By evoking the ‘lived reality’, Mansbendel was attempting to move beyond the snapshot of a CLI inspection.

But Mansbendel’s appeal did not just deal with the issue of overcrowding with which he had been charged. He outlined the ways he ensured the ‘cleanliness which reigns *chez moi*’: the frequent changing of the sheets (which he took pains to point out were washed in *fresh* water from the river Doller), and the daily airing of the building. Mansbendel’s appeal here emphasised the ways which his house could not be considered a *logement insalubre*, by using the language associated with cleanliness. Finally, Mansbendel tried to appeal to the hearts of the councillors by stressing that he had five young children to raise and needed the extra money from renting these beds. Unlike Rueff’s angry deflection of blame, Mansbendel instead tried a tactic of downplaying the charges of overcrowding whilst simultaneously stressing cleanliness and his position as a head of a household. However, like Rueff, his appeal was unsuccessful, and the interdiction remained.¹⁰⁶ This shows once again the potency of the notion of overcrowding as a target for CLI – it was difficult to apply a scientific quantification of how frequently Mansbendel cleaned his sheets and aired the building, but it was easy to count beds, and to calculate the quantity of air available.

¹⁰⁵ ADHR 5 M 39, Mansbendel to prefectural council, 1 Aug. 1863.

¹⁰⁶ ADHR 5 M 39, Rejection of Mansbendel’s appeal, extracts of the prefectural council of the Haut-Rhin, 20 Oct. 1863.

The proliferation of the activities of both the CLI as well as the defensive language used by landlords created a channel through which grievances about poor housing could be communicated by the working-class tenants themselves. As the actions and reports of the CLI in these cities expanded and impacted on more and more houses and landlords, they framed the very language that new grievances about poor housing could be expressed in. When it came to lodging appeals to the CLI, workers combined their unique ‘local knowledge’ of the lived environment with the vocabulary and phrasing that commissioners themselves had been using in their inspections and reports.

Returning once again to the notorious *Cours d'herbouville* in Lyon's La Croix Rousse suburb, we find in a rainy September 1868 the widow and silk spooler Annette Buisson complaining about the room she rented at no. 27. She had moved into the room on 15 September but, only the following morning, found it impossible to remain there as ‘so much water was falling into my apartment as if I had been stood on the street outside’.¹⁰⁷ Her furniture was ruined, she argued, meaning she could no longer work, let alone live in this apartment. She had relocated, and wanted recompense from the landlord, a M. Chavériat who also lived at no. 27. The CLI were sent to inspect this apartment, and declared that her complaint ‘could and must be considered null and void’.¹⁰⁸ Why? The language of the CLI report hints that Buisson should have been aware of the risks of the room she rented prior to renting it. The leak had been caused by a gutter that had overflowed, but the landlord had taken all steps to try and avoid the leak, and it should have been obvious that this was a risk before Buisson moved in. Chavériat was not held responsible, and Buisson's appeal was quashed by the CLI, who

¹⁰⁷ ADR 5 M 116, Buisson to prefect of the Rhône, 26 Sep. 1868.

¹⁰⁸ ADR 5 M 116, 'Commission des logements insalubres. Rapport à M. le Préfet du Rhône, Oct. 1868', 2 Oct. 1868.

seemed to place the blame for this ‘unhealthy’ living condition at the feet of Buisson’s foolishness.

The relationship between lodgers and landlords in Lyon was different to that of Roubaix and Mulhouse. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the latter two cities were dominated by factory industry, with housing providing a place to sleep and eat when not in the factory or school. In Lyon, however, the continued dominance of domestic silk work into the 1850s and 1860s meant that a large number of complaints to the CLI emphasised how the poor conditions of their lodgings was directly affecting their health and, therefore, their ability to work at home. At no. 8 *Passage Dumont* in La Croix Rousse, the weaver Jean-Marie Cochet wrote to the prefect in May 1868 to declare that he, his wife (who both worked at home), and their children had fallen ill because of the humidity and general poor conditions of their lodgings.¹⁰⁹ He was asking permission to break his contract and to move out, and to be excused from paying three months’ rent as they had not been able to work enough to earn that money. The language he used in this complaint, drawing on the ties between their illness and the insalubrity of the lodging, relates back to the original articles of the law of 13 April 1850. Either Cochet wrote the appeal himself and decided to use the kind of language here that a CLI report might contain, or he was illiterate and took his complaint to an intermediary to write it up; both scenarios indicate the extent to which the language of the Melun Law had spread throughout society by the end of the Second Empire.

The CLI was sent to inspect the lodging. It was ‘small, too small for three people’ deemed the inspectors, and was crowded with objects. But the inspection was as much about assessing how truthful Cochet was as it was about assessing how bad the house was. The inspector

¹⁰⁹ ADR 5 M 116, Cochet to prefect of the Rhône, 14 May 1868.

declared in his report that that he was ‘not able to say that [the members of the family] are ill’.¹¹⁰ The inspector admitted that Cochet’s wife and children ‘looked pale’ and that this pallor could derive from the humidity of the room, but it was not certain. ‘I see amongst these people there is more misery than bad faith’ he went on, calling on the compassion of the landlord to aid the family, but stopping short of granting all the family’s wishes. The case seems to have resulted in a stalemate, where the CLI did not force any improvements to be made, and the Cochet family were left to the protection of their landlord.

These cases were rife in Lyon, with many other calls for the CLI to come save ill families from their poor conditions, with a mix of success.¹¹¹ Similar situations arose in Mulhouse and Roubaix, though the tie between poor housing and ability to earn money for rent carried a greater potency in Lyon.¹¹² These complaints, often dictated rather than written by the workers themselves, adopted the vocabulary of *logement insalubres* commissions that spread through inspections and *arrêtés* for decades now. Humidity, miasmas, poor ventilation, and smells were used to describe the lodgings, and workers like Cochet emphasised the direct impact of the poor housing on their and their families’ health. While not all of these cases were successful, the common features of their language show the potency, throughout all levels of late Second Empire society, of the notion of an unhealthy house.

But the other side to these complaints – the unsuccessful ones or the ones where inspectors were trying to judge the veracity of the workers themselves as much as their claims – links to

¹¹⁰ ADR 5 M 116, ‘Commission des logements insalubres. Rapport à M. le Préfet du Rhône, May 1868’, 24 May 1868.

¹¹¹ For example, the case of M. Bernadet vs. M. Gautier at 59 *Cours Vitton* between November 1868 and January 1869, amongst others in the records of ADR 5 M 116.

¹¹² In Roubaix, for example, a doctor’s report from 27 May 1856 declared that the weaver Auguste Grouillon and his wife were both ill as a result of the poor quality of their housing, a ‘foyer of infection’, at 104 *Route d’Epeule*. From AMR 5 I 307.

the idea not of unhealthy workers' houses but, rather, of workers' unhealthy behaviour. On the one hand, throughout the 1850s and 1860s the work of the CLI expanded both in terms of numbers of houses dealt with as well as in terms of bringing the opinions of landlords and tenants into their rulings; on the other hand, however, this increased activity and greater integration of views only served to emphasise a growing sense in the eyes of the commissioners and municipal councils of an inalterable laziness in the behaviour of the majority of landlords and lodgers who created and perpetuated insalubrity. A letter from the director of municipal public works in Roubaix to the mayor on 21 March 1864 shows the growing frustration aimed at this unhealthy behaviour. While he praised the work of the CLI in tackling some structural failings of poor houses, he went on to state:

[m]ost of the causes of insalubrity still exist...such as the flow of domestic water, the sweeping of *cours*, or the removal of rubbish. These causes of insalubrity are the most harmful in the sense that an inhabitant, with little care for their own health, compromises that of their neighbours, and these can compromise the health of an entire quarter.¹¹³

There was a shift here from the original motivation behind the creation of the CLI, embedded in the language of the Melun Law, to tackle *logements insalubres* that 'threaten the life or health of their inhabitants'; now, rather than focusing exclusively on physical and hygienic deficiencies of houses and how these could threaten the life or health of their inhabitants, the CLI began to lay the blame for poor housing conditions on the poor habits and behaviours of the workers and landlords who lived there. Moreover, the issue faced here as a result of this unhealthy behaviour was not just a decrease in health of the culpable parties but, rather, the compromised health of neighbours and whole quarters. In a city like Roubaix, where workers were crowded into alleyways, the director of municipal works in the mid-1860s reached the conclusion that CLI could do all they wanted to improve the structural features of workers'

¹¹³ AMR 5 I 307, Director of the Service des travaux municipaux to the mayor of Roubaix, 21 Mar. 1864.

housing, but all it could take would be one bad worker to pollute the conditions and behaviour of entire swaths of the city.

It is in this context that we finish this chapter by visiting the *Rue Turgot* in the north of Roubaix, which the CLI visited on 8 April 1874. The CLI inspectors reported to the municipal council that this road was in a terrible state because of the poorly-constructed ditches which were piled up with rubbish and waste. If not dealt with soon, the inspectors urged, then the health of the entire surrounding area was at risk. The solution they suggested was to order the landlords to construct an aqueduct. The council, however, was already aware of this issue, but knew that the solution was not easy to implement, as the landlords on the road refused to contribute equally to the payment of the construction of this aqueduct. In the face of this ‘difficult opposition to be vanquished’, the council asserted in July that it might be necessary to resort to ‘coercive means’ to order the payments.¹¹⁴ Looking back to the descriptive exploration of the houses on the *Cours d’herbouville* in the early Second Republic years of the CLI in Lyon, we see a shift not only in style, but in target for opposition. The Croix Roussian doctor Duviard and his colleagues recorded every failing they could in their inspections, yet the tenants were absent, and the landlords were present only insofar that they were ordered to improve certain features. The *logement insalubre*, with all the garish description that accompanied the slumming inspectors, had been central. By the time we get to the *Rue Turgot* in early Third Republic Roubaix, however, the focus was not on individual houses but on an entire street, the language was clipped and structural rather than descriptive, and the main cause of insalubrity was the laziness of a collective group of nameless landlords and workers, rather than individual architectural failings that one landlord might be ordered to remedy. In the same way that the municipality had failed to legislate against the *courées*, the

¹¹⁴ AMR 5 I 307, ‘Réclamation de la Commission des logements insalubres relativement au mauvais état de la rue Turgot’, 31 Jul. 1874.

later CLI language on worker and landlord laziness seems to have given up on reforming the inhabitants of these houses as well.

The story of the CLI in these cities in this period is, then, a progression from a focus on individual houses and structures to domestic behaviours and workers' neighbourhoods. In the following chapter, we will see how this focus on behaviour was part of a wider process of the middle-class elite attempting to filter their perceptions of workers into categories of 'good' and 'bad' workers based on their behaviour beyond the workplace, both at home and at leisure. A worker could be praised if they managed to remain faithful to his religion and his family despite the misery of poor housing conditions; if, however, the worker could not, then they would fall to the allure of the cabaret, drunkenness, immorality, and a destruction of the sanctity of the family home.

The next chapter begins on the same *Rue Turgot* in Roubaix, just weeks after the CLI visited in April 1874. While the CLI and municipal authorities had been lamenting the unhealthy behaviour of the street's inhabitants at the beginning of the month, they were not to know that a scandal would take place only weeks later at a cabaret on this road that would encapsulate their collective fears of workers' drunkenness, laziness, and blasphemy. This scandal involved five workers, a bar crawl, and a life-size statue of Jesus Christ.

PART III: HOMES

CHAPTER 4: THE CHRIST IN THE CABARET: ATTITUDES TOWARDS DRINKING, RELIGION, AND THE IDEAL WORKING-CLASS HOME

Just before midnight on Tuesday 21 April 1874, a Roubaisian police officer saw Jesus Christ stumbling up an otherwise deserted street in the north of town. This Christ was in fact a battered, life-size, wooden crucifix, being carried on the back of the twenty-three-year-old Flemish blacksmith, Polydor Trachet. It was covered in mud and beer, and the arms were both severely damaged. When the police officer asked where he was going with such a strange and heavy object at that hour, Trachet launched into a frantic account of the evening's events, which he told in broken French. He described meeting a stranger who had tricked him into carrying the statue to the nearby town of Tourcoing on the border with Belgium. But, along the way, this stranger had then taken Trachet and the Christ on a night of drinking in several of Roubaix's cabarets, with a group of three other workers. The evening had culminated in a 'scandalous scene' in the last cabaret that they visited on the *Rue Turgot*, where the statue had been danced with, dropped repeatedly, and abused in all manner of other ways while the two women who worked in the cabaret looked on and jeered.¹

The events that Trachet recounted, with details of these 'odious jokes' that occurred in this final cabaret, formed the basis for a court case against the four workers at the Assize Court of Douai for 'outrages to the Catholic religion', despite there being no law against sacrilege in France at the time.² The conservative Catholic daily, *Journal de Roubaix*, labelled the events as 'one of the most scandalous affairs, which shows the degree of irreligion that some people

¹ ADN 2 U 1/608, Gaston Meunier, 'Exposé des faits', 27 Apr. 1874.

² The only legal precedent came almost fifty years earlier, in the never enforced Sacrilege Law of 1825, which was revoked in the early years of the July Monarchy. Mary S. Hartman, 'The Sacrilege Law of 1825 in France: a study in anticlericalism and mythmaking', *The Journal of Modern History*, 44, 1 (1972), pp. 21-37.

have come to'.³ The four other workers were imprisoned for between a month and a year each, while, before the court case had even begun, the cabaret in question was shut down by prefectural decree.⁴

This case illustrates several key themes concerning middle-class fears about working-class behaviour beyond the workplace. While the previous chapters of this thesis considered the ways that reformers, industrialists, and municipal councils interacted with 'the housing problem' through legislation and physical construction and improvement of houses, this chapter is concerned with attitudes directly regarding the working-class families who inhabited them. In the years before large-scale state social housing, working class families and their domestic sphere were to be the key building blocks of reform at the local level, rather than the bricks and mortar that surrounded them. Much of this moralising work was based upon fears of otherness, and on the attempts to project local middle-class norms onto the modern working-classes home.

This othering of the workers was achieved through a dichotomy in middle-class rhetoric between the 'good' worker, who spent all their time at home with their family, and the 'bad' worker, who spent their time and money in the cabaret, and neglecting both religion and their family. This dichotomy meant that behaviour and morality was spatialized around the home, with the consequences of poor housing being poor behaviour like that exhibited by the men involved in the tale of the Christ in the cabaret. A religious, clean, comfortable home, owned by the worker, and complete with a garden for the family to spend their leisure time was held up as the panacea for the numerous moral and social ills that resulted from the modern

³ 'Roubaix-Tourcoing', *Journal de Roubaix* (Roubaix, France), 24 Apr. 1874, p. 2.

⁴ ADN 2 U 1/608, Prefect of the Nord to Gaston Meunier re: 'Fermeture cabaret Jouret', 23 Apr. 1874.

industrial city. In order to reinforce these two, opposing models of worker behaviour, isolated stories like the Christ in the cabaret were used to make statements about the wider condition of the working-classes.

This chapter will use the narrative of the 1874 sacrilegious bar crawl and resulting trial and press coverage as a structure to explore this spatialized dichotomy between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ workers and between the home and the cabaret in more detail. After a first section which will reconstruct the events of the evening of 21 April 1874 through police interviews and witness testimonies, the chapter will focus on three distinct features for greater analysis: drinking, religion, and ‘ideal’ worker households in the three cities of Roubaix, Mulhouse, and Lyon.

Finally, the chapter will examine a coda to the Christ in the cabaret story: the appeals for clemency lodged by the families of the offenders following the sentencing in May 1874. By analysing the language used in these petitions, we can see the ways that workers echoed middle-class expectations regarding drinking, religion, and model families, in order to exonerate their loved ones. The process of dichotomizing ‘good’ and ‘bad’ workers was not, therefore, isolated to middle-class discourse and press and, instead, had a noticeable impact on the way workers presented themselves to their cities’ elites.

Henri, the *bon Dieu du Galon d'Eau*

In early evening of 21 April 1874, the *mécanicien* Louis Dessaux left work at his factory to return to his wife and young son at home.⁵ Desseaux had worked for Alfred Motte-Grimonprez – younger brother of the *filature monstre* pioneer Louis Motte-Bossut – for almost

⁵ ADN 2 U 1/608, 'Renseignements demandés sur Louis Dessaux', 23 Apr. 1874.

a third of his thirty years, and had a reputation as a punctual and a reliable worker.⁶ As he reached the industrial *Galon d'Eau* quarter, at the mid-point of his half-hour walk home, Desseaux decided to break his journey with a drink in the cabaret Cottégnie, on the corner of *Grande rue* and *Rue du Collège*. Walking in around six o'clock, he saw his old friend and fellow *mécanicien* César Joseph Lausent in the corner of the bar, enjoying a *chope* of beer besides a wooden, life-size crucifix.⁷

As Dessaux ordered a beer, Lausent explained how he had come into possession of the statue. Earlier that evening, Lausent had attended a public auction of the effects of a M. Deléscuse on the *Rue du Collège*. When a lot at the auction containing a life-size wooden statue of Christ came up for sale, the thirty-eight-year-old *mécanicien* was heard to laugh: 'So there it is! The *bon Dieu du Galon d'Eau*!'.⁸ Lausent was able to persuade Deléscuse's nephew, who bought the lot, to sell the crucifix to him for twenty *sous* so that he could 'make good use of it'. When pushed on what he meant by this, Lausent smirked and replied: 'you will laugh tomorrow morning, when you hear that a *Calvaire* has been found in the countryside and people have cried "miracle!"'.⁹

This plan hit its first hurdle when Lausent realised how heavy the statue was. After half-carrying and half-dragging it into the nearby cabaret where Dessaux found him, Lausent now faced a logistical problem of how to accomplish his 'good use' of placing the statue in the countryside when it was so heavy and unwieldy. Finishing his beer, Lausent went out into the

⁶ AN BB/24/806, Alfred Motte to President MacMahon, 4 Jun. 1874.

⁷ ADN 2 U 1/608, 'Déposition du témoin - Louis Dessaux', 24 Apr. 1874.

⁸ The details of the auction were told to the court by Alphonse Lézy, a factory foreman from Roubaix who was present at the time. In his witness statement, Lézy elaborated that the *Grande Rue* had previously been called the '*Rue du galon d'eau*', explaining Lausent's exclamation. ADN 2 U 1/608, 'Déposition du témoin - Alphonse Lézy', 27 Apr. 1874.

⁹ Ibid.

street. Here he saw the young *flamand*, Polydor Trachet, making his way home after work. With the build of a blacksmith, Trachet must have presented a good candidate to help in executing the plan. Lausent stopped him, and asked if he would like to earn a couple of francs by carrying a 'piece of wood' up to Tourcoing. Trachet accepted, though only realised what he had agreed to when he followed Lausent back into the cabaret and discovered 'a Christ instead of the piece of wood that has been advertised' to him.¹⁰ Still, the extra two francs were very tempting, so Trachet allowed them to load the crucifix up onto his broad shoulders and the group set out northwards towards Tourcoing.

The police commissioner charged with investigating the following events of the evening sketched a helpful map which shows how the group's progress towards Tourcoing over the following hours was repeatedly broken up by visits to further cabarets. After leaving the cabaret Cottégnie, the group walked for about a thousand metres up the *Rue du Collège*, onto the *Rue du Tourcoing*. Here, at around seven p.m., they visited the cabaret Pecqueur; an hour, a round of beers, and a hundred and fifty meters later, the cabaret Devos; after another hour, another round of beers, and a hundred and ninety meters, the cabaret d'Hellemmes.¹¹

In the first of these three cabarets, Louis Wilfart and Adolphe Baudour joined the motley procession. These two Belgian-born workers, both in their early forties, lived in the nearby area and worked together for L. Paulus *fils*, a *constructeur-mécanicien*. Wilfart, a father of seven,

¹⁰ Trachet and Lausent's accounts of this agreement vary in their witness statements – Trachet attested that he had not seen the statue and had only agreed to carry a 'morceau de bois', while Lausent was adamant that both Dessaux and the statue were out in the street with him when he met Trachet, implying that Trachet knew from the start what was asked of him. Trachet's description is given more support by the police interview with the *cabaretière*, Julie Cottégnie, the following morning, who corroborated that Lausent went out alone and called out to the passing blacksmith. ADN 2 U 1/608, 'Déposition du témoin - César Lausent', 24 Apr. 1874; ADN 2 U 1/608, 'Commissaire de police de Roubaix, Interrogatoires', 22 Apr. 1874.

¹¹ 'Commissaire de police de Roubaix, Interrogatoires'.

lived on the corner of the *Rue de Tourcoing* and *Rue Saint-Maurice*, a matter of a few minutes' walk from the cabaret Pecquer; Baudour, meanwhile, had a wife and three children at his house on the *Rue Turgot*. Both areas had a high density of *courée* housing and cabarets. Baudour evidently spent a lot of his time in these local cabarets, as he was well-known by their proprietors. Isoldore Devos, for example, recounted to the police officer interviewing her how the five had entered her bar around eight, propped the wooden Christ against the billiard table, and each drank a beer. Baudour was the only one of the five that she knew by name.¹² At the next cabaret, Lausent decided to play a joke on the young *cabaretière*, Laure D'Hellemmes. Entering alone, he asked her whether Jesus Christ could come in for a drink. D'Hellemmes had laughed, and said yes, assuming that 'Jesus Christ' was an allusion to Baudour and his large, red beard. She was understandably shocked, therefore, when the whole group entered, laughing, and Trachet deposited the wooden Christ against the wall of the bar.¹³

Each of the first four cabaret owners interviewed the morning after this bar crawl were adamant that, while the appearance of a large wooden Christ in their bars was somewhat surprising, no scandal involving it occurred in any of their establishments. While the men drank, the statue would be propped against the wall, the bar, or the billiard table and, upon finishing their drinks, the men would load it back up onto poor Trachet and the group would carry on. During one of journeys from bar to bar, the wooden statue fell, an arm broke off and had to be roughly reattached.¹⁴ At some point during the night, Lausent had started calling the statue what sounded like the name 'Henri'. This nickname came from the inscription INRI on the crucifix, standing for the Latin for 'Jesus the Nazorean, King of the

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ ADN 2 U 1/608, 'Déposition du témoin - Polydor Trachet', 25 Apr. 1874.

Jews'. While it is difficult to gauge how sacrilegious the intent behind this nickname was, it stuck and the group were heard to be calling the statue 'Inri' at various points in the night.¹⁵ The irrereligious nature of this new name would be further compounded by the events in the fifth cabaret of the evening.

According to Trachet's statement, the group entered the cabaret Jouret, next-door to Baudour's home on the *Rue Turgot*, around ten o'clock. The bar was not busy, with the *cabaretière* Stéphanie Jouret and her eighteen-year-old daughter Céline working in the kitchen and bar respectively. Trachet put the statue in the corner to rest against the counter and wall, while the others went to order another round of beers. At some point, the statue slipped and fell to the ground, knocking a full glass of beer out of Lausent's hands. Hitting the ground, the previously-repaired arm snapped off once more, and the beer from Lausent's glass spilled all over it. Although most of the men were adamant this fall was pure accident, Trachet argued that Baudour had decided to push the wooden statue towards Dessaux as a joke.¹⁶ When Dessaux, who had not been paying attention, did not react, the statue fell and hit Lausent instead. The fall and subsequent breakage led to laughter from all four workers as well as the two Jouret women, and it was left to Trachet to bend down and attempt to pull the wooden Christ back up against the bar. Dessaux interrupted him, and pushed the statue back towards Baudour with gusto. This led to a game between the four workers of pushing the wooden Christ between them for the following half an hour. It fell as many as six or seven further times, with each time greeted by jeers and laughs from the group of: '*Pauvre Inri!*'¹⁷

¹⁵ ADN 2 U 1/608, 'Déposition du témoin - Louis Wilfart', 25 Apr. 1874.

¹⁶ Meunier, 'Exposé des faits'.

¹⁷ 'Déposition... Wilfart'.

Wilfart, deciding to reattach the broken arm, asked the *cabaratières* for a hammer and nails.¹⁸

When he turned the wooden Christ upside down and began to work on reattaching the arm, another round of laughter greeted him. Dessaux and Lausent grabbed the statue and took turns dancing with it, still upside down. Wilfart went to the bar and asked the young Céline Jouret for a cigar. When she hesitated, the other three started chanting ‘Yes, give us a cigar for Inri!’ and she relented.¹⁹ More laughter rang out as the cigar was placed to the lips of the wooden Christ. Trachet, meanwhile, was attempting to stop these outrages, but to little effect.

Eventually, just before eleven, the group stumbled out of the cabaret Jouret. Baudour and Wilfart went next-door to eat dinner at Baudour’s. Lausent, meanwhile, loaded Trachet back up with the now muddy, beer-soaked, and severely damaged wooden Christ. He instructed Trachet to go on ahead to a cabaret owned by M. Joseph Houfflaere on the other side of the nearby bridge to Tourcoing and, once there, to order a bottle of hot wine to warm them all up. Trachet proceeded as instructed, but once at this cabaret, he decided to wait outside in the cold. When, after almost an hour, Lausent and the others had not appeared, Trachet took it upon himself to continue carrying the desecrated statue to its destination in Tourcoing. It was at this point that he was found by the police and told his side of the story.²⁰

¹⁸ Ibid. Trachet lists Baudour as the man who asked for the hammer and nails in his original witness statement, though the police later corrected this following Wilfart’s description. This confusion of names was most likely since Trachet had only met the men a few hours prior.

¹⁹ All four of the workers denied this chanting, though the general accuracy of Trachet’s statements in comparison to theirs meant that this ‘cigar for Inri’ was taken as truth, and was reported as such in the detailed newspaper report of the sentencing: “Cour d’Assises du Nord, Audience du 12 mai”, *Journal de Roubaix* (Roubaix, France), 15 May 1874, p. 2. In her witness statement, Céline obstinately declared: “I gave Louis Wilfart a cigar, I give cigars to those who ask them of me. Louis did not say that it was for Inri”, ADN 2 U 1/608, ‘Déposition du témoin - Céline Jouret’, 25 Apr. 1874.

²⁰ ‘Déposition... Trachet’.

When, the following morning, Trachet was taken back to the cabaret Jouret by two police officers, the young barmaid Céline Jouret denied that anything untoward had happened at all the previous night. As one of the two officers took out his notepad to begin a more formal line of questioning, Céline's mother came out from the kitchen and made violent gestures towards Trachet with her hands and head, as if to say 'keep your mouth shut!'. Trachet was not cowed, and bravely declared 'I will say what I saw!'.²¹ Lausent and the others were arrested that day, and the cabaret Jouret was closed down a day later.

'The life of the family or the life of the cabaret': concerns about worker drinking habits

Readers of the 24 April 1874 edition of the *Journal de Roubaix* found a provocative retelling of the events of a few nights' prior. In this version of events, Lausent's name was omitted in favour of '*le sieur X*', and he and certain other 'bad subjects' were described as having spent the evening throwing beer onto the statue in various cabarets, in order to amuse the unquantified gathered masses. In every cabaret that they visited, 'everyone' laughed at the actions of *le sieur X* and his group, which only spurred them on to further sacrilege.²² By painting the nameless crowds in these cabarets as a captive audience, and therefore willing accomplices, to the scandal, the editor of the conservative Catholic newspaper played to the pre-existing fears and concerns about what went on behind the doors of these places. The declaration at the start of the article that this tale showed 'the degree of irreligion that some people have come to' served as a warning about 'the people' as a whole, as well as the places that 'the people' frequented. Instead of a focus on César Lausent the *mécanicien* and his exploits, now all workers who socialised and drank in the cabarets of Roubaix could possibly be implicated in this disgraceful crime.

²¹ ADN 2 U 1/608, 'Audition du témoin Morez', 25 Apr. 1874.

²² 'Roubaix-Tourcoing', *Journal de Roubaix*, 24 Apr. 1874, p. 2.

This was not the only occasion that the twenty-six year-old editor of the *Journal de Roubaix*, Alfred Reboux, found time to use his newspaper to criticise the cabarets of the town and those who drank there. In the months leading up to his retelling of Lausent's story in a way that implicated all cabaret clientele, Reboux was being sued 1,000 Fr. for defamation, after writing about the misdemeanours of another cabaret owner's son. Reboux was acquitted, and published a series of articles in April and May 1874 emphasising his success (in the third person).²³ Alfred Reboux was following the crusade against cabarets that his father Joseph, founder of the *Journal de Roubaix* in 1856, had pursued throughout the Second Empire. Joseph had seized on any opportunity to paint cabarets, their owners, and their clientele in a bad light, through the way he reported stories about them: on 14 January 1860, he wrote an article about a four-year-old child found drunk on the *Rue du Faubourg Saint-Antoine*, with his parents 'dead-drunk [*ivres-morts*]' in a nearby cabaret; later in the same year, on 19 September, the paper covered details of a brawl in a cabaret that followed 'copious libation', and resulted in the cabaret owner, who had waded into the fight, receiving a split-lip; another cabaret brawl in nearby Tourcoing was reported on 7 November 1862, with Reboux beginning the coverage with 'quarrels in cabarets are frequent'; on 30 October 1863, Reboux blasted *cabaretiers* who continued to sell drinks to people in a state of extreme drunkenness, despite repeated prefectural *arrêtés*.²⁴ Just as the coverage of Lausent's bar crawl was used as an attack on cabarets in general, these stories also made broader statements beyond the reporting of isolated crimes or misdemeanours.

²³ 'Roubaix-Tourcoing', *Journal de Roubaix* (Roubaix), 20 Nov 1873, p. 3; 'Roubaix-Tourcoing', *Journal de Roubaix* (Roubaix, France), 23 Apr. 1874; 'Roubaix-Tourcoing', *Journal de Roubaix* (Roubaix, France), 14 May 1874, p. 3.

²⁴ 'Faits divers', *Journal de Roubaix* (Roubaix), 14 Jan. 1860, p. 3; '-', *Journal de Roubaix* (Roubaix), 19 Sep. 1860, p2; 'Chronique locale et départementale', *Journal de Roubaix* (Roubaix), 7 Nov. 1862, p. 2; 'Chronique locale et départementale', *Journal de Roubaix* (Roubaix), 30 Oct. 1863, p. 2.

The *Journal de Roubaix*'s repeated attacks on worker drinking habits and the Roubaisian cabarets was a reflection of a wider conservative suspicion of these working-class spaces. At the same time as Reboux's attacks in the press, Roubaix experienced a rapid increase in the number of worker drinking establishments. The number of Roubaisian cabarets rose drastically in the second half of the century: in 1857 there were 304, or roughly one for every 128 people; by 1869 there were 700, or roughly one for every 100 people, and by 1912 there would be 2,485, or one for every 49 people.²⁵ This increase of cabarets was closely tied to the increase in housing in the *courées* of the town, as founders of *courées* often owned or built cabarets at the entrance to the alleyway. The houses of the workers, lying down these alleys, were not visible to passers-by, in contrast to the cabarets at the entrances. The combination of the grisly tales of scandal and violence with the increasing ubiquity of these establishments in the urban fabric of Roubaix meant that, often, the imagination of conservative onlookers invented the tales of what could possibly be going on, not only inside the cabarets, but in the houses of the *courées* themselves that spread behind the cabarets.

This broader suspicion was found in the way that the Second Empire police treated cabarets in their reports. Monthly police reports throughout the Second Empire about the 'moral situation' of the population of Roubaix frequently mentioned the negative impact of the town's growing number of cabarets, making sweeping and generalized statements. In December 1855, for example, the police commissioner for the east of Roubaix lamented that most workers had the 'unfortunate habit' of spending all Sunday drinking in the cabaret.²⁶ By

²⁵ AMR 1 I 11, 'Rapport général sur les services de police... année 1858', 1858; Désiré Bonnier, 'Amélioration de la Condition morale & physique de la Population, Rapport de M. Bonnier, Juge-de-Paix', *Mémoires de la Société d'émulation de Roubaix*, 1: 1868-9, (1871), p. 104; Gaston Motte, *L'Urbanisation de Roubaix au XIXe siècle* (Roubaix, 1964), p. 26.

²⁶ AMR 1 I 11, 'Rapport - Section Est', 20 Dec. 1855.

1859, the tone of the police reports shifted to focus on those who were driving the population growth that was so closely tied with the increase in the number of cabarets: the Belgian migrant workers. In his annual report at the end of 1859, the central police commissioner declared that the workers of Roubaix collectively spent at least 150,000 Fr. a year on beer alone.²⁷ For him, there was one culpable group: 'the Belgian population, which is close to 14,000 souls... abandon themselves to the most degrading passions and vices – theft, drunkenness, cohabitation, immorality in all its forms are found to start with these foreigners'.²⁸

This hostility against the Belgian newcomers as sources of immoral corruption was echoed in letters to newspaper editors. In an April 1864 of the *Bulletin Mensuel du Chemin de Fer du Nord* (later the *Echo de Roubaix*), a 'Roubaisian observer' recalled how, thirty years prior, there had been no difference in the leisure habits of workers and middle-class families – they were all united as '*familles Roubageoises*'. However, in the following years as Belgians flooded the town to work in the growing factories, they founded a popular theatre where 'depraved actors and *filles perdues*, veritable *Bacchantes*' parodied religious plays.²⁹ The immoral behaviour in the leisure time of 1860s Roubaisian workers was, according to this disgruntled author, the fault of the Belgian migrants and, by extension, of the rapid industrialisation of the town.

In addition to the generalized comments from the police about the impact of cabarets on the 'moral situation' of Roubaix, there were also frequent specific reports of crimes or offenses that were the direct result of workers drinking in the cabaret. In some cases, this was made explicit by the author of the report. In June 1858, for example, a police officer wrote how

²⁷ AMR 1 I 11, 'Rapport annuel', 1859.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Un Observateur Roubaisien, 'Le Théâtre à Roubaix', *Bulletin Mensuel du Chemin de Fer du Nord* (Roubaix), 1 Apr. 1864, p. 1.

Mme. Vindels, who had been drinking all evening at the cabaret Jovarque, left the establishment and ‘with premeditation’ went home and stabbed her husband with a kitchen knife.³⁰ The habit of workers spending all day drinking on a Sunday led to numerous complaints of domestic violence to the police the following Monday morning – disputes which the police felt that they were powerless to prevent as the violence took place at home, rather than in the cabarets.³¹ The language of these reports suggests that spending time drinking in the cabarets unleashed dormant base and violent instincts, rather than creating them; workers’ potential violence and immorality was stoked by the cabarets. The close geographic proximity of the cabarets to housing in the *courées* made these domestic instances of violence seem almost inevitable to the police officers.

In other reports, police officers reinforced the stereotypes of the influence on cabarets on workers’ behaviour by engaging in conjecture. In October 1853, the police commissioner wrote to the mayor about a scandalous event that had been reported to him the night before, involving three teenage women and one man sharing two beds in a single room above a cabaret.³² He did not know what exactly had gone on in this room, but instead left this as obvious for the mayor to interpret. The police generally saw the tendency for women and men to drink together in these small, single-room bars as leading to far too many fights and immoral liaisons.³³

These police reports all share a sense that the cabarets of Roubaix were negatively affecting the working-class family and home, whether through draining earnings, or through releasing

³⁰ This is a curious case as, usually, cabarets were predominantly male spaces, and most other reports of domestic violence in the police archives are husbands attacking their wives. AMR 1 I 11, 'Rapport - Section Est', 20 Jun. 1858.

³¹ 'Rapport - Section Est', 20 Dec. 1855.

³² AMR 1 I 320, Commissaire de police of Roubaix to mayor of Roubaix, 13 Oct. 1853.

³³ AMR 1 I 11, 'Rapport - Section Ouest', 20 Apr. 1858.

seemingly base violent and sexual instincts in the workers. Yet, despite the exasperation of the police and the repeated reports of the negative impact of cabarets, the municipality did little to crack down on them during the Second Empire. On the contrary it seems that, alongside the sharp increase in the number of cabarets during this period, the municipality also became more tolerant in its management of them. Mandatory closing times, which the city council set at 10pm for every night in 1850, had shifted to 11pm during the week and midnight on Sundays by 1871.³⁴ But even these opening times were not definitive and unshifting. The mayor of Roubaix, Tiers-Bonte, was reprimanded by the prefect of the Nord in 1859, when word had reached the prefecture in Lille about how many licence extensions to midnight were being granted in Roubaix. 'I believe', wrote the Prefect, 'that I have to draw your attention to the real inconveniences caused by such authorization'.³⁵

This permissiveness that the Roubaisian municipality displayed regarding cabarets and working-class drinking was not just at odds with departmental policy in the Nord; it conflicted with the national approach, especially by the early conservative years of the Third Republic.³⁶ In March 1873, the National Assembly declared public drunkenness a crime; two months later, after the election of MacMahon as President on 24 May 1873, prefects were instructed to limit café and cabaret opening times strictly to 8 or 9pm in the countryside and 10 or 11pm in most cities.³⁷ By the time Lausent and his group started on their ill-fated bar crawl, Roubaix was in a strange situation where the number and density of cabarets was increasing, their opening hours were later and later, and yet the prefectural authorities, the police, and the

³⁴ AMR 1 I 320, Arrêté, 21 Dec. 1850; AMR 1 I 320, Arrêté, 13 Nov. 1871.

³⁵ AMR 1 I 320, Prefect of the Nord to mayor of Roubaix, 27 Oct. 1859.

³⁶ Susanna Barrows, "Parliaments of the people": the political culture of cafés in the early Third Republic', in Susanna Barrows and Robin Room (eds.), *Drinking: Behavior and Belief in Modern History* (Berkeley CA, 1991), pp. 88-9.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 89; W. Scott Haine, *The World of the Paris Café: Sociability Among the French Working Class, 1789-1914* (Baltimore MD, 1999), pp. 113-4.

middle-classes at large felt that these places were real threats to the moral situation of the town. It is unsurprising to find Reboux, in his coverage of the event in the *Journal de Roubaix*, drawing on commonly held perceptions of the Roubaisian cabarets to emphasise the scale of debauchery that had occurred.

The concerns about the impact of the cabaret and worker drinking habits in this period were not unique to Roubaix, as shown by the legislation of 1873-4. Throughout nineteenth-century France, fears of working-class drinking spaces as sites of debauchery and political intrigue were rampant. Nowhere has this been studied more than in Paris, where there were 22,000 drinking places by 1870.³⁸ In 1876, Degas exhibited the painting that would later come to be known as *l'Absinthe*, under the original title *Dans un Café* or *Le Café de la Nouvelle Athènes*.³⁹ Its depiction of a man and woman sitting at a table in misery, with a glass of absinthe in front of them, has become a totemic image of the Third Republic French café and the vices associated with drink. When the painting was later exhibited in London under its now famous name *l'Absinthe* in 1893, Victorian onlookers were horrified by its depiction of the 'degeneracy in modern society'.⁴⁰

Another of the most enduring representations of middle-class disgust at worker drinking in Paris came in the same year as Degas's painting. In April 1876, almost two years to the date after Lausent's bar crawl in Roubaix, Emile Zola published the first section of his novel *L'Assommoir* in the journal *Le Bien Public*. The title, *L'Assommoir*, refers to slang for 'the place where you can get knocked out'. The novel, as neatly summarised by Zola scholar David Baguley, was 'about a washerwoman, Gervaise Macquart, who falls on hard times, takes to

³⁸ Haine, *The World of the Paris Café*, p. 3.

³⁹ Jad Adams, *Hideous Absinthe: A History of the Devil in a Bottle* (London, 2008), pp. 52-5.

⁴⁰ Kimberley Morse-Jones, 'The 'philistine' and the new art critic: a new perspective on the debate about Degas's "L'Absinthe" of 1893', *The British Art Journal*, 9, 2 (2008), p. 50.

drink and dies in abject poverty'.⁴¹ The serialized parts shocked contemporaries with the coarseness of the language and the visceral depiction of drink and poverty when they first came out, with only six printed in the newspaper before the editor yielded to pressure and ceased printing in early June 1876.⁴² When the book was published in full in early 1877, Zola defended himself against the scandalized reaction, writing in the preface that he wanted to 'depict the inevitable downfall of a working-class family in the polluted atmosphere of our urban areas'.⁴³ Zola wanted to show that the 'logical sequel to drunkenness and indolence is the loosening of family ties, the filth of promiscuity, and the progressive loss of feelings and, as the climax, shame and death'.⁴⁴

The difference between Degas and Zola's Parisian vignettes on the one hand and the Roubaisian experience on the other lay in the classed distinctions of the different drinking places, and on the spatial relationship between houses in the *courée* and the cabarets. Degas and his avant-garde colleagues frequented the cafés of Paris, described by art historian Roberta Crisci-Richardson as 'essential institutions of Parisian sociability and spaces of modernity'.⁴⁵ While the image of these drinking institutions as sites of drunken poverty was potent in the early Third Republic, part of this reason was because of the permeability of these spaces. In Roubaix, the cabaret was a space of otherness for the middle-class onlooker, who would never dream of entering the exclusively working-class drinking establishments. Save for the inspectors from the *commissions des logements insalubres* or charitable religious visitor (see below), the houses of the *courées* were also hidden from the view of passers-by, with the

⁴¹ Leonard Tancock, 'Introduction', in Émile Zola, *L'Assommoir*, trans. Leonard Tancock (London, 1970), p. 18; David Baguley, *Émile Zola, L'Assommoir* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 1.

⁴² Tancock, 'Introduction', p. 7.

⁴³ Émile Zola, 'Preface', in Zola, *L'Assommoir*, p. 21.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 21.

⁴⁵ Roberta Crisci-Richardson, *Mapping Degas: Real Spaces, Symbolic Spaces and Invented Spaces in the Life and Work of Edgar Degas (1834-1917)* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2015), pp. 201-6.

cabaret that flanked the opening standing in as a substitute image for all workers' behaviour outside the workplace. With most *courée* housing being small and miserable, workers met and socialized in their local cabarets – not necessarily for drink, but for meals and sociability.⁴⁶ But these nuances were lost on the contemporary middle-class observer, who seized upon the tales of scandal and drunkenness in the cabarets and elided them with the Roubaisian working-class homes that lay behind the street frontage.

In Mulhouse, there was an alternative relationship between the working-class home and the cabarets. The innovative *cités ouvrières* were motivated to a large extent to help workers 'forget the way to the cabaret'.⁴⁷ Before the foundation of SOMCO in 1853, workers' drinking was a concern for the town's philanthropic industrialists in the SIM. The crisis in French vineyards caused by the arrival of the phylloxera aphid in the 1860s led to a surge in wine prices, but workers in Alsace had long-preferred drinking beer as reflected in the expression 'Water is wet, wine is dear, I'll take my pipe and drink some beer'.⁴⁸ This preference for beer meant Mulhouse also had a number of Germanic 'brasseries' alongside the exclusively working-class cabarets or middle-class cafés. The brasseries were where the predominantly male clientele would be served beer, brewed on-site, by waitresses.⁴⁹ Unlike the cabaret or café, the brasserie was neither exclusively working-class nor middle-class in theory but, in practice, certain brasseries held differing reputations. In the northern suburb of Dornach, near Jean Dollfus's factory complex, there were two brasseries in 1851, one exclusively visited by members of

⁴⁶ An effective reconstruction of the way workers gathered in their *courée*'s cabaret is found in the chapter 'L'ange de la courée. 1873' in Jacques Marseille, *Une Famille d'ouvriers de 1770 à nos jours* (Paris, 1981), pp. 102-6.

⁴⁷ Émile Cheysson, 'Ouvriers et La Réforme, Séance du 25 Mars 1877', *Bulletin de la Société internationale des études pratiques d'économie sociale*, 5, (1877), pp. 628-9.

⁴⁸ Original phrasing: "L'eau est mouillée, le vin est cher, je prends ma pipe et bois de la bière", quoted in David Tournier, 'Les débits de boissons à Mulhouse au XIXe siècle, 1798-1870', (Masters thesis, Université de Haute-Alsace, 1995), p. 19. For the phylloxera crisis between 1860-80, see Roderick Phillips, *Alcohol: A History* (Chapel Hill NC, 2014), p. 178.

⁴⁹ Tournier, 'Les débits de boissons à Mulhouse', p. 19.

‘good society’, and the other by factory workers.⁵⁰ Just as in Roubaix, then, fears about working-class drinking spaces were motivated in part by the sense of unknown, as the middle classes were unlikely to share the same drinking place as the workers.

For the workers, the Mulhousian cabaret or brasserie also served a distinctly political and anti-*patronat* role. David Allen Harvey, in exploring class and identity in Alsace, highlighted the freedom that certain cabarets offered for the workers. For workers who were employed in the factories of the great industrialists, and lived in the houses of the *cités ouvrières* or their earlier, small-scale precursors, the cabaret or brasserie became ‘the only place they could call their own, the only public space that did not belong to the *patronat*’.⁵¹ Cabaret owners in Mulhouse often stoked anti-industrialist sentiment as well, with several owners involved in instigating and encouraging riots and strikes during the Second Republic.⁵² Unlike in Roubaix, where the cabaret was closely tied to the workers’ homes in the *courées* and was almost an extension of the working-class home, the cabarets of Mulhouse offered a distinctly different space that offered freedom and separation from the overbearing paternalism of housing in the *cités*.

Paradoxically, this very lack of control and supervision in the cabarets was one of the motivating factors behind many of the paternalist features of the Mulhouse *cités ouvrières* above and beyond the houses themselves. Where some workers went to the cabaret to escape paternalist overtones of employer-initiated housing schemes, these same paternalists actively extended the provisions of these schemes to serve as incentives for avoiding the cabaret. The role of the cabaret and of drinking beer in working-class sociability was a direct motivating factor for the middle-class reformers who were responsible for building the houses of the *cités*

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 19.

⁵¹ Harvey, *Constructing Class and Nationality*, p. 31.

⁵² Borghese, 'Industrialist paternalism', pp. 76-7.

ouvrières. As we saw in Chapter 2, Émile Muller, architect of the *cités ouvrières*, declared in 1856 that: ‘The [housing] question leads to different resolutions for the worker: the life of the cabaret or the life of the family’.⁵³ Instead of focusing purely on decrying the cabaret, the founders of SOMCO focused on strengthening the other side of Muller’s statement: the life of the family. ‘If, upon leaving his arduous work’, Muller continued:

[the worker] enters a dirty, foul hovel, where the lack of space causes almost constant chaos, he will look elsewhere for the distractions he needs; and, away from the protective presence of his family, he would contract the habits of debauchery and laziness. Gradually, he will almost become a stranger to his family, and will neglect his most sacred duties to them. But if he finds a clean, airy, perhaps even cheerful house, he will attach himself to it and leave it as little as possible.⁵⁴

This housing scheme was about far more than just the physical and hygienic improvements that we saw above in Chapters 2 and 3; this scheme aimed to reform the very habits of the workers. In addition to the many extra social facilities in the *cités*, such as a library or restaurant, the houses themselves were designed able to keep the workers out of the cabaret. They did so, argued contemporaries, because of the financial commitment of the monthly mortgage payments and of the alternative leisure spaces of the gardens attached to each house.

When Victor Duruy, the French Minister for Education, visited Mulhouse in 1864, he asked to meet a worker who lived in one of the houses of the famous *cités ouvrières*. Upon entering one of these houses, he met a working-class woman, and asked her about her and her family’s lives in the *cit  *. When he asked her where her husband spent his evenings, he was surprised when she answered: ‘With us, since we have our house’ (*Avec nous, depuis que nous avons notre maison*).⁵⁵ Here, the combination of a pride of homeownership and a desire to save money had resulted in a worker seemingly eschewing the allures of the drinking halls for the moral

⁵³ Muller, *Habitations ouvri  res et agricoles*, p. 7.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵⁵ Penot, *Les Cit  s ouvri  res de Mulhouse*, p. 21.

comfort of his wife and family. This anecdote was shared far and wide, in industrial societies, scientific journals, and religious magazines, as proof of the reformatory power of improved housing and homeownership on the habits of the working classes.⁵⁶ Interestingly, when French-born writer and translator Henriette Guizot de Witt wrote an article on the *cités ouvrières* for an English journal, she translated the phrase the woman was reported to have said as 'At home, since we have had a home'. De Witt then further elaborated, by stressing 'Our home! this passion for possession... this love for the little field, the garden, the poor cottage which shelters the family... these are the joys of which, in general, the town workman is ignorant'.⁵⁷ Because of the concrete savings goal that homeownership provided, workers in Mulhouse would prefer to save their money than spend it in the cabaret or brasserie.

In addition to the allures of homeownership, the houses of the *cités ouvrières* also provided an alternate use of worker leisure time: the garden. A traveller from Paris visited Mulhouse in summer 1860, and was particularly struck by the neat cultivation of the rows of plots surrounding the houses of the *cités ouvrières*.⁵⁸ After praising the father of one family on the quality of his garden, the visitor reported that the father replied with 'evident satisfaction' that the land was well-cultivated because he was the owner of both house and garden.⁵⁹ The garden was a central feature of the houses of the *cités*, with even the cheaper, back-to-back style of houses including access to a private garden in front of the house.⁶⁰ This ability to

⁵⁶ 'Observations Présentées Par M. Cadet, Member Correspondant', *Travaux de l'Académie Impériale de Reims* (Reims, France), 1867, pp. 123-41; 'Les Cités Ouvrières du Haut-Rhin', *La Science Pittoresque* (Paris, France), 4 Jan. 1866, pp. 10-1; 'Les Cités Ouvrières du Haut-Rhin', *La Célébrité et la Gazette des Abonnés* (Paris, France), 8 Feb. 1866, pp. 46-7.

⁵⁷ Henriette Guizot de Witt, 'A good example; or, a manufacturing town in France', *The Monthly Packet of Evening Readings for Members of the English Church* (London, England), 1 Oct. 1868, pp. 386-7.

⁵⁸ 'Visite aux Cités Ouvrières de Mulhouse', *La Magasin Pittoresque* (Paris, France), 1861, pp. 60-2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁶⁰ Muller, 'La Société Mulhousienne des Cités Ouvrières: Devis descriptif'.

provide the fathers of the family an alternative space for evening leisure time was embraced by reformers beyond Mulhouse as one of the key benefits of the scheme. Jules Simon, in his 1861 work *L'Ouvrière*, dedicated a long passage to the importance of the gardens in the Mulhouse scheme as keeping the *pères de famille* away from the drinking establishments:

The father, after his work, is no longer obliged to choose between a garret and a cabaret; there is not a cabaret in the town which is as gay as his house. If he has some time to kill before his dinner, he takes his spade to the garden, he puts a splint on a young tree, he sows a vegetable patch, he waters a flowerbed. It is happiness and work for all the home, because the *mère de famille* loves to weed and rake her garden, and the boys eagerly bring water in large tanks.⁶¹

The gardens were therefore more than just practical additions that would provide families with their own vegetables – they were part of a desire to cultivate a higher standard of working-class leisure habits. The large scale and continued successes of the Mulhousian *cités ouvrières* meant that they were repeatedly evoked well into the Third Republic as showing how improved housing could keep the worker out of the cabaret. On 25 March 1877, the social reformer Émile Cheysson presented a paper to his assembled colleagues at the Parisian *Société internationale des études pratiques d'économie sociale* on the subject of 'the domestic foyer and the working-class family'. In this presentation, after reciting the anecdote of Duruy and his '*notre maison*' working woman, he turned his attention to the enduring success of *cités ouvrières* over the previous quarter of a century, with a particular focus on the gardens. 'The garden', Cheysson said, 'also plays an important role in the well-being and moralisation of the family... The *chef de famille* finds a clean and strengthening distraction in the cultivation of his garden and soon forgets the way to the cabaret'.⁶²

In Mulhouse, there were the same fears about the tendency for workers to spend their time and money in cabarets but here, unlike in Roubaix, the industrial elite took steps to make the

⁶¹ Jules Simon, *L'Ouvrière* (Paris, 1861), p. 352.

⁶² Cheysson, 'Ouvriers et La Réforme, Séance du 25 Mars 1877', pp. 628-9.

home and garden offer an attractive alternative. Instead of focusing on the feared ‘bad’ workers who frequented the ‘bad’ spaces of the cabaret, the focus was on creating ‘good’ spaces of the gardens and homes that would, by consequence, lead to ‘good’ workers.

For middle-class onlookers in both Roubaix and Mulhouse, there was a relationship between the home and worker-drinking outside the home: poor-quality housing (in the Roubaisian *courées*) was a cause for drinking in the cabaret, while reformed housing (in the Mulhousian *cités ouvrières*) was an alternative site used to tackle drinking habits. In Lyon in 1853, however, the mayor of the third arrondissement (the previously independent suburb of La Guillotière) was concerned not about drinking in the cabaret but, rather, worker drinking within the home itself. Notably, not quantity of drink or state of drunkenness but, rather, the choice of beer instead of wine as a mealtime accompaniment. In Roubaix and Mulhouse, the fact that beer was the drink of the workers elicited less concern than the impacts of the drinking itself, as beer had a long history in the Nord and in Alsace. Lyon offers an alternative perspective: there, beer was not only tied explicitly to the new industrial class, but it was also highlighted as a non-Lyonnais drink. While a recent thesis by Romain Thinon describes Lyon as an ‘*îlot brassicole*’ in the nineteenth century, beer did not enjoy the ubiquity and richness of tradition across the classes that it did in Mulhouse and in Roubaix, certainly not in the early years of the Second Empire.⁶³

Upon hearing rumours that local workers had started preferring beer to wine as their drink to accompany meals, the mayor of La Guillotière launched a series of inquiries in October 1853.⁶⁴ Of interest to the mayor was the relative cost of beer compared to wine, whether

⁶³ Romain Thinon, 'Un "îlot brassicole". Brasseurs et brasseries à Lyon et dans le Rhône (fin XVIIIe siècle - 1914)', (PhD thesis, Université Lumière Lyon 2, 2016).

⁶⁴ AML 4 WP 17, Mayor of La Guillotière to police commissioners, 20 Oct. 1853.

workers were preferring beer to wine, and what impact this would have on the physical and moral condition of the workers.⁶⁵ These questions were sent not only to the police commissioners of specific quarters, but also to local doctors and brewers.

The replies he received from the police commissioners indicated that the price of wine was affecting worker behaviour and preference for beer. What worried the commissioner for the 1st quarter was that workers were not going to brewers (*brasseurs*) to buy the beer, but instead going to café-owners (*limonadiers*), who would charge a lower price, thereby ‘encourag[ing] the *pères de famille* to substitute beer for wine’.⁶⁶ While other commissioners were uncertain about how far the switch to beer was actually occurring, they acknowledged that it would be an attractive economic choice for workers if the price of wine continued to rise.

The most illuminating aspects of this set of sources are the answers to the mayor’s questions about the impact of beer on the physical and moral condition of the workers. Interesting in all of these responses is the assumed lack of knowledge on the part of the mayor: police, doctors, and brewers each described beer to the mayor as if it was a strange, foreign substance. The commissioner for the Brotteaux quarter noted that the drinking of beer would be followed by ‘a noticeable torpor in the mental faculties’ as well as a lessening in ‘the vivacity in the execution of industrial works which require calculation or reflection’.⁶⁷ However, he supposed that there could not be any significant negative impact on the health of the population of swapping wine for beer, as shown by the health of workers in England and Germany who never drank wine.⁶⁸ This suggestion for the mayor to look elsewhere for the impacts of beer

⁶⁵ Ibid..

⁶⁶ AML 4 WP 17, Commissioner of police, 3e arrondissement, 1er quarter to mayor of 3e arrondissement (La Guillotière), 25 Oct. 1853.

⁶⁷ AML 4 WP 17, Commissioner of police, 3e arrondissement, Brotteaux quartier to mayor of 3e arrondissement (La Guillotière), 26 Oct. 1853.

⁶⁸ Ibid..

on the working classes was echoed in other responses: one respondent told the mayor to look to ‘the department of the Nord, to Belgium, to Holland, and to England, where no other drink than beer is drunk... however the people of the countries are like us, strong and intelligent’.⁶⁹ Similarly, a detailed medical comparison of beer and wine by Dr Subit told the mayor to ‘turn our eyes to Alsace, there we find to a great extent men [who are] strong and robust. What do they drink? Beer?’.⁷⁰ This linkage of the workers of the Nord and Alsace to foreign workers shows once again how specifically local the drinking traditions were in Roubaix and in Mulhouse compared to the French or Lyonnais norm of wine; what’s more, the reputation of these regions as successful industrial hubs overrode any reports of dangerous drunken workers. The prowess that the Northern and Alsatian towns enjoyed as industrial hubs of mid-nineteenth century France was not in spite of the beer drunk by their workers; it might even be because of it. Indeed, while a lot of the reports warn against the dangers of heavy drinking, they admit that this is not an issue confined to beer alone: in fact, in many ways beer, when brewed properly, could have many medical benefits for the working population.⁷¹

The conclusion of these reports suggested to the mayor that, if the workers began to drink beer instead of wine as their mealtime drink, this might have ultimately positive effects on their physical and moral condition compared to drinking wine. These sources reveal something different from the focus on cabarets and brasseries in Roubaix and Mulhouse – anxiety did not centre on working-class sociability or exclusively working-class public spaces. Instead, despite the essentially positive message about beer that came from the responses, the official concern was with domestic habits, the way that the working-class family differed from

⁶⁹ AML 4 WP 17, Meynel to mayor of 3e arrondissement (La Guillotière), 25 Oct. 1853.

⁷⁰ AML 4 WP 17, Subit to mayor of 3e arrondissement (La Guillotière), s.d. (Oct. 1853).

⁷¹ Ibid.

the established 'Lyon' (i.e. bourgeois Lyonnais) traditions, and what impact this could have on local industry and society. Just as the police correspondence regarding cabarets in Roubaix combined genuine reports with conjecture and prejudice, this specific case shows a Lyonnais mayor who turned to the police, to doctors, and to brewers to find out about the working classes, rather than question the workers themselves. 'This illustrates once again the way that images of immoral or ideal workers were constructed amongst middle-class observers' discourse, more than through interaction with the workers themselves, therefore illustrating more about middle-class fears of the new industrial age than it does about working-class realities. Drinking places and habits were just one element of the middle-class fears of worker behaviour in the industrial city; another, perhaps more potent fear, was that of irreligion and immorality, and ties us back to the sacrilegious events that took place in the cabarets of Roubaix in late April, 1874.

Religion, sacrilege, and home visits

Despite the recent passage of the March 1873 law on public drunkenness, it was not for this crime that the Roubaisian worker César Lausent and his group were tried in the aftermath of their blasphemous bar crawl. Instead, the trial brought against them on 12 May 1874 was classified as a case of 'outrages to the Catholic religion'. This is curious as, barring an abortive attempt to instil and enforce a law against sacrilege in the Restoration between 1825-30, there did not exist an anti-sacrilege law in 1874 France.

Lausent and his group had the misfortune of being tried by M. Arthur Desjardins, who had only been *procureur général* at the Assize Court of Douai since 1873.⁷² Born in Beauvais in 1835, Desjardins was a young and ambitious lawyer, whose skill in jurisprudence was matched by his religious fervour.⁷³ Desjardins's stint as *procureur général* in Douai only lasted a year, as he quickly rose up the ranks in his legal career, moving onto Rouen in late 1874, before being appointed *avocat général* to the Court of Cassation in Paris, the highest court in the French judiciary, in April 1875.⁷⁴ Later in life, Desjardins served as president of the multi-denominational *Ligue contre l'athéisme* from 1893 until his death in 1901, and he frequently spoke of the importance of religious conviction to patriotic sentiment.⁷⁵ This tie was central to Desjardins's prosecution of Lausent and his group. When Lausent's case was brought before the jury in Douai on 12 May 1874, Desjardins used a masterful interrogation of the witnesses and emphatic closing speech to the jury to elevate this case from a drunken misdemeanour to a sustained, twisted parody of Catholic belief and an insult to the central tenets of French national identity.

He did so through first establishing premeditation on the part of César Lausent. During the police interrogations and the court case, Lausent remained adamant that the reason that he had bought the life-size crucifix was to resell it to a M. Joseph Houfflaere, owner of the final, unvisited cabaret on the road to Tourcoing where Trachet was found.⁷⁶ Desjardins ridiculed Lausent's defence that he spent twenty sous on the statue in order to then resell it because of

⁷² Louis Renault, 'Notice sur la vie et les œuvres de M. Arthur Desjardins... Lue dans la séance du 16 décembre 1905', *Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques de l'Institut de France*, 25, (1907), p. 411.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 400.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 411.

⁷⁵ 'Informations: La Ligue nationale contre l'athéisme', *Journal des Débats Politiques et Littéraires* (Paris, France), 10 Dec. 1893, p. 3; Renault, 'Notice', p. 442.

⁷⁶ 'Déposition... Lausent'; 'Cour d'Assises du Nord, Audience du 12 mai', *Journal de Roubaix*, 15 May 1874, p. 2.

the fact that Lausent went on to pay the blacksmith Trachet double this amount just to carry the statue. Desjardins labelled this as ‘bizarre speculation’, especially considering Lausent had no history buying or selling similar objects. Lausent’s defence crumbled against the testimonies from witnesses who had heard Lausent laugh that we would put the statue to ‘good use’ by installing it as a *calvaire* between Roubaix and Tourcoing. Desjardins went on to stress that this quote meant that ‘the thought that dictated the purchase survived intoxication’.⁷⁷ For him, the insult had been carried out in spite of drunkenness, rather than because of it.

One element of the witness’s quote was of central importance to the assembled thirty-six jurors of industrialists, mayors, farmers, and landlords, who offered a fairly representative cross-section of Catholic, male, middle-aged and middle-class northerners.⁷⁸ While, to us, Lausent’s joke at the auction might just seem to be one in poor taste, his specific use of the term *calvaire* would have had particular resonance to this jury. The *calvaire*, or calvary, is a shrine that depicts one of the fourteen Stations of the Cross, a scene from the story of the Crucifixion of Christ. Calvaries offered the devout a way to embark in a spiritual pilgrimage that echoed the events of the Passion. These shrines had been particularly common at the junction of roads in Brittany, the north of France, and Belgium for centuries. The archaeologist and anthropologist Nicholas J. Saunders described the importance of these particular ‘wayside shrines’, stating that they ‘function both as navigational devices and objects of veneration. Since medieval times they have fixed the landscape, symbolically acquiring it for the Christian faith in the same way that, previously, megalithic monuments marked prehistoric

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

⁷⁸ Of the thirty-six jurors, three were from Roubaix – Julien Debaets, Charles-Louis-Joseph Dhallun, and Louis-Joseph Glorieux. All three of these men were born before 1830, and worked either as *fabricants* or *négociants* in Roubaix’s textile industry. ADN 2 U 1/608, ‘Liste des jurés’, 12 May 1874.

landscapes'.⁷⁹ Desjardins used this witness testimony to highlight Lausent's joke – not as a throwaway comment about surprising people with the appearance of a wooden statue but, instead, as a declaration of intent to parody a long-standing local memorial tradition.

Although Lausent did not carry out his proposed plan of installing this new calvary, his comment at the auction was interpreted to explain all the subsequent actions of the night. The prosecutor went on to declare that every scandalous act against the statue that followed in the evening came from this initial intention to 'turn the religion into ridicule'.⁸⁰ Desjardins then treated the jury to his retelling of the events of the night through the lens of an insidious, sustained attack on their religion. Quoting passages from the gospels concerning the Crucifixion, Desjardins drew numerous parallels to the group's actions. The Romans who had mockingly called Christ the King of the Jews were present in the cries of 'Poor *Imri!*'; the numerous falls and physical insults that Christ endured whilst carrying the cross were now the pushing and falling of the wooden statue; the wine with myrrh that was thrust towards Christ to drink was now the cigar sold by Céline Jouret and forced to the statue's lips. Perhaps most appropriately, Desjardins referred to a passage from the gospel of Matthew, which states: 'And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross'.⁸¹ This moment, when the 'foreign' Simon of Cyrene helped Jesus carry the cross, is one of the fourteen Stations of the Cross often replicated in calvary statues. The foreigner Trachet was now Simon, and the numerous stops at the 'stations' of the cabarets on a procession to Tourcoing, where the crucifix was to be installed, were all portrayed as ugly inversions of the path taken by Christ on his way to the Crucifixion.

⁷⁹ Nicholas J. Saunders, 'Crucifix, calvary, and cross: Materiality and spirituality in Great War landscapes', *World Archaeology*, 35, 1 (2003), p. 9.

⁸⁰ "Cour d'Assises du Nord, Audience du 12 mai", *Journal de Roubaix*, 15 May 1874, p. 2; "Cour d'Assises du Nord, Audience du 12", *Journal de Roubaix* (Roubaix, France), 14 May 1874, p. 3.

⁸¹ Matt. 27:32.

During the trial, the jury were presented with the remains of the battered statue as the sole exhibit of evidence.⁸² Seeing the proof of Lausent's attacks on their religion, the jury then heard Desjardins's closing argument as to why Lausent and his group could and should be legally punished. 'To our eyes', Desjardins asserted, they had insulted the very embodiment of 'a national religion... which is associated with our intellectual development, [which has] matured and protected our civilization, a religion which is not only the mother of mankind, but is also the mother of France'.⁸³ Closing his speech, he gestured to the crucifix that hung above the jurors in the courtroom, and said that if the jury did not choose to make an example of the defendants, then what was to stop them taking down that very crucifix, or any other religious symbol, and defiling it in front of them all?⁸⁴

Through this address, Desjardins had effectively launched a three-pronged attack on Lausent and his group; a three-pronged attack that allowed the crime to be punished despite the lack of anti-sacrilege laws. First, by directly quoting Lausent's use of the word *calvaire*, he played to local Catholic imagery and traditions that he was convinced had been the target for mockery. Second, by drawing parallels between the events that occurred on the cabaret crawl and the Passion, he offered seemingly indelible evidence of a premeditated, insidious parody that Lausent's group had undertaken. Third, by first presenting the extent of the men's blasphemous actions and then contrasting this to the importance of Catholicism in French national identity, Desjardins was able to present these workers as savage and against all that modern France stood for. The jury only took forty minutes to reach their unanimous verdict

⁸² ADN 2 U 1/608, État des pièces à conviction, s.d.

⁸³ "Cour d'Assises du Nord, Audience du 12 mai", *Journal de Roubaix*, 15 May 1874, p. 2.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 2.

of guilty.⁸⁵ Lausent was fined 300 Fr. and sentenced to a year's imprisonment, with six months for Dessaux and Baudour, and a month for Wilfart, who had co-operated with the investigation.⁸⁶

This trial had no significant bearing on French legal history; it did not lead to a new anti-sacrilege law in France. But for a few months in 1874, word of it spread through newspapers across two continents because of its scandalous and religious nature, with the reporting of the story reflecting different views on the state of religion or irreligion in France. Several national newspapers in France reprinted articles from the *Journal de Roubaix* and coverage of the trial, while Roubaix's proximity to Belgium meant that the story found an eager readership in cities across the border.⁸⁷ In both contexts, the coverage was similar to that in Roubaix itself, with the occasional misspelling of the defendants' names (e.g. 'Crochet' instead of 'Trachet') or omissions of certain details of the bar crawl or trial having any significant impact on the meaning of these pieces. However, the story took on a whole life of its own when it was printed in English-language publications throughout May and June 1874, in several different retellings.⁸⁸ The journalist for *The Times*, when covering the details of the trial in the 15 May edition of the paper, played into English traditions of anti-Catholicism when he described the men carrying the statue 'as if it had been a Guy Fawkes' through the streets of Roubaix. This journalist also tied the events to political concerns about post-Commune France, in hoping

⁸⁵ ADN 2 U 1/608, 'Cour d'assis du département du Nord. Audience du 12 Mai: Déclaration du jury', 12 May 1874.

⁸⁶ "Cour d'Assises du Nord, Audience du 12", *Journal de Roubaix*, 14 May 1874, p. 3.

⁸⁷ Including, but not limited to: 'Nouvelles diverses', *L'Univers* (Paris, France), 27 Apr. 1874, p. 4; 'Départements', *Le Petit Journal* (Paris, France), 3 May 1874, p. 3; 'Cour d'assises du Nord... Audience du 12 mai. Outrage à la religion catholique', *Journal des Débats Politiques et Littéraires* (Paris, France), 15 May 1874, p. 4; '-', *L'Indépendance Belge* (Brussels, Belgium), 16 May 1874, p. 3; 'Outrage à la religion catholique', *Le Bien Public* (Ghent, Belgium), 17 May 1874, p. 3.

⁸⁸ The story was printed in a number of provincial newspapers throughout England and Wales, including but not limited to: 'Outrage on religion', *Western Mail* (Cardiff, Wales), 3 Jun. 1874, p. 6; 'Outrage on religion', *York Herald* (York, England), 3 Jun. 1874, p. 7; 'Outrage on religion', *Leicester Chronicle* (Leicester, England), 6 Jun. 1874, p. 5.

that ‘such offences are not of frequent occurrence, and that the efforts of the Communists to propagate their abominable doctrines have not been successful in France’.⁸⁹ Coverage of the story in newspapers in the United States also deployed sweeping politico-religious statements, seemingly out of nowhere. A short article, printed both in the *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel* and the *San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin*, finished by making an anti-Catholic commentary of its own. Such scandals, according to this American author, could only occur in countries like France where ‘religion and irreligion are equally fanatical, and a dominant church becomes the instrument and ally of political reaction’.⁹⁰

The story evidently chimed with international readers who had opinions about the state of religion in nineteenth-century France. Before the anticlericalism that would later define Third Republic politics, the early 1870s were defined by a conservative reaction to the social and political unrest of the communes in Paris and Lyon. It was in the immediate aftermath of these communes that plans were established between 1870-2 to build Sacré-Cœur in Montmartre and the basilica of Fourvière in Lyon.⁹¹ Both funded by members of the local Catholic bourgeoisie, these buildings were planned to sit on significant urban elevations and were intended to be ‘gigantic ex-votos, to thank God for victory over the socialists and in expiation of the sins of modern France’.⁹² Both combined older histories of French Catholicism with modern symbols of conservative reaction to revolution and the republic: as Raymond Jonas puts it, to ‘[confer] an aura of sanctity on acts of resistance to the Republic’.⁹³

⁸⁹ The Times article was also reprinted in local papers, including the *Star* in Guernsey. ‘France’, *The Times* (London, England), 15 May 1874, p. 5; ‘France’, *Star* (Guernsey), 19 May 1874, p. 4.

⁹⁰ ‘-’, *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel* (Milwaukee WI), 5 Jun. 1874, p. 3; ‘Foreign Gossip’, *Daily Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco CA), 13 Jun. 1874, p. 4.

⁹¹ Karine Varley, *Under the Shadow of Defeat: The War of 1870-71 in French Memory* (Basingstoke, 2008), pp. 65, 216.

⁹² Bertrand Taithe, *Citizenship and Wars: France in Turmoil, 1870-1871* (London, 2001), p. 102.

⁹³ Raymond Anthony Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart: An Epic Tale for Modern Times* (Berkeley CA, 2000), pp. 4-5.

This Catholic articulation of identity and resistance to republican secularism in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Second Empire was not just restricted to Paris and Lyon. It was also in these early years of the Third Republic that Catholics across France used modern kinds of Catholic tradition such as the Lourdes pilgrimage as a way to ‘show their solidarity and strength’ in the face of a potentially hostile republican government.⁹⁴

However, after the fall of Thiers’s government and the near-unanimous election of Patrice de MacMahon as president in May 1873, this religiously-infused conservatism became enshrined in government itself, as MacMahon declared his ‘Moral Order’ approach to defending the French social hierarchy.⁹⁵ Lausent’s failed prank and Desjardins’s prosecution therefore took place when a reactionary, conservative national government was seeking to realign Catholicism with a modern French national identity.

The national atmosphere of conservative reaction in the early 1870s helps contextualize the court case and sentencing, but the story of the Christ in the cabaret also helps us understand the importance of religion to a specifically local Roubaisian middle-class identity in the decades before the Third Republic. Even in the Nord, described by Frédéric Barbier as the ‘citadel of militant Catholicism’, Roubaix was marked by the strength of the Catholic devotion of its industrial elite.⁹⁶ In the article where he described Roubaix’s ‘inferiority complex’ in relationship to Lille, the economic historian David Landes had searched to find something in the fierce Catholicism of Roubaix’s elites that would echo a Weberian ‘Protestant Work Ethic’.⁹⁷ Although he stressed the strict adhesion to the Catholic religion of the town’s

⁹⁴ Ruth Harris, *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in the Secular Age* (London, 1999), pp. 11-18.

⁹⁵ Jean-Marie Mayeur and Madeleine Rebérioux, *The Third Republic from its Origins to the Great War, 1871-1914*, trans. J. R. Foster (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 18-21.

⁹⁶ Barbier, *Le Patronat du Nord*, p. 28.

⁹⁷ Landes, ‘Religion and enterprise’, p. 42.

industrialists, Landes concluded that it was not some kind of Catholic 'Work Ethic' that drove the success of the town but, instead, a combination of this religious conviction with both a fierce cult of family as well as the inferiority complex as Roubaix grew in the shadow of Lille.⁹⁸ This combination meant that, by the Third Republic, the outward presentation of strict Catholicism was one of many ways that the Roubaisian elite could try to assert their cultural and moral superiority compared to their Lillois neighbours: this was a Roubaisian patriotism bound up in Catholicism. Just as Roubaix's *commission des logements insalubres* had to work harder to receive departmental praise because of the overshadowing work in Lille, the literal 'holier than thou' parts of Roubaisian elite identity was a way to distinguish the city as notable even in a department of fierce devotion.

This religious fortitude manifested in industrialists' reactions to worker strikes and insurrections. After the socio-political unrest of 1848 and subsequent strikes that continued into 1849 in Roubaix, elite textile manufactures buttressed Catholicism at all levels of Roubaisian life as a way to encourage social harmony. Statues of the Virgin Mary multiplied in offices and shops, nuns acted as moral supervisors in women's workrooms, and Catholic worker circles were set up from 1872, with both employer and worker participation.⁹⁹ Later in the 1870s and 1880s, beyond Lausent's trial and as the Third Republic increasingly embraced

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 74. Scholars since Landes have been keen to hold the textile magnates of Roubaix as the obvious counterexample to the Alsatian Calvinist elites, but they have also agreed with the importance of the cult of family and the notion of a Roubaisian inferiority complex. Colin Heywood, 'The Catholic Church and the Business Community in Nineteenth-Century France', in Frank Tallett and Nicholas Atkin (eds.), *Religion, Society and Politics in France since 1789* (London, 1991), pp. 72-4; Jean-Claude Dumas, 'Deux modèles de capitalisme familial: capitalisme dynastique et capitalisme viager dans l'industrie lainière française au XIXe siècle', in Jean-Claude Dumas and David S. Landes (eds.), *Le Capitalisme Familial : Logiques et Trajectoires* (Besançon, 2003), pp. 180-3.

⁹⁹ Landes, 'Religion and enterprise', pp. 76-7.

anticlericalism, this attachment to Catholicism in Roubaix only grew stronger, culminating the founding of the cult of *Notre-Dame de l'Usine* (Our Lady of the Factory) in 1887.¹⁰⁰

However, it was not just the elites of Roubaix who exhibited a strong attachment to Catholicism. The French and Belgian workers who flooded to Roubaix during its boom-years also exhibited a fierce devotion to Catholicism.¹⁰¹ Lausent's decision to play a prank was not indicative of a widespread irreligiosity amongst his fellow workers but, rather, reveals a motivation to mock the devoutness of urban and rural northerners whose belief would have them cry miracle at the sight of the calvary.

One of the most evident ways that shared religious belief was mobilized to tackle the perceived immorality of modern life was through charitable home visits. Middle-class Roubaisian women, imbued with the strength of their religious conviction, made visits to working class homes, where they helped poor mothers to care for their children. Several maternal societies, such as the *Dames de Bon Secours* and the *Petites Sœurs des Pauvres* were set up throughout the Second Empire and were sustained through generous donations and legacies from the great Roubaisian families.¹⁰² By 1877, there were twelve authorised religious groups, with a total of 197 permanent members, dedicated to supporting the ill or providing religious-infused education for the workers.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Claude Willard, 'Les attaques contre Notre-Dame de l'Usine', *Le Mouvement social*, 57 (1966), pp. 203-9.

¹⁰¹ Robert Gildea, *Education in Provincial France, 1800-1914: A Study of Three Departments* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 3, 49, 65; Reardon, 'Belgian and French workers in nineteenth-century Roubaix', p. 170.

¹⁰² AMR P I c 3, 'Dames de Bon Secours', 1853-81; AMR P I d 1, 'Petites Sœurs des Pauvres', 1853-94.

¹⁰³ AMR P I c 1, 'Commune de Roubaix: État des Congregations, Communautés et Associations religieuses autorisés et non autorisés, existant dans la Commune', 11 Jun. 1877.

This link between work, gender, religion, and the working-class home was not limited to Roubaix. Another city renowned for its staunch Catholicism in this period was Lyon, described by Bernadette Angleraud as the ‘bastion of ultramontism and the birthplace of social Catholicism’.¹⁰⁴ One of the most evident and extreme examples of this link was in the silk *internats* or ‘convent workshops’ that existed from 1835 in the south-east of France, particularly in the area around Lyon.¹⁰⁵ Girls and young women, aged between 12-21, worked silk spinning mills for industrialists while nuns supervised their work.¹⁰⁶ These *internats* had attached dormitories where the women slept, ensuring a near-constant moral supervision of female workers’ lives. By 1906, around 100,000 women worked in these *internats* throughout the south-east.¹⁰⁷ For Dominique Vanoli, historian of these workshops, these women were ‘imprisoned’ with the consent of their family, and subject to a dual submission: ‘submission of the body’ to the *patron*, through working 12-hour days for little or no money; and ‘submission of the soul’ to the Lord and the nuns.¹⁰⁸ Although these young female workers were allowed frequent visits home to see their family, they were isolated from other workers in the silk industry. This is one of the reasons, according to Louise A. Tilly, why working women in Lyon did not join their male peers in collective action during the nineteenth century – the isolation of the moral and social supervision in the *internats* prevented the consolidation of class links.¹⁰⁹ From the point of view of a conservative Catholic elite, this lack of female worker militancy must have been proof of the role that religion could play in stabilising the Lyonnais workforce.

¹⁰⁴ Angleraud, *Lyon et ses pauvres*, p. 6.

¹⁰⁵ Dominique Vanoli, ‘Les ouvrières enfermées: les couvents soyeux’, *Les Révoltes logiques*, 2, (1976), pp. 20-1; Louise A. Tilly, ‘Paths of proletarianization: organization of production, sexual division of labor, and women’s collective action’, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 7, 2 (1981), pp. 407-8.

¹⁰⁶ Vanoli, ‘Les ouvrières enfermées’, p. 21.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-5.

¹⁰⁹ Tilly, ‘Paths of proletarianization’, p. 408.

The *internats* were not the only example of how housing and religious supervision overlapped in Lyon. We have already seen how the *abbé* Camille Rambaud attempted to unite workers around the Church in his short-lived 1856 housing scheme. But it was not just nuns in the *internats* and men like Rambaud who expressed their faith through creating and supervising housing: just as in Roubaix, charitable women were also active in visiting pre-existing homes of the poor. In fact, it was in Lyon that these home-visiting ‘maternal societies’ were at their most active in France. Christine Adams, in the introduction to her comparative study of nineteenth-century maternal societies (where charitable women visited pregnant women and new mothers), used the image of one of these Lyonnais charitable women to set the scene for French maternal societies in general. Adams describes how the Lyonnaise home visitor was motivated by ‘[h]er Catholic faith... [to] overcome her repugnance at the odor, the filth, and the poverty she confronts each time she makes a home visit’.¹¹⁰ At the same time that the male CLI inspectors braced the stench of poor housing in order to judge and improve the structural and hygienic integrity of the working-class house, these women also crossed the threshold in order to judge and improve the social and moral integrity of the working-class home.

These *dames visitenses*, all mostly middle-class Lyonnaise aged between 40-65, identified poor mothers who were judged worthy of assistance, then monitored and visited them in their homes, to make sure they ‘behaved as proper mothers at all times’.¹¹¹ While maternal societies like these had been founded in the eighteenth century and existed throughout France in the nineteenth, the exceptional strength of Catholicism in Lyon made the actions of these groups

¹¹⁰ Christine Adams, *Poverty, Charity, and Motherhood: Maternal Societies in Nineteenth-Century France* (Urbana IL, 2010), p. 2.

¹¹¹ Catherine Pellissier, *Loisirs et sociabilité des notables Lyonnais au XIXe siècle* (Lyon, 1996), p. 62; Adams, *Poverty, Charity, and Motherhood*, p. 94.

stand out amongst their contemporaries elsewhere. Lyon's particular relationship between industry, gender, and housing might provide an explanation for this unparalleled fervour. While women did work in small workshops and *internats* in Second Empire Lyon, there was still an enduring practice of domestic silk weaving and the household as a productive unit into the 1850s and early 1860s.¹¹² Women played a dual role in the household as wives of male weavers, but also key workers themselves; their main sphere of activity was in this household production rather than factory work. The bourgeois *dame visiteuse*, therefore, considered herself as complementing the important work of nuns in the *internats* in ensuring female workers were not lost to the immorality of irreligion, regardless of where they worked.

Both Roubaix and Lyon evidently had active volunteer lay Catholic charity that accompanied supervision in the workplace to counteract the perceived threat of worker irreligion. The situation was different in Mulhouse, where the industrial elite was overwhelmingly Calvinist. When Mulhouse was annexed to France in 1798, there were very few Catholics in its population of 6,000. Even in the first few years after the reunion, the old city-republic seemed a 'Protestant oasis' within otherwise Catholic Alsace.¹¹³ This situation quickly shifted, however, and as workers flooded into Mulhouse to provide the workforce for its flourishing textile trade, they brought with them a distinct demographic shift. The Catholic workers reached parity in number with the members of the old Calvinist families in the early 1830s, and by the start of the Second Empire in 1852 they made up over two-thirds of the town's population.¹¹⁴ Although the elites were predominantly Calvinist and the workers

¹¹² Tilly, 'Paths of proletarianization', p. 407.

¹¹³ An anonymous quote from 1822, quoted in Paul Leuilliot, 'Les institutions: le regne des notables', in Georges Livet and Raymond Oberlé (eds.), *Histoire de Mulhouse des Origines à nos Jours* (Strasbourg, 1977), p. 214.

¹¹⁴ Schmitt, *Mulhouse au XIXe siècle*, p. 107. David Tournier, 'Le protestantisme mulhousien et ses œuvres au XIXe siècle: éthique et pragmatisme (1798-1870)', in Céline Borello (ed.), *Les Œuvres protestantes en Europe* (Rennes, 2013), p. 240.

predominantly Catholic, there were still religiously-motivated female home visiting societies like in Roubaix and Lyon, but these visits lacked the shared denominational background of the dispensers and recipients.

In 1852, Anne-Marie Kœchlin – the wife of the industrialist Nicolas Kœchlin – worked together with a Protestant deaconess from Strasbourg to visit the ill of Mulhouse in their homes and give them aid.¹¹⁵ Influenced by other Protestant examples of voluntary social welfare, like in Berlin, this led to the creation of seven ‘diaconates’ for the seven quarters of the Mulhouse from 1853, where aid could be distributed to the poor across both denominations. Supported by donations from wealthy Protestants, these women’s charities continued throughout the Second Empire.¹¹⁶ Like in Roubaix and Lyon, those executing the charity were doing so under the auspices of religiously-motivated domestic charity but with the key difference that those who were receiving the charity did not share the same form of religious belief.

Lay societies for visiting the homes of the poor in all three cities shared a similar gendered element: the act of religiously-infused visits to the home was seen as one for the middle-class women of these cities. Much of this has to do with the conception of the domestic role of women in the contemporary Catholic rhetoric. Hazel Mills has shown how the image of the ‘*femme forte*’ held a domestic authority that was stressed by contemporary religious texts, with this authority deriving from ‘her “natural” domestic talents, and her God-given home-making role’.¹¹⁷ This was also reinforced through middle-class education through the nineteenth century, as Christina de Bellaigue has illustrated, with women being judged responsible for

¹¹⁵ Tournier, ‘Le protestantisme mulhousien’, p. 248.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 248.

¹¹⁷ Hazel M. Mills, ‘Women and Catholicism in provincial France, c.1800-c. 1850 : Franche-Comté in national context’, (D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford, 1995), pp. 138-60.

‘religion and the revival of Catholic piety’.¹¹⁸ The image of the *femme forte* in Catholic teaching emphasized ‘women’s moral superiority and authority within the home’.¹¹⁹ Evidently, as seen from the Mulhouse example, this was not exclusive to Catholic doctrine. Tine Van Osselaer, in comparing the relationship of both Catholicism and Protestantism to family and domesticity throughout the nineteenth century, also points to how nineteenth-century ‘Christian articulations of the cults of domesticity and family thereby implied and confirmed gender ideals that were rippled with power issues and assertions of (‘essential’) differences’.¹²⁰ The domestic gender ideal that elite women home visitors embodied was one that could be shared by both denominations, rather than be isolated to the Catholic *femme forte*.

The middle-class French woman was to be, then, at the same time a deeply religious figure as well as the bastion of domestic hierarchy. The charitable home visits, as seen above in all three cities, were a way for middle-class women to replicate these roles in the public sphere. Much of the historical work on female lay charitable activity and home visits has been inspired by Bonnie Smith’s 1981 work *Ladies of the Leisure Class*, which focused on the *bourgeoises* of Northern France, including Roubaix. Sarah Curtis, in considering Parisian ‘charitable ladies’, wrote that ‘Smith’s path-breaking work showed how involvement in charity, especially religious charity, allowed elite women to reproduce domesticity in the public sphere’.¹²¹ However, in her book, Smith establishes and reinforces several divisions between men and women which verge on a strict binary: between on the one hand the secular, ‘freethinking, republican’ Northern men who were active in driving business and in the public sphere and,

¹¹⁸ Christina De Bellaigue, *Educating Women: Schooling and Identity in England and France* (Oxford, 2007), p. 28.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 118.

¹²⁰ Tine Van Osselaer, ‘Religion, Family and Domesticity in the 19th and 20th Centuries: An Introduction’, in Tine Van Osselaer (ed.), *Christian Homes : Religion, Family and Domesticity in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Leuven, 2014), p. 14.

¹²¹ Sarah A. Curtis, ‘Charitable ladies: gender, class and religion in mid nineteenth-century Paris’, *Past & Present*, 177, (2002), p. 121.

on the other, the women who ‘tended toward reactionary, pro-monarchist thoughts’ and whose involvement in industry declined through the century as they, instead, ‘sought to maintain’ the social order through religious charity that would reflect the ‘fixed patterns of authority’ of the family.¹²² For Smith, Catholic men like the de Melun twins Armand and Anatole who pushed for national public assistance and housing reform legislation could express their faith, but this was only in a public and political context. Although female charitable home visits and the societies that organised them can be seen as middle-class women creating a space for sociability in the otherwise male public sphere, Smith’s thesis argues that this sociability was focused on reinforcing a retrograde Catholic domestic hierarchy on the workers’ homes.

Rather than using Smith’s work on the Nord as a strict blueprint for how we should consider bourgeois male and female roles in wider nineteenth-century French religious charity, historians of Lyon have instead challenged it. Paul Seeley, Catherine Pellissier and Bernadette Angleraud have all shown the Lyonnais elite differed to their northern peers, and that ‘the ideal of charity seems to be shared by men as well as women’ in Second Empire Lyon.¹²³ Seeley, describing Lyon as ‘the principle pole of lay Catholic militancy for most of the nineteenth century’, illustrates how the fallacy of excluding men from studies of religious charity might have come to be. Seeley shows how the post-Revolutionary ‘embodiment of the citizen as a rights-bearing and confessionally neutral male depended on a derogatory identification of religion with the female’.¹²⁴ This was not born out in practice in Lyon, however, Seeley continues, when he illustrates how young members of the Lyonnais elite

¹²² Bonnie G. Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class: the Bourgeoises of Northern France in the nineteenth century* (Princeton NJ, 1981), pp. 4-10.

¹²³ Catherine Pellissier, *La Vie privée des notables Lyonnais au XIXe siècle* (Lyon, 2001), p. 34; Angleraud, *Lyon et ses pauvres*, p. 120.

¹²⁴ Paul Seeley, ‘O sainte mère : liberalism and the socialization of Catholic men in nineteenth-century France’, *Journal of Modern History*, 70, 4 (1998), pp. 863, 866.

received a robust religious education from their mothers, which stayed with them and was exercised in their charitable activity as adult men.¹²⁵ Similarly, according to Angleraud, male lay charity has too often been elided with what Carol E. Harrison describes as ‘charity’s masculine counterpart’ – industrial philanthropy – which means the religiosity of these men’s actions has sometimes been inaccurately disregarded.¹²⁶ In reality, lay religious men in Lyon were involved not only in charity, but also in home visits.

One way to use Lyon as an example to move beyond Smith’s dichotomies is to consider the founding of the *Société de Saint Vincent-de-Paul* (SSVP) by the Lyonnais Frédéric Ozanam in 1833. As Carol E. Harrison has recently illustrated, Ozanam himself embodies many features of both sides of male/female, secular/spiritual dichotomies considered above. When the Lyon-born Ozanam went to Paris to study law, it was to a city that was a ‘gauntlet that Catholic youth had to run – a “modern Babylon” that tested a young man’s moral fibre’. Ozanam associated his city of birth with his Catholic mother and as a ‘safe haven for Catholic faith’, while the city of his education was one associated with the masculine, secular career that his father wished for him.¹²⁷ In 1833, Ozanam founded the SSVP, for fellow male students to visit the Parisian slums, where they would be ‘reclaiming the urban poor of Paris for the Church’.¹²⁸ Ozanam and his peers were well aware that their actions were following the example set by female charitable visitors.¹²⁹ As other SSVP conferences were set up throughout the country, a difficult difference emerged in the spiritual danger of young,

¹²⁵ Ibid., pp. 872-3

¹²⁶ Angleraud, *Lyon et ses pauvres*, pp. 120-5; Carol Harrison, E., *Romantic Catholics : France's Postrevolutionary Generation in Search of a Modern Faith* (Ithaca NY, 2014), p. 203.

¹²⁷ Harrison, *Romantic Catholics*, p. 193.

¹²⁸ Michael Gauvreau, 'Forging a new space for lay male piety: St. Vincent de Paul societies in urban Quebec and Ontario, 1846-1890', *Histoire sociale/Social history*, 42, 1 (2009), p. 42.

¹²⁹ Harrison, *Romantic Catholics*, p. 204.

unmarried men visiting poor single women; as a result, SSVP conferences tended to avoid these women altogether.

Harrison has shown, however, that as Ozanam grew older, his conception of male charity and society also matured. In 1841 he married Amélie Soulacroix, a Lyonnais woman who, like her peers, frequently visited the homes of the poor.¹³⁰ Through his interactions with his wife, Ozanam developed his view of SSVP's charitable action from being a fraternal bond of young men who wanted to reinforce religious sentiment to a new centrality of women and marriage to social charity.¹³¹ The work of Ozanam and the SSVP, therefore, show the overlapping nature of charitable male and female home visits in the nineteenth century, and serves as an important contradiction to the notion that it was only women who engaged in religiously-motivated visits to the working-class home.

A branch of the SSVP was set up in Mulhouse in 1846. Even though Catholic industrialists were by a long way in the minority amongst their Calvinist peers, by 1851 this branch had 56 members.¹³² Just as the earlier example of Mulhousian female home visits shows that these were not exclusively Catholic affairs, there were also elite Protestant men who engaged in this activity. In 1837, Daniel Kœchlin and Jean-François Grosjean set up a *Société d'amis des pauvres*. This group brought together young Protestants, who were to visit the homes of the poor and help distribute aid, as well as to provide lessons on Sundays for the children who otherwise worked all week in the factory.¹³³

¹³⁰ Ibid., pp. 206-16.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 235.

¹³² Tournier, 'Le protestantisme mulhousien', p. 249; Schmitt, *Mulhouse au XIXe siècle*, p. 137.

¹³³ Schmitt, *Mulhouse au XIXe siècle*, p. 133.

The example of Ozanam's SSVP and the Mulhousian *Société d'amis des pauvres* shows how lay religious home visits were not confined to women of the middle-classes. Michael Gauvreau has used the SSVP's ventures into the previously feminine world of home visits and the 'conflation of male and female attributes in the Vincentian discourse' to identify a need for historians to 'refine and nuance models of nineteenth-century masculinity'.¹³⁴ Fears of worker irreligion or immorality motivated both lay religious men and women to visit workers' homes and seek to strengthen the bonds of family.

One important common feature between male and female home visits, however, was the subjects for charity themselves: working-class mothers. While much of the rhetoric regarding concerns about workers drinking were focused on men abandoning the home and family for the cabaret, concerns about religion and morality were focused on the morality of the working-class mother. Importantly, if charitable visitors could empower working-class women to act as 'the angel in the house' and upholder of moral values, then there would be hope for working-class families to thrive or, at least, to survive poor housing conditions without descending into immoral destitution.¹³⁵

The police investigation that followed César Lausent's sacrilegious bar crawl in 1874 Roubaix – and which provided Desjardins with his evidence for his masterful prosecution – highlights how this focus on working-class motherhood factored into debates about morality. The two Jouret women, mother and daughter who ran the cabaret on the *Rue Turgot* where the worst scandals occurred, were the subject of a police report before the trial, as it was strongly

¹³⁴ Gauvreau, 'Forging a new space', p. 56.

¹³⁵ Robert J. Morris has highlighted a similar process that was taking place in England by the 1860s, with the focus on the 'essential goodness of women' to help reduce poverty and drunkenness. Robert J. Morris, *Men, Women and Property in England, 1780-1870: a Social and Economic History of Family Strategies Amongst the Leeds Middle Class* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 26-8, 392-3.

suspected that Baudour, who lived next-door, was having an affair with the eighteen-year-old Céline. Céline and her mother were described as having a ‘very problematic’ and ‘rotten’ reputation in Roubaix, wrote the police officer, and anyone who was suspected of having contact with them was tarred with the same brush.¹³⁶ This contrast between the ‘rotten’ Jouret women who had been witnesses and active accomplices to the religious scandal and Baudour’s poor wife and children, alone next-door, was used to emphasise the immorality of the men’s actions. Here was yet another example of the immorality of the cabaret and its ability to destroy working-class families. In the final section of the chapter, we will examine the opposite of these immoral models of worker families, by focusing on the ways that middle-class onlookers constructed notions of the ‘good’ worker and ‘ideal’ home to counter the cabaret.

‘Good’ workers and ideal households

The image of an irreligious worker, drinking or being violent in a cabaret, contrasts to the other side of reform-minded discourse and action in this period: that of the ideal moral household-heading father or pious mother. Duruy’s encounter with the proud working-class mother in the Mulhousian *cités ouvrières*, whose husband came home every evening to spend time with his family instead of drinking, is just one example of the way that the ‘model’ workers were held up or rewarded by some of the same individuals who would be quick to decry the failings of the class as a whole. Middle-class discourse in the courtroom, in newspapers, and in municipal council meetings juxtaposed the immoral space of the cabaret with the restorative nature of family life at home: often side-by-side in the street, these were ‘bad’ and ‘good’ areas for working-class sociability and domesticity.

¹³⁶ ADN 2 U 1/608, Police commissioner of Roubaix to examining magistrate, 27 Apr. 1874.

Readers of Reboux's *Journal de Roubaix*, who would have been inundated with horror-stories of workers' behaviour in their city's cabarets, also found examples of 'good' workers and families beyond Roubaix. In summer 1856, for example, scattered throughout the '*Faits divers*' and '*Chronique locale*' sections of the paper, were reports of religious and generous workers. On 12 July, for example, Reboux reprinted an article from the Lyon newspaper *Le Salut Public*, in which an 'honest' working-class woman from La Guillotière refused alms from a priest, despite her poor conditions, instead directing him to a neighbouring single mother who was even more destitute; on 9 August and again on 27 August, Reboux treated his readers to two tales of workers in Lille and Paris respectively who had chosen to go out of their way to return briefcases full of money that they had found to their rightful owners.¹³⁷ These stories helped to show that it was possible for workers to avoid the misery of the cabarets or of irreligion and, instead, to exhibit the noble behaviour that charitable home visits were meant to instil.

This idea of the 'good' worker, shining in the darkness of the workers' conditions, is best illustrated by two different cases of prizes given to the heads of the 'best kept households'. Both Roubaix and Mulhouse saw examples of these prize-oriented schemes in the early 1860s. From 1863, the municipal council of Roubaix distributed prizes to the heads of working-class households who managed to fulfil the criteria of their 'good conduct', 'attendance at work', their 'spirit of order[liness] and economy', by their 'strictness in sending their children to school', and their 'application to giving good examples'.¹³⁸ Many of these criteria represent the inverse of what was inferred by workers spending all their time and money in the cabarets –

¹³⁷ 'Faits divers', *Journal de Roubaix* (Roubaix, France), 12 Jul. 1856, p. 2; 'Chronique locale', *Journal de Roubaix* (Roubaix, France), 9 Aug. 1856, p. 2; 'Faits divers', *Journal de Roubaix* (Roubaix, France), 27 Aug. 1856, p. 3.

¹³⁸ AMR 4 Q e 1, List of 65 households receiving prizes in 1863, 10 Oct. 1863.

these criteria clearly delineated the positive alternatives of domesticity. The city council created a commission of three municipal councillors, who then went and visited the houses of the workers. Once they decided on the workers who best excelled in the list of criteria, the commissioners then invited prominent members of the Roubaisian elite to a prize-giving in December of each year, in order to reward the best kept workers houses.

In the descriptions of the recipients of these prizes throughout the 1860s, repeated reference was made to the good example the father figures were setting to their children; how well-kept the houses were; and whether the children regularly went to school.¹³⁹ The focus on the father here contrasted with religious, charitable focuses on the working-class mother. But what unifies this municipal scheme with the religious charitable schemes is the focus on the sanctity of the family unit. A key common theme throughout was not necessarily how good the houses or workers are, but how good they were compared to the otherwise miserable condition in the *courées* and the allures of the cabaret. Henri Agache, for example, was a 39-year-old weaver who lived ‘near the beerhall [*estaminet*] de Beaureward’. He was father to seven children, and managed to keep his house ‘well kept, despite the great misery’.¹⁴⁰ Jean-Baptiste Lecomte, meanwhile, was a 40-year-old father-of-five, who was the head of one of the 96 households rewarded by the 1864 commission. In the brief, two-line description that accompanied his name in the commission’s report, Lecomte was described in three, punctuation-less bursts as having ‘Raised the family very well no cabaret good conduct’.¹⁴¹ Conditions of working-class life were known to be poor, and yet these shining lights chose not to spend their evenings drinking – instead they were able to make the best of a bad situation and should therefore be rewarded.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ AMR 4 Q e 1, List of 96 households receiving prizes in 1864, 26 Jul. 1864.

In Mulhouse, a similar annual scheme began in March 1864, though with some key differences. First of all, instead of the municipal council authorizing and administering the prize-giving, this was a scheme that the committee of SOMCO created (although, at this point, both SOMCO and the council were headed by mayor Jean Dollfus).¹⁴² As a result, those who were worthy for prizes had to live in the houses of the *cités ouvrières*. This alone shows a significant difference from the Roubaisian scheme – workers who lived in the houses of the *cités* already lived in spaces designed to improve their physical conditions, and even with the subsidisation of the rent by SOMCO, it was still only the more affluent factory workers who could afford to live there. In Roubaix, conversely, the annual prize-giving considered all workers' households, especially singling out those who managed to thrive 'in spite of the great misery'.

Secondly, whereas the winners of the Roubaisian scheme were decided by a small commission who went and visited the homes, recording the working-class family in the same way that CLI inspectors might report on the state of the bricks and mortar, this Mulhousian scheme was advertised as a competition. The competition would still be judged by a visiting commission, like in Roubaix, but SOMCO was clear to advertise to the workers what they were to be judged on. SOMCO printed posters in both French and German, describing a 'competition between the working families who live in the *cités*', and a hierarchy of prizes: three of 60 Fr., three of 40 Fr., and four of 20 Fr.¹⁴³ The posters gave specific details for the five criteria that would be judged: the interior and exterior appearance of the habitation and garden; the state of the furniture; the order and economy of the household; the clothing of the children and

¹⁴² AMM B 296, 'Cités-ouvrières de Mulhouse - Avis / Arbeiter-Quartiere von Mülhausen - Bericht', 31 Mar. 1864.

¹⁴³ Ibid. There were also ten '*mentions honorables*', which came with no financial remuneration.

whether they regularly go to school; the earning rate of family members.¹⁴⁴ Some of these criteria echo the standards rewarded in the Roubaix scheme, though much more is made of the relation here of a well-kept house with a well-kept household, unsurprising considering this was a competition launched by the same people who had constructed the houses and who would want them to remain neat and tidy. What is crucial here, though, is the sense of competition that this poster elicits that is absent from the Roubaix allocation of prizes: outdoing one's neighbour was a key motivation here, with the intention by SOMCO that the whole *cités ouvrières* would benefit as a result.

Unfortunately, there is a dearth of material in the archives on any awards of these prizes in Mulhouse, compared to those of Roubaix, but the differences in how they were structured speaks to the difference in attitudes towards the working-class families in these two towns. Just as the Roubaisian municipality failed to support any new housing schemes or to enforce stricter regulations or curfews on cabarets, so too did the 'best kept household prize' operate in a way that dealt with the existing condition, rather than try to provide a more direct and clear advertisement of factors that would be rewarded. This was in marked contrast to the attempts made to change the workers' domestic habits – or to motivate workers to aspire to change their own habits – with the competition in Mulhouse. But in both cases, the role of the father as head of the household, and the importance of looking after the workers' children were two common threads of what it was to be a 'good' worker.

As we saw in Chapter 2, when the Mulhousian *cités ouvrières* were exhibited at the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris in 1867, the model house that was built on the Champ de Mars was complete with a working-class family, to show the impact of improved housing on the

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

working-class family. The promotional material that was created for the section on housing further emphasized this image (fig. 4.1). The cross-section image of the Mulhousian house depicted two figures, both women, undertaking 'home-making' chores of cooking and sewing. The interiors were depicted as clean and tidy, with decorations such as framed pictures and a grandfather clock that evoke the modern middle-class norms of home that these houses were expected to instil in the workers. Moreover, this stressed that these houses would restore women to their role as homemakers, rather than factory workers, which would contribute to the moral and social reinvigoration of the working classes. On the external elevation image, a working-class man is shown leaning back and inspecting the house, his house: this man is surveying the whole of his possession.¹⁴⁵

In such representations, the ideal worker's home and family were once again tied to the notion of homeownership, and Émile Muller's declaration that the worker faced a choice between the cabaret and the home. Homeownership, as embodied in the Mulhousian *cités ouvrières*, could restore the sanctity of the family unit. The impact of homeownership, or the lack thereof, on the behaviour of workers was the subject of a number of discussions at the Roubaisian *Société d'émulation*, founded in 1868. This *société* was similar in many respects to the Mulhousian *Société industrielle*, founded four decades prior. In one of the new Roubaisian society's first meetings, the vice-president M. Bonnier reported on the recent *Exposition Universelle*, and the ways to improve the physical and moral condition of the workers.¹⁴⁶ He divided his report into four sections, ordered in the way he deemed most important and appropriate to Roubaix: 'The first concerns churches... the second, public education... the third, workers' housing and gardens... the fourth, mutual support societies'.¹⁴⁷ The fact that

¹⁴⁵ AN CP/F/12/11872/1, 'Exposition Universelle de 1867. Classe 93, Maisons d'ouvriers', 1867.

¹⁴⁶ Bonnier, 'Rapport', pp. 85-116.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 86.

housing came after a discussion of religion neatly surmises the differences between Roubaix and Mulhouse. Bonnier also dedicated a subsection to the ‘abusive frequenting of cabarets’ by workers which could be reduced if the workers would only ‘return to holy and pure’ [*saintes et pures*] habits.¹⁴⁸ When it came to discussing housing, Bonnier discussed the merits of the Mulhouse scheme and the gardens, but dismissed the scheme as too expensive for Roubaix and therefore unachievable.

In the next edition of the *Mémoires* of the Roubaisian *Société d'émulation*, Alexandre Faidherbe presented a report on the work of Frédéric Le Play, organizer of the 1867 exhibition. Faidherbe declared that according to Le Play, it was necessary to ‘put society back on its eternal bases, on private life, on the home’.¹⁴⁹ The French Revolution, for Le Play, had ‘destroyed the respect for God, for the father and for the wife, the three great social forces, and it has created the omnipotence of the cabaret’.¹⁵⁰ The worker who lived in a rented house, like those of the *courées* of Roubaix, merely ‘settled... like the traveller who hovers his tent in the desert [and] sees there just a place for sleeping and eating’.¹⁵¹ There was no motivation to beautify a rented house, he continued, especially when the neighbouring cabaret, ‘which has been washed [and] sanded’ called working men to visit and ‘often [lose] his reason, his health, his purse and the peace of his household’.¹⁵² Both of these reports show that members of the Roubaisian elite evidently saw the potential benefits of homeownership to avoiding the ills of irreligion or the cabaret, despite taking no effort to replicate the Mulhouse scheme (as we saw in Chapter 2).

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 104.

¹⁴⁹ Alexandre Faidherbe, ‘L’organisation du travail d’après M. Le Play’, *Mémoires de la Société d’émulation de Roubaix*, 2: 1870-1, (1871), p. 63.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 76.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 76.

This focus on improved housing as leading to ideal households, rather than the idea of ‘good’ workers thriving ‘in spite of the great misery’, placed a certain amount of responsibility for the condition of Roubaisian workers on the inactive elite who did not act to improve the housing condition. In the rhetoric of Le Play and this Roubaisian group, the working father almost inevitably fled the miserable conditions of the *courées*. The importance of the father in the family home was evident in the varied sentencing in the trial of Lausent and his group in May 1874. When the prosecutor, Desjardins, questioned one of the defendants, Louis Wilfart, the first thing he asked was: ‘You are married, a father to seven children? How did you find yourself mixed up in such an affair?’¹⁵³ This position of Wilfart as father to such a large family, combined with the fact that he co-operated with the investigation and expressed open remorse, was a reason his sentence was so much shorter than the other three – he only received a month compared to Lausent’s year. This was in spite of the evidence that Wilfart had engaged in some of the more scandalous individual acts: turning the statue upside down, nailing the arm, bringing the cigar to its lips. The strength of his remorse and the image of him as a father figure helped reduce his sentence.

In contrast, two of the other defendants, Baudour and Dessaux, had less than perfect reputations, as the police investigations uncovered. Baudour’s well-known reputation amongst the interviewed *cabaretières*, as well as his suspected affair with the barmaid Céline Jouret, contributed towards the representation of his ‘bad’ character. Investigations into Dessaux, meanwhile, had discovered that he had left his wife while she was pregnant, only a few months after they had married in 1867. He was absent throughout her pregnancy, and only returned for a ‘*rapprochement*’ on the doorstep of their house months after the child had died in infancy.¹⁵⁴ These police investigations and their findings suggested that these two were not

¹⁵³ "Cour d'Assises du Nord, Audience du 12 mai", *Journal de Roubaix*, 15 May 1874, p. 2.

¹⁵⁴ ADN 2 U 1/608, Police commissioner of Roubaix to Desjardins, 8 May 1874.

moral family men, and the scandal they took part in was just one in a long list. Baudour, Dessaux, and the ‘rotten’ Jouret women had succumbed to the ‘great misery’ of the poor conditions in Roubaix and had therefore sunk to such immoral actions. As opposed to the winners of the municipal prizes who were heralded as shining in the darkness of their conditions, these offenders predictably played out their role as villains for the imaginaries of the police, the jury, and the readers of Catholic newspapers.

‘To serve as an example’

The case of the Christ in the cabaret shows the centrality of drunkenness, irreligiosity, and broken family relations to middle-class fears about the working classes. In Mulhouse and Lyon, as well as in Roubaix, different middle-class figures and groups made attempts to tackle these fears, to varying degrees of success. In the Catholic cities of Roubaix and Lyon, religion was used as a bond across classes to form communities of common denominations. In Mulhouse, meanwhile, SOMCO used the gardens and homeownership of houses to anchor the working-class fathers to their families and make them avoid the dangers of the cabaret. Ultimately, creating good working-class houses could lead to the creation good working-class homes.

What had emerged, by the 1870s, was a clear set of hopes and fears, of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ workers in the middle-class imaginary, that were almost removed from the reality of the towns. As an epilogue, to show how far these hopes and fears were communicated to the workers, we must consider the appeals against the sentencing of Lausent and his group. The language used in these appeals shows that the plaintiffs knew how to play to the hopes and fears of their middle-class audience.

Baudour, the bearded Belgian with a well-known reputation with the *cabaretières* of Roubaix, had an appeal lodged by his wife, Lucie, on the 20 June 1874. Lucie described how her husband was deeply repentant, and how she and their three children had been plunged into the deepest distress since his imprisonment. Not only was Baudour repentant, but he was also a ‘good father and good husband, a good Catholic. He loves the Christian religion and sets a good example to our children. He is, in a word, esteemed by everyone’.¹⁵⁵ This last statement was corroborated by a petition signed by many members of the local community, including Wilfart and Baudour’s employer, M. L. Paulus *fiils*. Baudour’s wife stressed the suffering of her children and herself, and their shared religious belief, when she wrote: ‘May the tears and anguish of a mother weeping for her children touch [your] so clement and generous heart. I address earnest prayers that to Him so that he can take you to grant my husband a generous pardon’.¹⁵⁶ This appeal has a tragic note, in that we cannot tell either whether her husband’s rumoured infidelity was true, nor whether she had heard these rumours. Was Baudour having an affair with the barmaid Céline Jouret, or was this just the reactionary conclusion that the police had jumped to, knowing Baudour’s well-known reputation in the local cabarets? It is impossible to tell but, considering Lucie had to lodge a further appeal on 26 August, it is likely that his bad reputation was not shifted by her words. Here, the prejudices against Baudour and the Jouret women were too powerful to be moved by Lucie’s emotive words.

Another of the defendants, Louis Dessaux, seized on the idea that the court case had played on pre-standing poor reputations or stereotypes when he wrote his own appeal on 1 June 1874, just three weeks after he was sentenced. In this letter, Dessaux was remorseful yet also defensive. He wrote that he had been pressured into drinking with his old friends ‘by a

¹⁵⁵ AN BB/24/806, Lucie Dufranc (Baudour) to President MacMahon, 20 Jun. 1874.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

regrettable destiny' and to take part in the events that unfolded.¹⁵⁷ However, the extremity of their crime had been exaggerated, Dessaux argued, by the local newspapers such as the *Journal de Roubaix*, which had political motivations. While Dessaux did mention that the crime they committed was an 'outrage against Christ', the focus of his letter was to blame the role that drink took in the events of the night, and the fact that the seriousness of the sentence was out of proportion with the seriousness of the crime. Dessaux went further than Lucie's collection of signatures when he included a note from his employer Alfred Motte-Grimonprez to defend him. Motte, unusually progressive compared to others in his family and peer-group, reiterated the idea that Dessaux was a good worker who had made a big mistake due to the influence of alcohol. Yet, to the audience of these appeals, excusing one great crime with another vice would not shift the pre-existing stereotypes. If he was not a dangerous, anti-Catholic individual, he was still a product of the cabarets and all that entailed.

Finally, the appeal of César Lausent, the main perpetrator. Unmarried, Lausent lived with his widowed mother, and allocated a sizeable portion of his salary towards supporting her, although he also had a reputation for being hungover or drunk on Mondays.¹⁵⁸ He had no wife to write his appeal, nor did he write one himself. His widowed mother, however, wrote several during the course of 1874. In these appeals, Lausent's mother shows how, despite being neither a husband nor a father, Lausent still played his role of head of household and source of support admirably in looking after her. Though he had no children to send to school, his conduct otherwise could easily fill the criteria for the 'best kept workers' houses. His imprisonment had left her destitute. While she acknowledged that the crime that he committed was unfortunate, she stressed that it was minor, and his first offence. In a similar

¹⁵⁷ AN BB/24/806, Louis Dessaux to President MacMahon, 1 Jun. 1874.

¹⁵⁸ ADN 2 U 1/608, 'Renseignements demandés sur César Lausent', 23 Apr. 1874; AN BB/24/806, 'Ministre de Justice - Grâces et Réhabilitations, Rapport', 11 Dec. 1874.

vein to Dessaux's attack on the *Journal de Roubaix*, Lausent's mother declared that she was convinced that 'the penalty inflicted on my son was not for the gravity of the crime, but to serve as an example'.¹⁵⁹ In many ways Lausent was indeed – as his mother said – made an example of. In the same way that the crucifix was more than just the 'piece of wood' that had been advertised to Trachet, Lausent became more than just another drunken worker – in court and in the press, he was used to exemplify everything that was perceived to be threatening early 1870s Roubaix and French social harmony. Yet the appeals of a destitute mother somehow rang true to the president of the appeals in Paris. While we do not have evidence of the result of Baudour and Dessaux's appeals, it is perhaps notable that, months after the trial, Lausent's sentence was quietly reduced to eight months, after which he was released.¹⁶⁰ He had served his purpose as a symbol for the evils of working-class home-life in Roubaix, and was now free to return again to society and to save his mother from 'the great misery'.

While many newspapers that picked up the story of the Christ in the cabaret used it to show the dangers of irreligion or state of French Catholicism, coverage in the journal *l'Univers illustré* was far less serious. The article, appearing on 23 May 1874 after the trial, begun:

Four young men, four "*philosophes*" of the city of Roubaix have just appeared before the Assize Court of the North, accused of outrages against the Catholic religion. Heaven forbid we raise in this mild *chronique* a serious religious discussion about the mischief committed by imbeciles. We are inclined, indeed, to believe them more stupid than wicked... Here is what these four idiots are guilty of.¹⁶¹

Rather than signifying the 'degree of irreligion' some people had come to, or rampant drunkenness in the Roubaisian workers, this article instead reduced the four men to 'amiable brutes'; the focus was instead on how the men had been prosecuted at all in an era without

¹⁵⁹ AN BB/24/806, Veuve Lausent to President MacMahon, 8 Aug. 1874.

¹⁶⁰ 'Ministre de Justice - Grâces et Réhabilitations, Rapport'

¹⁶¹ 'Courrier du Palais - Le sacrilège de Roubaix', *L'Univers Illustré* (Paris, France), 23 May 1874, p. 331.

anti-sacrilege laws. Just as Lausent's mother would later decry in her appeals, whether the men had intended sacrilege or not, their actions were used to exemplify all the local middle-classes feared about the working-classes.

All of the fears concerning the working-class home in this chapter have focused on the social or moral failings of the working-classes. But many of the fears surrounding Lausent's trial also related to the Third Republic's political climate following the Commune of 1870-1. In the final chapter of this thesis, we will turn to the way that elites sought to reconcile political threats from the working-classes by seeking to establish a shared sense of 'home' and collective identity through emotional attachment to their cities.

CHAPTER 5: URBAN IDENTITY AND THE LIMITS OF PATERNALISM

The Mulhousian industrialist Jean Dollfus received widespread praise for his intervention into working-class housing in the form of his innovative *cités ouvrières*. This housing scheme represented an architectural, hygienic, and moral ideal for the working-class home, and reformers and industrialists throughout Europe were open in their admiration. But Jean Dollfus was not without his adversaries. An article in the 16 March 1872 edition of the Spanish socialist newspaper *L'Emancipacion* portrayed Dollfus as a cold, profit-driven industrialist, whose housing scheme was designed by the Mulhousian and his peers 'in order to make money, but in addition, with a political idea at the back of their minds'.¹ This political idea, according to the article, was:

[to increase] the number of small property owners in order to build an army for themselves against the proletariat... M. Dollfus and his colleagues sought to stifle all revolutionary spirit in their workers by selling them small dwellings to be paid for in annual instalments, and at the same time to chain the worker by this property to the factory in which they work.²

This Spanish socialist criticism of Dollfus was given a much larger audience when Frederick Engels quoted it at length in his series of essays between 22 June 1872 and 22 February 1873 on 'the housing question'.³ Engels was writing derisively about what he termed 'How Proudhon solves the housing question': namely, worker-homeownership. Engels wanted housing to help the worker, who was 'formerly chained to the land', to be transformed into 'a completely propertyless proletarian, liberated from all traditional fetters and *free as a bird*'.⁴ To denigrate the 'tearful Proudhonist' who 'bewails the driving of the workers from hearth and

¹ *La Emancipacion* (Madrid, Spain), 16 Mar. 1872, quoted in Friedrich Engels, *The Housing Question* (New York NY, 1935), p. 35.

² *Ibid.*, p. 35.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

home', Engels wrote that the only 'rational and practically applicable' example of worker-owned housing did not spring from 'the womb of revolutionary idea' but, rather, from 'the big bourgeois himself', Jean Dollfus.⁵

While the 'big bourgeois' Dollfus was inevitably painted as a moustache-twirling villain in this socialist rhetoric, the Alsatian industrialist did not deny the political implications of his housing scheme in the 1870s. As a deputy to the German Reichstag (as Mulhouse was now a German city following the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1), Jean Dollfus gave a speech in November 1878 on the subject of the Anti-Socialist Laws, the first of which had been passed the previous month. He declared that 'the best way of combatting socialism is to ameliorate the moral and physical conditions of the population... [In Mulhouse we] have tried in the first place, to make the workers in factories proprietors'.⁶ Dollfus argued that he was not seeking to create a 'small army against the proletariat' with his homeowners but, rather, to improve the condition of workers in general in Mulhouse so that socialism would not appeal. Dollfus's housing scheme was a means to pacify socio-political resistance to the established elite preemptively. In the same way that reformers praised Dollfus for the architectural, hygienic, and moral innovations of his houses, this political motivation also played a key role in the commendation from his peers. In the same year that Dollfus spoke on the Anti-Socialist Laws, the Hamburg author Julius Schultz published a book entitled: *The Mulhouse System of Workers' Housing: A Call for the Emulation of This Humane Means of Combating Socialism*.⁷

⁵ Ibid., pp. 28, 34.

⁶ E. H., 'A Speech in the Reichstag', *The Daily Graphic* (New York NY), 13 Nov. 1878.

⁷ The German title was *Das Mülhausener System der Arbeiterwohnungen : eine Anregung zur Nachahmung dieses humanen Bekämpfungsmittel des Socialismus*, referenced in Bullock and Read, *The Movement for Housing Reform*, p. 137.

This chapter considers the relationship between increasing working-class political unrest and middle-class reworking of the urban environment. Dollfus's *cités* and the focus on improving the social and moral condition of workers were just one example, but the ways that urban elites shaped and reshaped their urban environment in response to growing working-class pressure extended beyond just housing. Through considering the development of new, distinct bourgeois neighbourhoods and the redevelopment of predominantly working-class quarters, this chapter will explore whether workers were included or excluded in the elites' new view of a common municipal identity by the final decades of the nineteenth century. Rather than the ideal 'home' of the domestic interior we saw in the previous chapter, this chapter's 'home' under consideration is the larger sense of the term: a sense of communal identity and belonging tied to the wider city.

This is not to say that cities had a single homogenous identity, a single shared 'home'. As Doreen Massey has shown, in practice, places like cities or neighbourhoods can have multiple overlapping and competing identities in the same way people can, and, equally, political or religious communities in turn are rarely tied to one single place.⁸ The way Dollfus viewed his *cités ouvrières* as contributing to wider Mulhousian identity would have differed from how the inhabitants of the *cités* viewed their place in Mulhouse. Instead, this chapter is about how the conscious inclusion or exclusion of workers in space and in local government helped urban elites define and delimit their imagined community, and therefore their elite sense of their city's identity.

The first section of the chapter shows the different elite reactions to the spread of the *courées* and worker political unrest in the final third of nineteenth-century Roubaix. By the 1880s, the

⁸ Doreen Massey, 'A global sense of place', in Doreen Massey (ed.), *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 153-6.

Roubaisian elite carved out a new bourgeois quarter free from the central *courées*; but, simultaneously, this elite paid the price for their hubris of inaction regarding workers' housing when they lost control of municipal government. In 1892, Roubaix became the first major French city to be run by a socialist municipal council. The second section focuses on a similar relationship between urban development and challenges to elite political hegemony in Mulhouse. By tracking the long, difficult history behind the construction of a Catholic church for the inhabitants of the *cités ouvrières* between 1853-1883, we see how and why the Calvinist elite conceded to the increased political leverage of their Catholic workers in German Mulhouse. The final section considers a longer time frame in Lyon. In Roubaix and Mulhouse, the threat of worker political insurrection and challenges reared its head in the late 1860s and 1870s. In Lyon, the urban elite had already experienced repeated mass worker revolts a generation earlier in the form of the *canuts* (silk weaver) revolts of 1831, 1834, 1848, and 1849. During each revolt, the *canuts* used their unique knowledge of the twisting alleyways and passages in Lyon to succeed in occupying the city. This link between political insurrection and the urban environment was one of the justifications for the vast public works of the 'Haussmann of the South', Prefect Claude-Marius Vaisse, in the Second Empire. However, while his work was initially supported by local elites, eventually Vaisse's creation of long, Parisian-style boulevards was portrayed by these same elites as another infringement by the French capital into Lyon's long history of pro-decentralised identity. By the Third Republic, where in Roubaix the workers and elites were politically and spatially separated, in Lyon the *canuts* and urban features that had been associated with them in the revolts earlier in the century were now used as symbols of a shared Lyonnais political identity in opposition to Paris. The workers – or, rather, the memory of them – now played a central role in the rhetoric of a Lyonnais elites' sense of a home lost to Parisian urban forms.

Ultimately, in moving beyond the detached rhetoric of housing reform, the bricks and mortar of the working-class house, and the socio-moral confines of the ideal worker's household, this chapter shows the centrality of the workers to the construction of different local elite notions of shared municipal identities and 'homes' by the final third of the nineteenth century.

The formation and transformation of Roubaix

Between February and March 1867, Roubaisian textile employers tried to make weavers operate two looms instead of one, without matching this increased work with a commensurate wage increase.⁹ The workers reacted in mass protests, culminating in widespread industrial violence by mid-March. As one of the leading industrialists in Roubaix and owner of the 'monstrous factory', Louis Motte-Bossut authored a report to the prefect of the Nord in the aftermath of the strikes giving detail about what had happened and how he and his peers had been affected. Motte-Bossut indicated how the strikes began just after midday on 16 March, with 170 weavers at the factory of M. Desrousseaux refusing to work. In the following hours, workers at factories owned by François Roussel, Eugène Grimonprez and many others followed suit, with around 6,000 workers in total violently storming out of their factories in protest.¹⁰ The police commissioner and mayor sent increasingly frantic telegrams to the prefecture in Lille, describing 'lots of noise in the streets', barrages of rocks being thrown at the vastly-outnumbered *gendarmes*, and factory equipment being broken.¹¹ By 6pm, the municipal council was holed-up in the *mairie*, and the mayor exclaimed that 'industrialists' lives are in danger'.¹² While the prefecture eventually sent reinforcements in the

⁹ Roger Price, *People and Politics in France, 1848-1870* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 348

¹⁰ AMR 1 I 11, Louis Motte-Bossut, 'Rapport sur l'Émeute du 16 Mars 1867, à Roubaix', s.d. (1867), p. 2.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 2.

¹² Ibid., p. 3.

evening to disperse the crowds of workers, the damage was done. In his report, Motte-Bossut estimated that over 300,000 Fr. of destruction had been wreaked on the city's factories.¹³

Louis's younger brother and fellow industrialist Alfred Motte-Grimonprez had been personally attacked, though he managed to escape with only a crushed top hat to show for it.¹⁴ The former mayor Henri Delattre, who had governed the city between 1848-55 and now employed over 2,000 workers in his factory, was less fortunate as he was severely injured in the strikes and witnessed his factory being burned to the ground.¹⁵ Workers eventually returned to work on 22 March, under their old conditions.

The local press stressed the impact these strikes had on the middle-class sense of security. *L'Echo de Roubaix* described Roubaix 'shaken at the moment', with its prosperity threatened if attempts to mollify workers were unsuccessful.¹⁶ The *Journal de Roubaix*, meanwhile, reprinted an article from the national journal *France* on the Roubaisian strikes, which stated 'for most [of the workers], their *patron* is their enemy' and that discussion about working conditions was 'no longer a calm debate of what is possible: it is a fight, it is a war to conquer by force that which could not be obtained by reason'.¹⁷

While the immediate violence of 1867 dissipated, an uneasy tension between the industrialists and their workers in Roubaix remained. One industrialist sought to repair the fissures between *patron* and *ouvrier* in Roubaix by calling his fellows to make up for their failure to protect against inter-class strife. Notably, this solution did not come from a member of the long-

¹³ Ibid., pp. 3-4.

¹⁴ David M. Gordon, *Liberalism and Social Reform: Industrial Growth and Progressiste Politics in France, 1880-1914* (Westport CT, 1996), p. 33.

¹⁵ Barbier, *Le Patronat du Nord*, p. 172.

¹⁶ Alexandre Lesguillon, 'Roubaix', *L'Echo de Roubaix* (Roubaix), 24 Mar. 1867, p. 1.

¹⁷ J Cohen, 'Les Grèves violentes', *Journal de Roubaix* (Roubaix), 24 Mar. 1867, p. 1.

established Roubaisian industrial elite: it came from the Alsatian, Charles Junker.¹⁸ On the surface, Junker shared far more with the Dollfuses and Kœchlings of Mulhouse than he did with the Mottes and Delattres of Roubaix: he was a Protestant, and advocated for paternalist schemes aimed at improving of employer-employee relations. However, Junker had not been born into the elite milieu of the Dollfuses or Mottes. After working as first as a textile worker then *contre-maître* in Alsace, Junker moved to Roubaix in 1865, where he took up a role as the director of the modest Cavois-Mahieu spinning factory.¹⁹ It was because of this experience working at all levels in the factory that Junker felt able to describe himself as a ‘social intermediary’ between workers and employers.²⁰

On 1 October 1869, Junker wrote a letter to all the major manufacturers in Roubaix, outlining his vision for future worker-industrialist relations. ‘You know that in our valiant industrial city’, he wrote, ‘which has transformed all its manufacture and updated all its tools, there remains an equally useful task to accomplish, more noble than others, that of perfecting its human tools’.²¹ Junker praised the Roubaisian industrialists for their work in bringing the northern town to the rank of one of the strongest industrial cities in France. But Junker was concerned about the impact this rapid growth had on the workers who laboured in the industrialists’ factories. Referring to the 1867 strikes, Junker announced that ‘the antagonism which exists between *patrons* and workers is only the sad result of the ignorance of the latter’.²² Junker’s solution was to use paternalism, philanthropy, and education to bring instruction,

¹⁸ Stéphane Lembré, ‘« La flamme qui brûle et la flamme qui éclaire » : une expérience d’éducation ouvrière à Roubaix, 1869-1872’, *Les Études Sociales*, 159 (2014), p. 135.

¹⁹ ‘Corps législatif, Enquête parlementaire sur le régime économique (Extrait de la séance du 29 juin 1870)’, in *Bulletin de la Société d’enseignement mutuel des travailleurs de Roubaix* (Roubaix, 1873), p. 28; Lembré, ‘La flamme qui brûle’, p. 134.

²⁰ Katherine Auspitz, *The Radical Bourgeoisie: The Ligue de l’Enseignement and the Origins of the Third Republic, 1866-1885* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 92.

²¹ ‘Ch. Junker to manufacturers of Roubaix, 1 oct. 1869’, in *Bulletin de la Société d’enseignement mutuel des travailleurs de Roubaix*, p. 4.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

morality, and happiness to the workers.²³ ‘*Noblesse oblige*, gentlemen’, he finished his letter, ‘after having admired you in the speed and daring of your mechanical transformations, France must see you live up to your task in the transformation... [and] the improvement of the lot of the working class’.²⁴

This transformation and improvement would come in the form of worker education and a new popular library. The motivation for this solution may have come from the local recent strikes and unrest in the Nord, but the inspiration came from his fellow Alsatians. Junker exchanged several letters with two of Jean Dollfus’s nephews: Auguste Dollfus (president of SIM from 1864-1911), and Gustave Dollfus (one of the *associés* of *Dollfus-Mieg et C^{ie}*, and son of Daniel Dollfus-Ausset – the man responsible for introducing Henry Roberts’s work to the Mulhousian elite back in 1845). In these letters, Junker asked for details about the many paternalist schemes in Mulhouse, especially concerning education and libraries.²⁵ Junker was also in close contact with Jean Macé who had, in 1866, formed the *Ligue française de l’enseignement*, which had 18,000 members by 1869.²⁶ Macé, while Parisian by birth, had lived in Beblenheim in Alsace since Louis Napoléon’s coup in 1851, and was closely aligned with the Mulhousian fabricantocracy, having joined Mulhousian masonic lodge *La Parfaite Harmonie* in 1866.²⁷ Junker had seen the success that could be achieved by paternalist education schemes through his communication with the Dollfuses and Macé, and he sought to replicate this success in Roubaix.

²³ Ibid., pp. 5-6.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

²⁵ ‘A. Heinrich to Ch. Junker, 31 Aug 1869’, in *ibid.*, pp. 10-13; ‘A. Dollfus to Ch. Junker, 23 Oct. 1869’, in *ibid.*, p. 14.

²⁶ ‘Jean Macé to M. Junker, Président des Travailleurs de Roubaix, 18 Aug. 1869’, in *ibid.*, p. 3; Lembré, ‘La flamme qui brûle’, pp. 138-39.

²⁷ Jean-Paul Martin, ‘La Ligue de l’enseignement et la République des origines à 1914’, (PhD thesis, Institut d’Études politiques de Paris, 1992), p. 27.

The *Société d'enseignement mutuel des travailleurs de Roubaix* was officially recognised by the prefecture in February 1870, and Junker was named president on 13 March 1870.²⁸ The reception to Junker's plan by his fellow Roubaisian industrialists was tentatively enthusiastic. Junker received donations from 59 different sources by May 1870, in the form of both books and funds, varying wildly from 10 Fr. to 2,000 Fr.²⁹ Louis Cordonnier, patron of the *Cité Cordonnier* housing scheme, donated 100 Fr. in March 1870, while the municipal councillor Henry Ternynck also gave 100 Fr.³⁰ Ternynck promised that 'as soon as your company has developed even further, you will be able to appeal [again] to my generosity which will not fail you'.³¹ Support also came from local and national political figures. The prefect of the Nord donated a series of books, while the Roubaisian *député* Jules Brame subscribed 100 Fr. in March 1870, and later brought the scheme to the attention of the *corps législative* in June, which led to several Parisian donations to Junker, including from the Minister of Education.³²

Others amongst Roubaix's conservative industrial elite were more hesitant in their support. The textile merchant Louis Eeckman was so confident that the scheme would be successful that he donated a grand total of four books to the fledgling library (on the condition that he could have them returned if his sons later expressed any interest at all in reading them).³³ Pierre Motte-Motte wrote to Junker on 28 March 1870 to say that, while he approved of the moralising goal of the *Société*, he wanted more information about the practical implementation of these goals before he would commit any funds.³⁴ Similarly, while he would later donate 100

²⁸ Lembre, 'La flamme qui brûle', pp. 134-35.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 137.

³⁰ 'Louis Cordonnier to Ch. Junker, 25 Mar. 1870', in *Bulletin de la Société d'enseignement mutuel des travailleurs de Roubaix*, p. 19; 'Henry Ternynck to Ch. Junker, 17 Mar. 1870', in *ibid.*, p. 19.

³¹ Ibid., p. 19.

³² 'Corps législatif', pp. 27-28; 'Ministre de l'Instruction publique to Ch. Junker, 16 Jul. 1870', in *ibid.*, p. 29.

³³ 'L. Eeckman to Ch. Junker, 27 Apr. 1870', in *ibid.*, p. 23.

³⁴ 'Motte-Motte to Ch. Junker, 28 Mar. 1870', in *ibid.*, p. 21.

Fr. personally, Louis Motte-Bossut apologised to Junker in October 1869 that the *Chambre syndicale de Roubaix*, of which he was president, could only provide encouragement and approval, rather than financial support.³⁵

By 25 June 1870, Junker's library had around 550 books, and the *Société* ran lessons every evening of the week. Each day had a different topic: from Natural History to Arithmetic. Junker was aided in the running of these classes by MM. du Breuil and Huguenin, who were directors at the *H. Delattre père et fils*: the company whose factory had been burned in the riots of 1867.³⁶ These classes were literal evidence of a cooperation between groups who had, only three years prior, been at violent odds with one another. Auguste Dollfus wrote to Junker in May 1870, praising his early successes and using the statistics of the Mulhousian equivalent (1,102 workers signed up to classes and 6,000 library books) to encourage Junker to continue expanding the *Société*.³⁷

At first glance, it seemed as if this Alsatian-Roubaisian hybrid solution of using education to heal the socio-political divisions between worker and employer might work. Even the most hesitant industrialists like Pierre Motte-Motte and Louis Motte-Bossut seemed open to engaging with the *Société* once it had become more well-established. In addition to making the industrialists more amenable to conciliatory philanthropy, the *Société* also seemed to have a positive impact on the workers too. When violent strikes broke out once again in Roubaix in February 1871, the working-class members of Junker's *Société* were notable for seeking to stop their fellow workers from engaging in violence and in trying to restore order. Word of their

³⁵ 'Motte-Bossut to Ch. Junker, 18 Oct. 1869', in *ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁶ Lembre, 'La flamme qui brûle', pp. 142-43.

³⁷ 'Aug. Dollfus to Junker, 17 May 1870', in *Bulletin de la Société d'enseignement mutuel des travailleurs de Roubaix*, pp. 25-26.

interventions reached the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce in Paris, who told the prefect of the Nord to pass on his appreciation to Junker.³⁸

Unfortunately, the actions of this engaged minority of workers was not enough to prevent the majority of Roubaisian elites retreating to reactionary conservatism following these renewed strikes of February 1871. These local strikes, combined with the outbreak of the Paris Commune the following month, led the overwhelmingly conservative industrial elites in Roubaix to turn away from a *rapprochement* and, instead, to attack Junker. The press painted Junker and his education plan as a menace to the established social order, with articles in March and again in October 1871 smearing him as having links to the International.³⁹ Although it would not be until 1874 that the *Société* was officially shut down, in reality it ceased any meaningful activity after these attacks in 1871. Junker, who entered the municipal council in 1871 and set up his own factory in 1872, would continue to agitate for improved education and relations between employer and employee, but his dream of an independent *Société* focused on these goals had been exposed as futile in Roubaix.⁴⁰

Junker's goal and early successes had been based on the idea that, through education, he could remake the workers into acceptable bourgeois figures. Junker's dream died with the failure of his *Société*. In fact, as the 1870s drew on, the industrial and municipal elite further distanced themselves from the workers. Instead of engaging with the workers in their *courées* and inviting them to share in a communal identity based on Roubaisian prosperity, the elite sought to construct a new city identity where the workers were not invited, not present, and not

³⁸ 'Minister of Agriculture and Commerce to prefect of the Nord, 17 Apr. 1871', in *ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

³⁹ Lembré, 'La flamme qui brûle', pp. 144-5.

⁴⁰ Danielle Delmaire, 'Le christianisme social dans le Nord entre 1860-1914 : éléments de recherche', *Revue de du Nord*, 73, 290-291 (1991), pp. 332, 334.

welcome. This came in the form of the construction of the new bourgeois suburb to the south-west of the city in the 1870s and 1880s.

These early decades of the Third Republic witnessed the creation of a vast new park to the south-west of Roubaix (the *Parc Barbioux*, 1879), around which the industrial elite sought to construct new apartment blocks, free from the vast factories and choking *courées* of the city centre.⁴¹ Although several individual architects executed the work on this quarter, one figure stands out as the main creative force in this development – Edouard Dupire-Rozan (1842-1901). He and his peers built mansions for a multitude of elite families, and their unity of design lent this new quarter a distinct sense of identity that was separate to the industrial city centre. By the late 1880s, they had built an entirely new suburban quarter.

Dupire-Rozan's new Roubaisian quarter is at once reminiscent of three separate scales of activity: first, of similar processes of middle-class 'suburbanization' in nineteenth century industrial cities in general; second, of Parisian 'Haussmannized' boulevards and uniform building frontages; third, of a distinctly historic and regional architectural style, used to express local pride.

In the first instance, the suburbanization of Roubaix's industrial elite appears very similar to the tendency for other urban middle class groups in nineteenth-century industrial cities to move out from the city centre. Urban historians like Simon Gunn have covered the British experience of this 'spatial differentiation', whereby, by the end of the nineteenth century, cities had distinct, dense slum areas and airy middle-class suburbs.⁴² Using the example of Leeds,

⁴¹ Georges Franchomme, 'L'évolution démographique et économique de Roubaix dans le dernier tiers du XIXe siècle', *Revue du Nord*, 51, 201 (1969), pp. 214-15.

⁴² Simon Gunn, 'Class, identity and the urban: the middle class in England, c. 1790-1950', *Urban History*, 31, 1 (2004), p. 37.

Gunn shows how the middle classes abandoned the ‘old jumbled co-existence’ and embarked on ‘a great trek outwards’, away from the ‘the filth and stench of industry’, seeking to create a ‘different way of life’ in the suburbs; a way of life that would not have to be shared with the working classes.⁴³ As this process of spatial detachment took place, Gunn continues, a new genre of ‘street philosophy’ in the mid-nineteenth-century local press reinforced the idea that ‘the identity of collective groups, whether ‘slum-dwellers’ or ‘suburbanites’, was defined by their urban environment’.⁴⁴ This meant that, as the middle-classes moved away from the ‘jumbled’ spatial proximity to the workers in city centres and physically constructed new suburban neighbourhoods, they were simultaneously – consciously or unconsciously – also constructing and consolidating a distinct urban identity tied to this new, worker-less space.

This process was evidently present in Roubaix, especially with regard to the role that the middle class press played in aligning urban space and urban identity. We have already seen how press coverage of cabarets sought to affiliate distinctly working-class urban spaces with degeneracy and debauchery. As the factory and working-class *courée* were both directly integrated to the urban fabric of Roubaix, with alleyway houses clogging the arteries of all major quarters with little or no distinction, the whole of Roubaix seemed an immeasurable slum by the 1860s. In the 1 December 1863 edition of *l’Echo de Roubaix*, the editor wrote that Roubaix might rightly be known as ‘the French Manchester’ because of its strength of industry, but that the city was now ‘only a vast factory’. ‘When the machine ceases to function’, he continued, ‘the active Roubaix no longer exists... [it] is now only a body without a soul’.⁴⁵ Through the retreat to the new suburb in the 1870s and 1880s, the Roubaisian elite

⁴³ Simon Gunn and Rachel Bell, *Middle Classes: Their Rise and Sprawl* (London, 2002), pp. 30-1.

⁴⁴ Gunn, ‘Class, identity and the urban’, p. 37.

⁴⁵ Alexandre Lesguillon, ‘Roubaix’, *L’Echo de Roubaix* (Roubaix), 1 Dec. 1863, 1.

sought to salvage and reconstruct a new bourgeois identity and pride that consciously omitted the workers and the *courées*.

Although sharing features with the British experience of suburbanization, Dupire-Rozan's quarter was also distinctly French, in its links to Haussmann's Paris. In the 7 June 1868 edition of *L'Echo de Roubaix*, a 'French Roubaisian' (*Un Franc Roubaisien*) wrote a two-page article titled 'The Roubaisians who ask for a Haussmann' (*Les Roubaisiens qui demandent un Haussmann*).⁴⁶ This author praised the industrialists for their work in elevating the prestige and status of Roubaix through industry, but argued that this focus on industrial progress had meant that the elite had 'neglected public affairs, in terms not of the *transformation* but of the *formation* of the city' [emphasis mine]. The young city had been crowded and choked by factories and *courées*, and needed an urban surgeon, similar to the Baron Haussmann in Paris, to bring aesthetic beauty and green spaces to the city, so as to return 'the complexion we are losing in our smoky workshops'.

When Dupire-Rozan and his colleagues built the new quarter, they did so based on long, wide boulevards, with a unity of design, and a focus on the green space of the new *Parc Barbioux*. When, at the end of the twentieth century, the French Ministry of Culture designated a row of Dupire-Rozan's houses on the *Boulevard de Paris* (now *Boulevard du Général-de-Gaulle*) as a historical monument, the accompanying justification asserted that '[t]his succession of buildings reflects the homogeneity of this type of urban housing, intended for large bourgeois and industrial families'.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Un Franc Roubaisien, 'Les Roubaisiens qui demandent un Haussmann', *L'Echo de Roubaix* (Roubaix), 7 Jun. 1868, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁷ 'PA59000028: 56 boulevard du Général-de-Gaulle' (13 Oct. 2015), http://www.culture.gouv.fr/public/mistral/merimee_fr?ACTION=CHERCHER&FIELD_1=REF&VALUE_1=PA59000028, accessed 6 Nov. 2017

While obviously sharing similar features with wider middle-class suburbanization and the Parisian boulevards, this new quarter was also a way to re-establish Roubaix's cultural standing in the Nord, as part of the long-fought struggle to step out from Lille's shadow. The buildings were mostly constructed in a distinctive red brick with decorative stone features, while the limited neo-classical columns and pediments were more than matched by gothic and Renaissance features, in keeping with regional traditions that held strong against Parisian fashions and preference for Italianate architecture over the preceding centuries.⁴⁸ Simultaneously, this quarter referenced a Lillois architectural heritage while also emphasising the cultural maturity of the Roubaisian elite.

When the Lille-based *Société des architectes du département du Nord* visited Roubaix for the first time in May 1882, they confirmed Dupire-Rozan's success in elevating local bourgeois pride through the new quarter.⁴⁹ Given a tour of the area by Dupire-Rozan, the predominantly Lillois architects marvelled to find their eyes 'dazzled by this luxury, this comfort, which we did not expect to find so widespread... [only] a few kilometres from our offices'.⁵⁰ Five years later, in July 1887, the society made another summer excursion to see how the area had developed. A. Liagré, the *Société's* reporter on this occasion, noted that 'the *Boulevard de Paris*, almost entirely built during the last ten years, presents a magnificent view of *hôtels* and mansions, all with an original character'.⁵¹ The group was impressed by 'several beautiful façades' on this road, stopping briefly outside one of Dupire-Rozan's buildings and noting

⁴⁸ Paul Parent, 'Les caractères régionaux de l'architecture dans le Nord de la France (Flandre et Artois)', *Revue du Nord*, 13, 49 (1927), pp. 40-43.

⁴⁹ 'Assemblée générale ordinaire du 8 juillet 1882', *Bulletin de la Société des Architectes du Département du Nord* (Lille, France), 1883, p. 53.

⁵⁰ 'Assemblée générale ordinaire du 3 juin 1882', *Bulletin de la Société des Architectes du Département du Nord* (Lille, France), 1883, pp. 50-51.

⁵¹ A Liagré, 'Compte-rendu de l'excursion à Roubaix', *Bulletin de la Société régionale des Architectes du Département du Nord* (Lille, France), 1888, pp. 65-66.

that 'it presents a monumental aspect, the effect is imposing, it is indeed the sumptuous dwelling of a rich industrialist'.⁵²

In Dupire-Rozan and his colleagues, Roubaix seemed to have found its Haussmann, its solution to overcome the image of being just a vast, ugly factory, and the promise of stepping out from underneath Lille's cultural shadow. Liagré, speaking for the Lillois society, concluded that after visiting this area of the city that 'we are allowed to say that Roubaix will soon be as famous for the wealth and beauty of its dwellings as for its industry and commerce'.⁵³ However, the work of Dupire-Rozan was not bourgeois beautification of an existing city centre; it was a new, beautiful bourgeois quarter, located at distance from the concentration of working-class *courées* in the centre of Roubaix. Rather than adopting an approach like that of Charles Junker, who would have reconciled the socio-political gulf between worker and employer who shared the same urban environment, Dupire-Rozan's new quarter merely added an urban spatial divide to the social, economic, and political divides that already existed between the classes.

In moving to beautiful buildings in the suburbs, the industrial elite delineated a new Roubaisian bourgeois urban identity in which the workers, with their *courées* and *cabarets*, were not present, and not welcome. Ironically, working contemporaneously to this spatial retreat, the political identity of Roubaix was shifting in favour of the workers. Another strike in 1880 saw almost 60 percent of the workforce put down tools in demand of wage increases.⁵⁴ In the years that followed, worker support for socialism grew in Roubaix, with socialists seizing

⁵² Ibid., pp. 67-8.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 65.

⁵⁴ Gordon, *Liberalism and Social Reform*, p. 37.

positions on the municipal council.⁵⁵ This political sea-change culminated in 1892, when Roubaix became the first major French city to elect a socialist municipal government.⁵⁶ All 36 city council seats went to members of the *Parti Ouvrier Français*, who united around the former weaver, *cabaretier*, and now mayor Henri Carette.⁵⁷ If there was any symbol more potent of the culmination of industrialists' fears of workers and the cabarets on the one hand and their lack of action to combat them on the other, Carette was it. The new reputation of Roubaix as a 'citadel of socialism' led to the socialist Jules Guesde to choose the city as the base for his successful campaign to be elected to the Chamber of Deputies in 1893.⁵⁸

By the final decade of the century, the 'vast factory' of Roubaix was now best-known as the beacon of socialist municipal government. Ironically, in seeking to escape the presence of the workers in the *courées* of the old municipal centre, the elites inadvertently removed themselves from the head of Roubaix municipal governance. The workers who belonged to Junker's short-lived *Société* and had crossed class lines to attempt to stop industrial violence in the early 1870s had been abandoned with the Roubaisian elite's retreat from conciliation and, as a result, this elite lost control of their city by the early 1890s.

⁵⁵ Jean-Numa Ducange, *Jules Guesde: L'anti-Jaurès?* (Paris, 2017), p. 71; Reardon, 'Belgian and French workers in nineteenth-century Roubaix', pp. 170, 179.

⁵⁶ Rémi Lefebvre, '«Le conseil des buveurs de bière» de Roubaix (1892-1902). Subversion et apprentissage des règles du jeu institutionnel', *Politix*, 14, 53 (2001), p. 94. Roubaix was the largest of 23 French municipalities where Guesdist socialists won a majority in 1892. Joan Wallach Scott, 'Social history and the history of socialism: French socialist municipalities in the 1890's', *Le Mouvement social*, 111, (1980), pp. 145-53.

⁵⁷ Gordon, *Liberalism and Social Reform*, p. 31.

⁵⁸ Ducange, *Jules Guesde*, pp. 70-2.

Catholic churches in a Calvinist city

The Mulhousian *Société industrielle*, with its work on employer-employee relations, cast a long shadow, and Charles Junker was not the first Roubaisian to look to Alsace for inspiration.⁵⁹ But Mulhousian paternalism was not without its limits. By analysing the contrast in attitudes towards building a Catholic church in the *cités ouvrières* before and after the Prussian annexation in 1870-1, we can explore the interplay between the Mulhousian municipal elites, the paternalist hegemony of SOMCO, and the growing weight that Catholic workers' voices and demands carried. When Jean Dollfus finally relented in the late 1870s and gave permission for a church to be built in his *cités*, this gesture was emblematic of not only the demographic shift in Mulhouse throughout the century, but also of the waning political omnipotence of the Calvinist elite.

From the conception of SOMCO, Jean Dollfus and his architect Émile Muller designed the *cités ouvrières* to be both a new, separate community as well as an organic expansion of Mulhouse. On the one hand the *cités* were constructed close to pre-existing factories in Dornach, just north of Mulhouse. The style of houses was influenced by an Alsatian rural vernacular.⁶⁰ Additionally, as we saw in Chapter 2, the street names were designed to tie to a wider Mulhousian municipal identity: to recall ancient elite families (*Rue Kœchlin*, *Rue Dollfus*), to emphasise the centrality of the textile industry (*Rue des Imprimeurs*, *Rue Calicot*), and to assert Mulhouse's leading role in modern French science through references to notable French politicians and scientists (*Rue Napoléon*, *Rue Lavoisier*, *Rue Thénard*).⁶¹ On the other hand,

⁵⁹ See Louis Motte-Bossut's visit to Mulhouse in 1858 and subsequent interest in workers' housing (Chapter 2), and the architect Godey from the Roubaisian CLI holding up the Mulhousian *cités ouvrières* as the best example of workers' housing in 1866 France (Chapter 3).

⁶⁰ Jonas, 'Les villages ouvriers et Mulhouse, 1830-1930', pp. 24-5.

⁶¹ 'Plan de la cité ouvrière de Mulhouse'

however, the *cités ouvrières* were far more than a collection of houses intended to expand the city of Mulhouse. Within the *cités* were public baths and washhouses, a subsidised restaurant and *boulangerie*, a public library, and Dollfus and his colleagues founded the school where classes were put on in the evening for workers to attend which Junker admired so much in Roubaix.⁶² SOMCO had designed a workers' town that was one that tied to the Mulhouse of the Dollfuses and Kœchlin and, at the same time, catered to everything the workers should need in a convenient and local neighbourhood.

This notion of what 'everything the workers should need' was one dictated by the industrial elite who designed the *cités*, and one aimed at improving the behaviour of the workers who lived there. As have seen, one of the focuses of the *cités* was on keeping workers out of the drinking halls, and the *cités ouvrières* were shaped to reflect this Mulhousian bourgeois notion of leisure and sociability that placed sobriety and homemaking at the heart of how workers should be spending their time beyond the factory: as a result, SOMCO did not include any drinking establishments in their *cités*. A more striking omission from the *cités ouvrières* than that of a cabaret or brasserie – an omission that betrayed distinctly local divisions in terms of identity between patrons and workers in Mulhouse rather than more commonly-held elite fears of worker drinking in France – was the decision not to include a church to serve the spiritual needs of the overwhelmingly Catholic population. Unlike Camille Rambaud's housing scheme in Lyon, which placed a Catholic church quite literally at the centre from its beginning in 1856, it would be almost thirty years before a Catholic church was finally built in the Mulhousian *cités*. In 1853, when Jean Dollfus founded SOMCO and the work was begun on the initial stage of the *cités ouvrières*, the 20,000-strong, predominantly working-class group of Catholics in Mulhouse were only served by one Catholic church: the thirteenth-century

⁶² Ott, *La Société industrielle de Mulhouse, 1826-1876*, pp. 480-4.

Franciscan church of Saint-Marie in the centre of town (fig. 5.2).⁶³ The next thirty years witnessed repeated struggles by this every-growing Catholic population to have a Catholic church built in the working-class northern quarter of the city.

Catholics in pre-Second Empire Mulhouse were, according to David Tournier, ‘without representation, without possible cohesion, without substantial financial resources, [and] without municipal support’.⁶⁴ Even the isolated examples of middle-class Catholics who managed to break into the social milieu of the Calvinist municipal elite were usually not Mulhousian by birth, and were accepted by their peers because of technical expertise or even by making concessions on their faith. Dominique “Adolphe” Bazaine, for example, was a Catholic, Versailles-born engineer who was appointed to the Haut-Rhin to oversee railway construction. Whilst there, he served as a municipal council member in Mulhouse between 1837-42, becoming close family friends with the cousins André and Nicolas Kœchlin, mayor of Mulhouse and deputy of the Haut-Rhin respectively. He eventually chose to baptise and raise his children as Protestants.⁶⁵ The chemist, doctor, and social investigator Achille Penot – whose statistical surveys had been of central importance to Villermé when the hygienist visited Mulhouse in the 1830s – was another notable Catholic who rose to prominence in the Mulhousian elite milieu. Born in Nîmes in 1801, Penot’s eventually became a ‘lynchpin’ of the SIM, serving as vice-president of between 1852-71.⁶⁶ It was also through Penot, and his prominent position for a Catholic in the *Société*, that SIM were able to establish and maintain

⁶³ David Tournier, 'La construction des deux Saint-Etienne. Un catalyseur des crispations interconfessionnelles à Mulhouse (1830-1866)', *Revue d'Alsace*, 136 (2010), p. 72.

⁶⁴ David Tournier, 'Salut par les oeuvres et cohabitation confessionnelle. De l'initiative charitable individuelle à l'organisation ségrégée du contrôle des âmes (Mulhouse, 1798-1870)', *Histoire, Économie & société*, 35, 3 (2016), p. 67.

⁶⁵ Maurice Baumont, *Bazaine: les secrets d'un maréchal, (1811-1888)* (Paris, 1978), pp. 34-7; Tournier, 'Salut par les oeuvres', pp. 66-7.

⁶⁶ Nicolas Stoskopf, *Université de Haute-Alsace : la longue histoire d'une jeune université* (Strasbourg, 2005), p. 3; Hau and Stoskopf, *Les Dynasties alsaciennes*, p. 87.

links with Catholic social reform movements in France and Belgium.⁶⁷ Penot was an outlier, however, and the municipal and industrial power in Mulhouse remained overwhelmingly with the established Calvinist families.

Because of the lack of political representation for Catholics in Mulhouse, plans for a second Catholic church were repeatedly delayed or given low priority by the municipal council in the first half of the century, with a plan to build one as early as 1830 abandoned just three years later.⁶⁸ In May 1850, a committee of Catholics in Mulhouse published a list of subscriptions they had gathered for a new church, totalling 109,403 Fr., 53 c.⁶⁹ Workers had banded together to make collective donations: workers at Jean Dollfus's DMC donated 286 Fr., 45 c.; those at *M. Charles Naegely et C^{ie}* collected 991 Fr., 10c. Showing awareness of the popular support for a new church, industrial elites and their firms also committed funds towards this church.⁷⁰ The issue of a new Catholic church was not high on the list of priorities of the municipal council, but evidently had popular support from workers. After numerous petitions like these from the Catholic inhabitants of the town, the municipal council finally constructed the second Catholic church, Saint-Etienne, which was built between 1855-60 to the south-west of the old medieval centre (fig. 5.2).⁷¹

At the same time, the Mulhousian municipality supported the reconstruction of the old Protestant church (confusingly also named Saint-Etienne) in the town centre between 1858-66

⁶⁷ Jonas, *Cités ouvrières*, pp. 49-50.

⁶⁸ The mayor André Kœchlin had donated a plot of land in 1830 for a new church, but changed his mind in 1833 when he decided a school should be built there instead. Tournier, 'La construction des deux Saint-Etienne', pp. 71-4.

⁶⁹ Prefect of Aisne to Minister for Agriculture and Commerce.

⁷⁰ For example, Jean Dollfus's *Dollfus-Mieg et Cie* donated 4,000 Fr.; *André Kœchlin et Cie* donated 6,000 F.; Dr Achille Penot donated 500 Fr. Ibid.

⁷¹ AMM M2 Aa 1, Letter to the mayor of Mulhouse arguing for a new church, 21 Dec 1846; AMM M2 Aa 8, Plan for a new church, 21 Nov. 1851.

(fig. 5.2).⁷² There was a paradox inherent to the construction of this church: Calvinism was central to Mulhousian elites' identity yet, in seeking to construct a new church to reflect this identity in the 1860s, the elite eschewed the typical sparse functionality of Calvinist churches, instead building one with 'ostentatious luxury... disagreeing with the austerity' of their denomination.⁷³

Not wishing to be seen to privilege one scheme over another, the municipal council insisted on allocating equal amounts of public funds to each project. This decision, motivated on the surface by equity, opened the door for donations to top up the costs of construction, which inevitably privileged the reconstruction of the Protestant temple over the founding of the second Catholic church in Mulhouse. Unsurprisingly, the Calvinist elite of Mulhouse were more generous in their support of the church that reflected their faith than they were in donating to the funds for a Catholic church. Elite donations eventually totalled 106,000 Fr. for the construction of an entirely new Catholic church; for the reconstruction of the old Protestant church, they reached 400,000 Fr.⁷⁴ This disparity shows that, while it was prudent to show support for a scheme that would benefit their workers, the Calvinist Mulhousian elite found it more attractive to support a scheme that would benefit themselves. Small to medium donations played a large role in forcing through the construction of this second Catholic church over thirty years; its Protestant namesake was rebuilt in a much shorter timescale, with much greater generosity from the predominantly Protestant industrialists of the town.

Both these churches reflected a spatial fixation on the part of the municipal elite with the old, medieval centre of Mulhouse: a fixation that did not reflect the realities of the distribution of

⁷² Tournier, 'La construction des deux Saint-Etienne', pp. 86-9.

⁷³ Tournier, 'Salut par les oeuvres', p. 68.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 69.

workers in the growing industrial city. This is in direct contrast to what we saw in Roubaix. In Roubaix, the concentration of *courées* and factories throughout the centre of the city led to the industrial elite retreating to a new, bourgeois quarter in the 1870s. In Mulhouse, the medieval centre around the Protestant Saint-Etienne symbolised the centuries of municipal independence that the Calvinist elite had enjoyed prior to the ‘reunion’ of 1798. By rejuvenating the church at the centre of this, the Mulhousian elite were re-establishing their link to this bygone age. Simultaneously, with the construction of the neo-classical *Nouveau Quartier* – containing the building of SIM, the *bourse*, the chamber of commerce, and bourgeois apartments – to the south of this medieval centre in the 1820s, Mulhouse’s elite had already stepped away from a centre that was becoming overpopulated.⁷⁵ The elite’s focus was either on the old medieval centre or on their self-fashioned, bourgeois south from the 1820s. The part of the city which was not considered in the building of either Saint-Etienne, however, was the rapidly-industrialising north. With the constant expansion of the textile factories in Dornach and the foundation of SOMCO in 1853, a whole new, exclusively working-class quarter was developing to the north of the town (fig. 5.1). Inhabitants of the *cités* were quick to petition the head of SOMCO, Jean Dollfus, with requests for a Catholic church exclusively for this working-class district, to stand alongside the other public provisions included in the scheme.

In October 1858, Louis Gaeng wrote one of these requests to Dollfus. Gaeng lived on a house on the *Rue Napoléon*, and was a teacher at the workers’ school that would later serve as an inspiration for Charles Junker in Roubaix. He was one of the 72 individuals who had started making payments towards owning his house by 17 April 1856 and, like the majority of

⁷⁵ Hau, *L’Industrialisation de l’Alsace (1803-1939)*, p. 418; Florence Bourillon, *Les Villes en France au XIX siècle* (Paris, 1992), p. 88; Ott, *La Société industrielle de Mulhouse, 1826-1876*, p. 101; Hau and Stoskopf, *Les Dynasties alsaciennes*, p. 184.

his working-class neighbours, Gaeng was a Catholic.⁷⁶ He began his letter by thanking Dollfus for the ‘great benefits’ that he had already given to the working classes of Mulhouse:

[T]he names of Dollfus and of Kœchlin will remain forever in the memory of all the workers of Mulhouse. You have given them, Monsieur, public baths and wash-houses, established a beautiful promenade and finally built healthy and pleasant housing. The *cités ouvrières* will eternally repeat the names of their creators.⁷⁷

And yet, as Gaeng went on to note, the one thing that the workers of the *cités ouvrières* lacked was a church ‘where we would be able to pray to the Holy One for your temporal and spiritual happiness and that of all of your respectable family, Monsieur, and [for] the prosperity of Mulhouse’. Gaeng finely balanced these sycophantic reminders of Dollfus’s past personal generosity to the workers with a pressing insistence on the need for a new church for the good of Mulhouse as a whole. It is telling that, while he used ‘*église*’ for the most part in his letter when talking about what was needed, when Gaeng reflected on the wider impact of a new church, he wrote that the provision of a ‘*temple*’ would allow the inhabitants of the *cités ouvrières* to become ‘better Christians and better citizens’. The choice to use ‘*temple*’ here, a word used in French to refer to Protestant ecclesiastic buildings rather than to Catholic buildings, must surely have been chosen for the impact it would have had on its Calvinist reader and, perhaps, as an attempt to tie this proposed building into the wider municipal denominational identity. Although the building that Gaeng wanted was a Catholic church for a parish of nearly ten thousand workers in the *cités ouvrières* and surrounding working-class neighbourhoods, his use of Protestant ecclesiastic vocabulary may have been a call to make the *cités* and their inhabitants feel more closely aligned with the wider community of the Mulhouse of the Dollfuses and Kœchlins.

⁷⁶ ‘État: locataires et acheteurs’; ‘Société mulhousienne des cités ouvrières : Grande Livre, 1862-66’.

⁷⁷ ADHR 1 Z 504, Louis Gaeng to Jean Dollfus, 26 Oct. 1858.

The timing of Gaeng's petition is important. Work had just begun on both Saint-Etiennes in the city centre and Gaeng believed that the impending demolition and reconstruction of the Protestant Saint-Etienne offered a perfect opportunity. Although there was soon to be a second Catholic church in the town, Gaeng wrote in a later petition to the sub-prefect of the Haut-Rhin, a town with such a large Catholic population surely required at least three churches.⁷⁸ The solution Gaeng proposed was that, if the old Saint-Etienne was about to be demolished, why not then save money by rebuilding it in the *cités* instead of in the centre? The denominational difference that this change of location would have necessitated does not seem to have been an issue for Gaeng. He was convinced that the government would willingly provide funds for a priest, and he had already begun soliciting support from his fellow workers to help decorate the new church. The construction of a Catholic church by Protestant industrialists even had recent local precedent, Gaeng concluded. In Wesserling, around twenty miles north-west of Mulhouse, industrialists had built the church of Saint-Philippe-Saint-Jacques between 1854-6 for their workers.⁷⁹ The name of this church reflected the two forenames of the industrialists responsible for the foundation. While Gaeng did not stress this in his letter, it is safe to assume he would have proposed a similar way to commemorate Jean Dollfus had his petition been successful.

Though his petition was did not have the outcome he would have wanted, Gaeng's letters to Dollfus and to the departmental authorities are important examples of the ties between Dollfus and his *cités*, and the independence of the new workers' quarter compared to the older city. Gaeng wrote to a man who belonged to a family that was one of the oldest and most established in Mulhouse, but who did not personally hold municipal office; instead, he was

⁷⁸ ADHR 1 Z 504, Louis Gaeng to sub-prefect of Haut-Rhin, 10 Nov. 1858.

⁷⁹ 'IA68003096: église paroissiale Saint-Philippe-Saint-Jacques' (5 Sep. 2015), http://www.culture.gouv.fr/public/mistral/merimee_fr?ACTION=CHERCHER&FIELD_1=REF&VALUE_1=IA68003096, accessed 6 Nov. 2017.

head of a textile factory and pioneer of this housing scheme. Gaeng may have suggested the reconstruction of Saint-Etienne as an opportunity for a new church for the *cités* but, by addressing Dollfus directly, he was considering local issues for the inhabitants of the *cités* as separate from those of Mulhouse as a wider city, and envisaged the construction of a church as an extension of past paternal generosity. With Gaeng's failure, later petitioners took a different approach by instead treating the *cités* as part of a wider Mulhouse, and the needs of its inhabitants as a wider Mulhousian concern.

In May 1863, a group of locals from the *cités ouvrières* and the neighbouring *Rue Franklin* to the south wrote to both the sub-prefect and the mayor, Joseph Kœchlin-Schlumberger. In these letters, they informed the officials of their intention to form a society to build a church on the *Rue Franklin* that would be able to serve the now fourteen-thousand strong Catholic population of the north of Mulhouse, and they wanted municipal support.⁸⁰ Like Gaeng, this group drew attention to other nearby Alsatian towns where conditions were more favourable. However, unlike Gaeng's example of an isolated, industrialist-constructed church in Wesserling, this group focused on the largest city in Alsace when they noted that in Strasbourg, where there was a similar population of Catholics, there were no fewer than ten Catholic parish churches.⁸¹

The fact that this renewed pressure of 1863 for a church was directed at the municipal council itself rather than SOMCO or Dollfus was reflected in the tone of the letters as well. Where Gaeng sought to massage the ego of the paternalist Dollfus and emphasised the role of a church for the *cités* alongside facilities like the public baths, these letters instead stressed the

⁸⁰ ADHR 1 Z 504, Letter to sub-prefect of Haut-Rhin, 20 May 1863; ADHR 1 Z 504, Letter to Joseph Kœchlin-Schlumberger, 20 May 1863.

⁸¹ Letter to Joseph Kœchlin-Schlumberger.

quantifiable difficulties that were caused by the municipality's failure to provide a church in the north of the town considering the concentration of Catholics there – both in the *cités* and nearby.

Despite this different tactic, this group had the same frustrations as Gaeng. Mayor Kœchlin-Schlumberger rejected their request on 2 September 1863. His defence noted 'the considerable expenses made by the town to satisfy the needs of the Catholic religion', including the recent construction of the Catholic Saint-Etienne.⁸² Here, the *cités ouvrières* were just treated as a part of the wider town, rather than a distinct community with their own needs. This refusal did not deter the group, who sent another letter to Kœchlin-Schlumberger in reply, writing that 'for inhabitants of our suburbs and of the *cités ouvrières*, it takes at least a quarter of an hour... [or] half an hour for others to go to the churches'.⁸³ This was often a wasted journey, argued the writer, as the two churches in the centre of Mulhouse were 'scarcely able to contain six thousand, while twenty-five thousand want to enter'. This letter reflects the curious conditions of the *cités ouvrières*: at once both an extension of the town and the remit of the municipal council but, at the same time, a distinct local community with specific needs, in a new part of the old Calvinist city.

One of the explanations as to why the municipality made no efforts to consider building a third Catholic church was because of the remarkable political calm of Mulhouse. After a series of strikes in the years around 1848, and a few again during the economic impact of the American Civil War in the early 1860s, Mulhouse's political atmosphere throughout the Second Empire was far more stable than other textile towns – in part, due to the myriad

⁸² AMM M2 Ac 1, Kœchlin-Schlumberger to church petitioners, 2 Sep. 1863.

⁸³ AMM M2 Ac 1, Church petitioners to Kœchlin-Schlumberger, 23 Sep. 1863.

philanthropic activities of SIM and SOMCO.⁸⁴ The municipal council lacked sufficient urgency to bend to the will of the Catholic inhabitants, whose demands were not met with accompanying unrest. This complacency would be exposed as hubris in the final years of the Second Empire as the mayor, Jean Dollfus himself from November 1863, saw his failure to mollify Catholic workers contribute to an electoral disaster in 1869.

After the death of Joseph Kœchlin-Schlumberger in October 1863, Jean Dollfus was elected mayor of Mulhouse. Dollfus was not long in office before he was petitioned to reconsider both his and the municipality's stance on a church for the *cités*. The letter he received on 3 December 1864 came from the *curé* Joseph Uhlmann.⁸⁵ Uhlmann built on the 1863 group's use of statistics to make his case, with parts of the letter being reminiscent of the reports from municipal *commissions des logements insalubres*. He estimated that there were 55,000 Catholics in the town and surrounding area, 33,000 of whom were willing and able to go to church. Assuming a maximum of six persons per square metre, Uhlmann went on, the two existing churches in Mulhouse could contain no more than 4,600 at once.⁸⁶ Even if the two churches ran double the number of services and masses, there remained around 15,000 inhabitants who had nowhere to go. This figure approximated the number of Catholics who lived in and around the *cités* in the north of the town. This reasoned, quantifiable argument from a member of the clergy contrasts to Gaeng's earlier appeals to compassion. With Dollfus now serving as mayor, calls to emotions and to industrial paternalism were replaced by rational language stressing the need – not the want – for a church. This was a tangible and urgent issue faced by the community of Catholics in the north of Mulhouse, rather than just a request

⁸⁴ Leuilliot, 'Le monde ouvrier et les deux sociétés', p. 220; Thomas A. Sancton, 'The myth of French worker support for the North in the American Civil War', *French Historical Studies*, 11, 1 (1979), pp. 66-7; Borghese, 'Industrialist paternalism', pp. 55-84.

⁸⁵ AMM M2 Ac 1, *Curé* Uhlmann to Jean Dollfus, 3 Dec. 1864.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

from a group of workers that had already benefited for years from Dollfus's other paternalist schemes.

Dollfus made no serious attempts to use his new position as mayor to bow to these requests, until it was too late. In the election campaign of 1869 for election as deputy of the Haut-Rhin, Jean Dollfus stood as the government-supported candidate.⁸⁷ Despite Dollfus's long history as a leading industrialist and municipal servant in Mulhouse, his peers were split in their support. The issue of Jean Dollfus's instrumental role in the passage of the Cobden-Chevalier free trade treaty of 1860 between Britain and France was a crucial dividing point. He was opposed by his nephew, Albert Tachard, around whom protectionists like SIM's president Auguste Dollfus flocked in support.⁸⁸ Dollfus could also not rely on the support of rural voters, who resented the mayor's recent policies towards razing the nearby Harth forests.⁸⁹

All of a sudden, the political opinions and support from Catholic workers played a much more important role for Dollfus. With no guaranteed majority from either his peers or from the rural electorate, Dollfus might have hoped that his years of paternalism would lead to mass worker support. However, while the bourgeois newspaper *L'Industriel Alsacien* threw its support behind Dollfus, there was a virulent pamphlet campaign in both French and German that sought to turn worker votes against him.⁹⁰ This campaign came not from the workers themselves but, rather, from the petit-bourgeois merchants and artisans whose *boulangeries* and

⁸⁷ Fox, 'Presidential address', p. 160.

⁸⁸ Tachard's father had married a sister of André Kœchlin, who was himself brother-in-law to Jean Dollfus. André Brandt and Paul Leuilliot, 'Les élections à Mulhouse en 1869', *Revue d'Alsace*, 100, (1960), pp. 108-9; Dan P. Silverman, 'The economic consequences of annexation: Alsace-Lorraine and Imperial Germany, 1871-1918', *Central European History*, 4, 1 (1971), p. 40.

⁸⁹ Paul Leuilliot, 'Politique et religion : les élections alsaciennes de 1869', *Revue d'Alsace*, 101, (1961), p. 94.

⁹⁰ Brandt and Leuilliot, 'Les élections à Mulhouse', p. 112.

restaurants had been challenged by the subsidised equivalents in Dollfus's *cités ouvrières*. One of these pamphlets called Dollfus '*le Dictateur-fleur*' and claimed his 'beautiful words' expressing love for the workers was merely a mask to cover his true intention: 'to arrive simply and noiselessly at a second feudalism'.⁹¹ Notably, the author of the pamphlet derided Dollfus's supposed promise of a Catholic church for the inhabitants of the *cités ouvrières*, claiming sarcastically that it was 'public notoriety' that Dollfus also planned to erect a large wall to encircle the entire quarter and place inside a 'vast brothel (for love... [sic] of the workers)'.⁹²

Dollfus held a public meeting in the *sale d'asiles* of the *cités ouvrières* on 16 May 1869, where he desperately regaled the assembled thousand workers with his manifesto as well as his past paternal provisions as mayor and president of SOMCO. He was applauded, but a group of Tachard supporters then heckled him, leading to arguments between Dollfus and the group that ended the meeting on a sour note.⁹³

When the results of the election came out on 25 May, it was evident that Dollfus had been soundly defeated. Of the 21,997 who voted (representing three-quarters of the electorate), Dollfus received just 6,428 votes to Tachard's 15,307; in the predominantly Catholic Mulhouse-Nord district, where the *cités ouvrières* were situated, Dollfus was outvoted by over two-to-one.⁹⁴ Evidently, the issue of a church for the *cités ouvrières* was not the sole factor for Dollfus's electoral humiliation: his support for free trade meant that many of his peers rallied behind the protectionist Tachard. However, Dollfus's repeated refusals and delays in permitting the construction of a church provided an example for those who sought to

⁹¹ AMM 66 TT B 4, Cher concitoyen!, s.d. (1869).

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Brandt and Leuilliot, 'Les élections à Mulhouse', p. 118.

⁹⁴ Of 6,772 registered voters in Mulhouse-Nord, 1,508 voted for Dollfus, 3,210 for Tachard. Ibid., p. 106.

undermine the motives behind Dollfus's paternalism. The *procureur-général* finished his post-election report with the declaration that 'It would really discourage charitable activity if good [work] does not find its reward in public recognition!'.⁹⁵

Although he was defeated electorally, Dollfus still remained head of *Dollfus-Mieg et C^{ie}* – one of the largest companies in the city – as well as president of SOMCO. Obviously learning from his defeat that Catholic demands for a church in the *cités* was now an important political consideration, rather than just an appeal to an extension of paternalism, Dollfus finally offered to donate a plot of land for the construction of a church later in 1869.⁹⁶ Dollfus liaised with Émile Muller, original architect of the *cités* who had since moved to Paris, for his opinion on what he needed to take into account, and which local architects he might recommend.⁹⁷ In finally considering a church for the *cités*, Dollfus returned to the original architect that he had worked with, rather than a local architect. While the two of them had omitted a church from their original plans for the scheme, Dollfus evidently wanted to preserve the integrity of the *cités* as a whole by including Muller in the planning process now that a church would be added.

Whether Dollfus and Muller's plans would have amounted to a third church in the *cités* is hard to tell, as the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1 threw Mulhousian life into disarray. The day after the outbreak of the war, on 11 July 1870, between 1,500-2,000 workers from different Mulhousian factories banded together and presented a list of demands to their employers.⁹⁸ Waves of unprecedented strikes followed, with one industrialist's concessions at his factory to

⁹⁵ Leuilliot, 'Politique et religion', pp. 97-8.

⁹⁶ Gilbert Poinot and Marie-Philippe Scheurer, 'IA00096484: Église paroissiale Saint-Joseph' (1984), <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/documentation/memoire/HTML/IVR42/IA00096484/index.htm>, accessed 13 Oct. 2017, p. 1; Fox, 'Presidential address', p. 160.

⁹⁷ AMM M2 Ac 1, Émile Muller to Jean Dollfus, 8 Dec. 1869.

⁹⁸ Price, *People and Politics in France, 1848-1870*, p. 353.

keep the workers on-side only leading to other factories' workers rising in insurrection.⁹⁹ The paternalism and philanthropy that had sought to hold the workers in check in Mulhouse, compared to other textile towns, had finally failed: in the words of historian Paul Leuilliot, industrial philanthropy 'strove to resolve the first "class" antagonisms; the strike of 1870 marked the late awakening of worker consciousness'.¹⁰⁰

After dealing with the unrest of these strikes, Mulhouse then had to cope with the advancing Prussian army. Jean Dollfus was one of a group of municipal councillors who dramatically marched up to place himself between the Prussian canons and his beloved *cités ouvrières* in October 1870 when they were threatened with bombardment.¹⁰¹ The German annexation of Alsace-Lorraine into the Reichsland drastically altered the political landscape of Mulhouse. There were two central issues that dominated elections throughout the Reichsland in the years following the annexation: opinions towards the annexation, and the political position of Catholics in the new state. Workers felt betrayed by the seeming complicity of the Mulhousian industrial and municipal elite in allowing the annexation to take place: in an election of 30-31 July 1871 to choose a provisional mayor, only six percent of the registered electorate voted in the first round – Dollfus received just 709 votes.¹⁰² In the second round, there was a similarly high rate of abstention from the workers that would come to mark Mulhousian politics through the following years, and Jean de Frédéric Schoen was appointed provisional mayor with just 797 votes.¹⁰³ Meanwhile, all construction of new houses in the still-growing *cités ouvrières* was halted, not resuming until 1876.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 354.

¹⁰⁰ Leuilliot, 'L'essor économique', p. 173.

¹⁰¹ Jean Weber-Koechlin, *Les Prussiens à Mulhouse en 1870: journal d'un conseiller municipal* (Mulhouse, 1910), pp. 25-8.

¹⁰² Richard Wagner, *La Vie politique à Mulhouse de 1870 à nos jours* (Mulhouse, 1976), p. 41.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁰⁴ Jonas, *Mulhouse et ses cités ouvrières*, p. 216.

While it had been easy for Mulhousian mayors like Kœchlin-Schlumberger and Jean Dollfus to ignore the religious needs of their workers during the Second Empire, the annexation irrevocably altered politics in Mulhouse. Catholic politicians stood in local and regional elections and, now, workers had the opportunity to vote along denominational lines, rather than having to choose between Calvinist industrialists. This was a common trend in post-annexation Alsace-Lorraine, beyond just Mulhouse. In 1874, of the 15 deputies elected to the Reichstag from the Reichsland, 11 of them were clericals.¹⁰⁵ One of these was Landelin Winterer, deputy of Altkirch-Thann in 1874.¹⁰⁶ In the chaos following the annexation, Winterer had been named *curé* of Saint-Etienne in Mulhouse on 14 August 1871, without the authorisation of the new German authorities, who were then unsuccessful in blocking his canonical installation on 27 August.¹⁰⁷ It was around Winterer that a ‘veritable Catholic elite’ rose in Mulhouse from the early 1870s, and the *curé* would later be described by the *Augsburg Allgemeine Zeitung* in 1881 as one of the ‘firebrands of the Catholic party’.¹⁰⁸ Winterer was responsible for encouraging worker abstention, which remained high in municipal elections in the early years of the 1870s, as he argued for a more proportional representation of Catholics on the Mulhouse municipal council.¹⁰⁹ The days of the Calvinist fabricantocracy claiming a sweeping mandate for local rule were over.

Winterer mobilised this popular support to renew the push for a third church in Mulhouse. A day after his formal installation in August 1871, Winterer attempted to resurrect Dollfus’s

¹⁰⁵ Dan P. Silverman, 'Political Catholicism and Social Democracy in Alsace-Lorraine, 1871-1914', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 52, 1 (1966), p. 46.

¹⁰⁶ Wagner, *La Vie politique à Mulhouse*, p. 31.

¹⁰⁷ Claude Muller, 'Plutôt noir que rouge: l'abbé Henri Cetty, vicaire à Saint-Etienne Mulhouse (1878-1886)', *Annuaire Historique de Mulhouse*, 9, (1998), p. 81.

¹⁰⁸ Tournier, 'Salut par les oeuvres', p. 74; Silverman, 'Political Catholicism', p. 48.

¹⁰⁹ Wagner, *La Vie politique à Mulhouse*, pp. 42-3.

1869 plan and petitioned the mayor, but his requests to the municipal council were unsuccessful, in part due to the imposition of the German *Kulturkampf*.¹¹⁰ In a twist of fate, it would only be with the help of none other than Jean Dollfus himself that Winterer would be able to succeed in realising this long-term Catholic ambition in Mulhouse.

Dollfus recovered from his electoral humiliation of 1869 by reconciling both the industrialists who had been split in their support of him in 1869, as well as finally – and humbly – extending a hand to his Catholic workers. While some of his peers opted to relocate their industry to France and thereby abandon Mulhouse after the annexation, Dollfus instead headed a commission that was sent to Berlin in early 1871 to negotiate with officials to protect the economic interests of Mulhousian industrialists who remained in the new Reichsland.¹¹¹ Many of Dollfus's peers, who had undermined his 1869 campaign and supported the protectionist Albert Tachard because of Dollfus's advocacy of free trade, had now been won over to his position by virtue of necessity due to the new tariff situation of Mulhouse in the Reichsland.¹¹² After the war, Dollfus served as a municipal councillor in Mulhouse until 23 March 1874; he then returned to politics at the age of 76 when he stood as the only candidate to replace Henri Haefly as Mulhousian deputy to the Reichstag in the 1877 elections.¹¹³

Dollfus's new approach to appeasing Catholic workers worked as, in January 1877, he won an endorsement from the local Catholic committee, by pledging not to vote against Catholic deputies in the Reichstag on questions of religion or salaries.¹¹⁴ The workers, who were still

¹¹⁰ Muller, 'Plutôt noir que rouge', p. 82; Poinot and Scheurer, 'Église paroissiale Saint-Joseph', p. 1.

¹¹¹ Silverman, 'The economic consequences of annexation', pp. 37-8.

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 40-1.

¹¹³ Wagner, *La Vie politique à Mulhouse*, pp. 44-6.

¹¹⁴ Muller, 'Plutôt noir que rouge', p. 83.

adamantly abstaining from elections to city councils because of the continued lack of Catholic representation, mobilized in support of Dollfus and his ardent *protestataire* position in the Reichstag: Dollfus won 7,000 votes in the urban area of Mulhouse where, a few months prior, the municipal elections had only collectively garnered 1,500.¹¹⁵ While these Catholic workers wanted greater representation in Mulhouse, they uniformly resented German infractions from the new state. In early 1874, workers from Dollfus's company, DMC, had written an article for *L'Industriel Alsacien*, declaring 'We are French and we wish to remain French; and if that is not possible, we at least do not wish to be Germans or vote for Germans'.¹¹⁶ Throughout the ten years that Dollfus served as deputy in the Reichstag, he convincingly defeated all non-Mulhousian official candidates that the German state put up against him, even when they represented the democratic-socialist party.¹¹⁷ The unifying ties between local (Mulhousian) and national (French) identity secured Dollfus support in the face of the imposition of foreign (German) rule, or of divisive class-based politics.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 83.

¹¹⁶ Silverman, 'Political Catholicism', pp. 54-5.

¹¹⁷ The longstanding anti-German sentiment has been used to explain the delay of socialism in Alsatian politics under the Reichsland until the 1890s. Alison Carrol, 'Socialism and national identity in Alsace from Reichsland to République: 1890 - 1921', *European History Quarterly*, 40, 1 (2010), pp. 59-60.

¹¹⁸ There is a rich literature on the importance of municipal, local, and/or regional identities in the construction of national identity in the nineteenth-century that supports this Mulhousian case. Importantly, many of the more recent works on France move away from a centre-periphery model of state imposition of a homogenous national identity, instead looking to the local for examples of distinct 'forms of Frenchness' that were forged through negotiation and creation identity at the local or peripheral level. Caroline C. Ford, *Creating the Nation in Provincial France: Religion and Popular Identity in Brittany* (Princeton, N.J., 1993), esp. pp. 1-10; Benjamin J. Lammers, 'National identity on the French periphery: the end of peasants into Frenchmen?', *National Identities*, 1, 1 (1999), pp. 81-87; Stéphane Gerson, *The Pride of Place: Local Memories & Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca, NY, 2003), esp. pp. 1-17. The German context is also important when considering Mulhouse and Alsace in the final three decades of the century. See Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill NC, 1997), esp. pp. 4-16; Zimmer, *Remaking the Rhythms of Life*, esp. pp. 111-67.

Together, Dollfus and Winterer might seem unlikely allies in the longer history of Mulhousian politics. Yet, although supported by many Catholic workers, Winterer shared many of Dollfus's anti-socialist convictions. In 1878, the same year that Dollfus rose and spoke in the Reichstag on the many acts of beneficence that he and his fellows had executed in Mulhouse, Winterer published a tract that sought to place religion as the most apt opponent to socialism. He wrote that 'if Socialism is the shadow of modern civilisation, this shadow is large and sinister'.¹¹⁹ Socialism, for Winterer, was built not upon a 'proselytising of love' but, rather, 'the proselytising of hatred', and achieved its greatest successes in lands that were irreligious.¹²⁰ The 'first role in the pacific struggle against Socialism', he wrote, 'is devolved to the Church', through a reinvigoration of the 'dogma of future life', of renewed Catholic charity, and of greater state laws to protect Catholicism.¹²¹ In the final line of his conclusion, Winterer declared that 'Socialism can do nothing against the work of God'.¹²²

Dollfus saw acts of paternalism such as his housing scheme as the way to tackle socialism, even though the limits of this paternalism had been exposed in his earlier political failure; Winterer saw renewed religious fervour as the solution, but had been unable to persuade the still-closed caste of the municipal elite. A combined solution of a new church, wrought up in the guise of Dollfus's old paternalism, was a way to unite both men. In November 1877, when Catholics now made up over four-fifths of Mulhouse's population, Dollfus and Winterer co-authored a petition containing 2,012 signatures from heads of families to the municipal council to seek authorisation to build a third church.¹²³ The council eventually approved the

¹¹⁹ Landelin Winterer, *Le Socialisme contemporain* (Paris, 1878), p. 187.

¹²⁰ Ibid., pp. 187-8.

¹²¹ Ibid., pp. 192-3.

¹²² Ibid., p. 195.

¹²³ AMM M2 Ac 1, Petition for a church in the *cités ouvrières*, 22 Nov. 1877; Tournier, 'Le protestantisme mulhousien', p. 240; Poinot and Scheurer, 'Église paroissiale Saint-Joseph', p. 1.

petition, and allocated 50,000 Fr. in October 1878 to study the practicalities of building the church.¹²⁴

Dollfus was adamant that the new church should necessitate no demolition of any existing houses of his *cités*, so he donated an undeveloped, small tract of land in 1879 in the west of the *cités* for the construction.¹²⁵ A competition was launched to find a design that was both cheap (not exceeding 120,000 Fr.) as well as quick (a maximum of two years' construction) to build. Several designs were submitted to the municipal commission, and the winning choice was eventually the cheapest one, despite Winterer's preference for some of the grander, more traditional designs.¹²⁶

In April 1883, Saint-Joseph, the third Catholic church of Mulhouse and the first in the *cités ouvrières*, was finally opened, almost thirty years after the construction of the first set of houses there. The winning architect, Jules Scherr, had designed a church with little outward ornament, and used a metal skeleton to reduce costs, which he left uncovered in large areas of the interior (fig. 5.3).¹²⁷ Whether intended or not, the effect of this exposed metal was to recall the architecture of the factories in which the inhabitants of the *cités* spent all week working, tying this site of devotion back to the industrial world of the *cités'* founder Jean Dollfus.¹²⁸ This industrial feel to the interior of the church shocked both the working-class parishioners as well as the *curés* subsequently posted there, so different as it was to the existing two

¹²⁴ Poinso and Scheurer, 'Église paroissiale Saint-Joseph', p. 1.

¹²⁵ Nicolas Stoskopf, *Les Patrons du Second Empire: Alsace* (Paris, 1994), p. 123.

¹²⁶ Poinso and Scheurer, 'Église paroissiale Saint-Joseph', p. 1.

¹²⁷ 'L'église Saint-Joseph' (1 Jul. 2015),

<http://www.musiqueorguequebec.ca/orgues/france/mulhousesjo.html>, accessed 13 Oct. 2017.

¹²⁸ 'L'église Saint-Joseph' (2011), <http://www.mulhouse.fr/fr/la-ville-industrielle/>, accessed 13 Oct. 2017.

Catholic churches in Mulhouse.¹²⁹ Equally, the church was built without a parvis in front of it, which restricted the ability for workers to gather after a mass.¹³⁰ This church, built simply, at low cost, and quickly, was therefore not only one designed to meet minimum requirements due to population pressures; it was one that actively sought to remind Catholic workers of their place and of their relationship with the Calvinist elite.

This was a working-class Catholic church built for a working-class Catholic quarter, motivated by a desire to stem the tide of socialism. It was a compromise, and a compromise that betrayed some of the divisions that still existed between workers and industrialists in Mulhouse. However, in the political rehabilitation of Dollfus and his election to the Reichstag as a vocal *protestaire*, the shared desire of both workers and industrialists to remain French in the face of the German annexation proved a powerful uniting bond across the classes. Mulhouse, which had only officially become French in 1798, and which had taken a lot longer to overcome its spirit of independence, was now defined by a pan-class union based on a call back to national identity.

Canuts, traboules, and the Haussmann of the south

Industrial and municipal elites in both Roubaix and Mulhouse responded to the increase in worker political power from the end of the Second Empire. In Roubaix, a school designed to reconcile the classes failed, and the elites developed an exclusively elite new quarter, which emphasized the increasing political gulf with a geographic expression. In Mulhouse, meanwhile, the hegemony of a Calvinist industrial elite was challenged following the German annexation, and as a result the founders of the *cités ouvrières* compromised their initial vision

¹²⁹ Poinot and Scheurer, 'Église paroissiale Saint-Joseph', p. 2.

¹³⁰ 'L'église Saint-Joseph', from [http://www.mulhouse.fr/...](http://www.mulhouse.fr/)

for this quarter of their town by finally building a Catholic church to try to keep hold of political power.

Lyon offers a different perspective. The workers' insurrections that shaped Lyonnais response to the urban environment came not at the end of the Second Empire but, rather, in the decades preceding it. In the 1830s and 1840s, the *canuts* of Lyon repeatedly seized control of the city and had to be bloodily repressed. Contemporaries (including a young Karl Marx) and historians alike have described these silk weaver revolts as the 'earliest example of open warfare between the working class and bourgeois society... the first modern insurrection[s] in European history'.¹³¹ During each revolt, the way that the *canuts* used the Lyonnais urban environment politicized the topography of Lyon. As a result, during the Second Empire, the state responded by appointing a Haussmann of the south to radically reinvent the old medieval centre of the city and thereby prevent future insurrections. Unlike the new developments in Roubaix and in Mulhouse (the bourgeois south-west quarter and the *cités ouvrières* respectively), this was a reshaping of the existing urban fabric that was dictated at least in part by a desire to pacify worker unrest. This was not an example of middle-classes retreating to the suburbs or conceding to workers' urban demands; this was a sweeping redevelopment of central Lyonnais urban identity to delineate a space where politically-dangerous workers were not welcome.

When the *canuts* first marched down the narrow, steep streets from La Croix Rousse to central Lyon on 21 November 1831, the black flags they bore declared: 'Live working or die fighting'.¹³² Infuriated by the falling price of silk and resultant wage decreases, they descended

¹³¹ Bezucha, *The Lyon Uprising of 1834*, pp. vii-ix.

¹³² 'Vivre en travaillant ou mourir en combattant', from Ludovic Frobert, *Les Canuts, ou la démocratie turbulente: Lyon, 1831-1834* (Paris, 2009), p. 11.

en masse towards the centre of Lyon, driving the local garrison back, until the town was in the hands of the silk weavers. A military force of 20,000 eventually won the town back but, under three years later in April 1834, the *canuts* revolted once again. Achieving the same early victory between 9-11 April, the insurgents were eventually isolated from one another and picked apart by the reactionary military forces until, between 14-15 April, they had to surrender once more.¹³³ This week of violent revolt, which soon came to be known as the ‘bloody week’ (*sanglante semaine*), left 600 dead and 10,000 arrested.¹³⁴

During both revolts, the silk weavers had been able to take the city so rapidly because of their mastery of the urban landscape. La Croix Rousse had rapidly developed from the final decades of the *Ancien Régime* and early years of the nineteenth-century: a near-rural hillside dominated by orchards and religious houses on the eve of the French Revolution in 1789, by the 1830s there were over 30,000 inhabitants, living in towering five or six-storey blocks of buildings, arranged in rows up the side of the hill (fig. 0.1).¹³⁵ A resulting feature of the new Croix Roussian urban landscape was the proliferation of the *traboules*: covered stairways and passages that allowed silk weavers to carry their products from their workshops on the hill to the merchants at the base without exposing them to the elements.¹³⁶ During the *canuts*’ revolts, workers used these familiar passageways to descend the hill quickly, to outflank repressive forces, and to evade capture. On 11 April 1834, for example, weavers used the *traboules* to descend from the *Rue Tolozan* and ambush a detachment of soldiers two streets below on the *Rue Bouteille*.¹³⁷ Three days later, as the tide turned on 14 April, *canuts* manning a barricade on

¹³³ Ludovic Frobert and George Sheridan, *Le Solitaire du ravin : Pierre Charnier (1795 - 1857), canut lyonnais et prud'homme tisseur* (Lyon, 2014), p. 35.

¹³⁴ Adolphe Sala, *Les Ouvriers de Lyon en 1834, esquisses historiques sur les événements d'avril* (Paris, 1834), p. vii.

¹³⁵ Bezucha, *The Lyon Uprising of 1834*, pp. 14-15.

¹³⁶ Mary Lynn Stewart-McDougall, *The Artisan Republic: Revolution, Reaction, and Resistance in Lyon 1848-1851* (Gloucester, 1984), p. 4.

¹³⁷ Bezucha, *The Lyon Uprising of 1834*, p. 165.

the *Cours d'Herbouville* escaped up a *traboule*, allowing them to reach the *Rue des Gloriettes*, far above.¹³⁸

After successfully crushing both revolts, the primary government response was to try to expand police and surveillance powers. The police's evident failure to infiltrate worker networks or to achieve the same ease of movement in the working-class quarter led to pressures to bring La Croix Rousse under the direct supervision of the Lyon municipality.¹³⁹ If La Croix Rousse and the other suburbs of La Guillotière and Vaise were to be 'reunited' with the 'mother city' of Lyon, then the police would be able to be more effective in monitoring and preventing worker insurrections.¹⁴⁰ Additionally, to prevent future revolts and place soldiers closer to the source, the municipality built new fortifications to encircle La Croix Rousse.

The early 1830s municipal reunion plan stalled and, as revolution swept through Europe in early 1848, the *canuts* revolted once again. The Voraces workers' society seized the new fortifications in La Croix Rousse when they heard that a Republic had been declared in France, occupying them for over two weeks.¹⁴¹ A year later, when in June 1849 there were rumours that Louis Napoléon and his cabinet had been arrested, weavers streamed down La Croix Rousse once more exclaiming: 'Long live the democratic and socialist Republic', and they were brutally suppressed once more.¹⁴² The clashes between the *canuts* and the authorities

¹³⁸ René Dejean, *Traboules de Lyon : histoire secrète d'une ville* (Lyon, 1988), pp. 169-70.

¹³⁹ ADR 1 M 87, 'Réunion des faubourgs à la ville de Lyon: Rapport présenté au nom de la commission des objets d'intérêt public au conseil municipal de Lyon', 18 Jul. 1833.

¹⁴⁰ Pierre-Yves Saunier, 'Logiques de l'aggrégation : l'agglomération lyonnaise au XIXe siècle', *Bulletin du Centre Pierre Léon d'histoire économique et sociale*, 1 (1992), p. 34.

¹⁴¹ Mary Lynn McDougall, 'Consciousness and community: the workers of Lyon, 1830-1850', *Journal of Social History*, 12, 1 (1978), p. 135.

¹⁴² Ninety-two people were killed or injured during this June 1849 clash. Bezucha, *The Lyon Uprising of 1834*, p. 194.

in Lyon in 1831, 1834, 1848 and 1849 were based on a mix of political and economic concerns, but they were also, as Mary McDougall has argued, ‘exacerbated by their geographical expression... Physical geography accentuated this special separation’.¹⁴³ Robert Bezucha has shown the similarities between the *canuts*’ use of the urban landscape in 1830s Lyon to the workers’ occupation of Haussmannized Paris in four decades later in the Commune of 1871. In both cases, he argued, ‘there was a direct relationship between urban development and the patterns of violence’.¹⁴⁴ This relationship was evident to the Lyonnais local government.

Under the Second Empire, the national government took steps to limit the ability for the *canuts* to inflict more urban unrest. One of the first steps was the reinvigoration of the plan to strip the silk weavers’ town of municipal autonomy. The reunion plan was revitalized once again and, on 24 March 1852, the *faubourgs* of La Guillotière, Vaise, and La Croix Rousse were finally subsumed to form a new Lyonnais agglomeration.¹⁴⁵ All elective offices in Lyon were abolished with this decree, replaced instead by an appointed municipal council under the direct authority of the prefect of the Rhône.¹⁴⁶ This reunion dramatically expanded the police and surveillance powers of the prefecture: as Robert Liebman argues, the centralisation of power in Lyon was motivated by a desire to facilitate the ‘chief agencies of repression’, and to take control over potential provincial hotbeds of insurrection.¹⁴⁷ Although nominally part of Lyon now, La Croix Rousse was left with what Pierre-Yves Saunier has described as ‘dark

¹⁴³ McDougall, 'Consciousness and Community', p. 135.

¹⁴⁴ Bezucha, *The Lyon Uprising of 1834*, p. 163.

¹⁴⁵ Saunier, 'Logiques de l'agregation', pp. 35-6; 'Décret sur l'agglomération lyonnaise', *Le Salut Public*, 27 Mar. 1852.

¹⁴⁶ Charlene Marie Leonard, *Lyon Transformed: Public Works of the Second Empire, 1853-1864* (Berkeley CA, 1961), p. 15.

¹⁴⁷ Robert Liebman, 'Repressive strategies and working-class protest: Lyon, 1848-1852', *Social Science History*, 4, 1 (1980), pp. 42-50.

myth' hanging over it well into the Second Empire from its history of revolts.¹⁴⁸ As the suburb was brought under the central authority of the prefect of the Rhône, both government officials and Lyonnais elites viewed the 'hill that worked' with unease. The early years following the reunion were accompanied by increased surveillance powers for the police, intended to monitor all elements of *canuts'* social, economic, and political life.¹⁴⁹

The *canuts* were not, however, just passive victims of the new impositions and invasions into their working and private lives. Master weavers (*chefs d'atelier*) had gained valuable political experience through their action in the earlier revolts, and found themselves in a position in the early 1850s where they could interact with new impositions and to modify them to the benefit of their fellow workers.

One example of the political role played by the *canuts* in the early 1850s comes from Spring 1853. Pierre Charnier (1795-1857) was a key figure in the *canut* revolts and worker-employer relations in nineteenth-century Lyon. Charnier was far more conservative than the more radical members of the 'Lyonnais labour aristocracy' like Joseph Benoit or Jean Louis Greppo.¹⁵⁰ As a Catholic royalist, and as a *chef d'atelier* who served on the *conseil des prud'hommes* whose role was to settle disputes between weavers and merchants, Charnier often found himself working as an isolated conciliator in the between two opposing forces – whether between republicans and legitimists, between artisanal workers and political writers, or between workers and notables.¹⁵¹ His ability to sit between conflicting economic and political

¹⁴⁸ Pierre-Yves Saunier, 'Un espace toujours à part: la Croix-Rousse de Lyon', in Annie Fourcaut (ed.), *La ville divisée : les ségrégations urbaines en question, France XVIIIe-XXe siècles* (Grâne, 1996), pp. 177-8.

¹⁴⁹ Liebman, 'Repressive strategies', p. 50.

¹⁵⁰ McDougall, 'Consciousness and Community', p. 136; Christopher H. Johnson, 'Deux lettres inédites de cinq ouvriers lyonnais à CABET et DÉZAMY', *Revue d'histoire économique et sociale*, 47, 4 (1969), p. 529.

¹⁵¹ Frobert and Sheridan, *Le Solitaire du ravin*, pp. 65-6.

forces while articulating the wants and need of the silk weavers led Michel Chevalier to describe Charnier in the aftermath of the 1831 revolt as the ‘Spartacus of the workshops’.¹⁵²

Writing a biographical study of Charnier in 2014, Ludovic Frobert and George Sheridan chose to use the *chef d’atelier*’s pen-name of ‘*le Solitaire du ravin*’ as the title of their work. This pseudonym of ‘*Solitaire du ravin*’ is apt, because of Charnier’s repeated role as conciliator between opposing political forces, but it also had a literal and physical connotation too, because of where Charnier lived. Although a *canut*, Charnier did not live on the hill of La Croix Rousse. Instead, he spent most of his working life living in the old Saint-Paul quarter of Lyon where, from 1840, he owned a house with Jacquard looms, and rented rooms to apprentice and journeymen weavers.¹⁵³ Saint-Paul lay in the ravine between the ‘hill that prayed’ of Fourvière, and across the Saône from the ‘hill that worked’ of La Croix Rousse. In his day-to-day work and movement in his neighbourhood, Charnier would pass the base of several *traboules* that traced up from this quarter to La Croix Rousse and to the Fourvière hill.¹⁵⁴

On 1 April 1853, Charnier wrote a letter to the secretary-general of the police of the Rhône. In it, Charnier explained that he represented those on the *conseil des prud’hommes* who wanted to modify a recent *arrêté* that concerned him and his fellow *chefs d’atelier*. According to the new *arrêté*, every master weaver in the city of Lyon would now be required to report in person to their local police commissariat each month and, once there, to give a list of everyone who lodged and worked with them. Charnier argued that these visits were inconvenient and, instead, should only be made when an apprentice worker first arrived or left their lodgings

¹⁵² Ibid., pp. 8, 10.

¹⁵³ Ibid., pp. 58, 73.

¹⁵⁴ Dejean, *Traboules de Lyon*, pp. 18-19, 39-40.

permanently. Eight days later, each police commissioner in the city received a letter from the secretary-general informing them of the proposed compromise being implemented: now *chefs d'atelier* would be required to make their reports in person only when changes to the living situations occurred.¹⁵⁵

Although this may just seem a subtle change, this *arrêté* and Charnier's role in modifying it reveals much about the situation of the *canuts* in mid-century Lyon. Weaving households at the beginning of Second Empire Lyon were still structured along vertical, quasi-familial lines, with *chefs d'atelier* like Charnier as head of the household. While the number of journeyman workers who lodged with their workers had no doubt diminished by 1853, the practice must still have been widespread enough for the *conseil des prud'hommes* to ask Charnier to write his letter.¹⁵⁶ Not only must this practice of accommodation have been prevalent enough to require both the original *arrêté* and its amendment, but the fact that Charnier was arguing against a monthly need to report in person suggests that, on average, apprentices and workers spent more than a month living with these masters.

Obviously, this *arrêté* must be considered as part of a wider set of new surveillance regulations aimed at preventing future revolts.¹⁵⁷ Although Charnier did not spell it out in his letter, his modifications can be read as a defiant stand against the incursions of the centralised power structure. His successes in changing the regulations that the *arrêté* was designed to impose reflects his mobilisation of local knowledge and experience about the lived realities of *canuts* and *chefs d'atelier*. By asking *chefs d'atelier* to make regular reports on the workers who lived with

¹⁵⁵ BML MS RUDE 375 f128-149, Pierre Charnier to Secrétaire Général du police du département du Rhône, 1 Apr. 1853

¹⁵⁶ McDougall, 'Consciousness and Community', p. 135.

¹⁵⁷ Benoit and Saussac, *Histoire de Lyon*, pp. 177, 193-5, 205; Saunier, 'Logiques de l'agrégation', pp. 35-6.

them, the original *arrêté* was an attempt to gather knowledge about workers that was fixed both in time and in space: a monthly accumulation of data of working-class households. Through successfully amending the *arrêté*, Charnier made the focus shift to change and movement, rather than continuity: by only notifying authorities when there was a change in living circumstances, *chefs d'atelier* reduced the total amount of surveillance knowledge that local government could regularly accumulate about the *canuts*.

What this example shows is the continued existence into the 1850s of the traditional *canut* household that had existed in Lyon for generations; it also shows the way that police surveillance tactics were limited by a politically mature member of the weaver elite, Charnier in this case, who was able to prevent a complete intrusion into workers' domestic lives. By the later 1850s, government in Lyon sought to build on its limited police surveillance, through mass urban works that would alter the face and identity of the city: the urban regeneration undertaken by the 'Haussmann of the south', prefect Claude-Marius Vaisse.

In March 1853, Claude-Marius Vaisse was appointed prefect of the Rhône and *de facto* mayor of Lyon. We have seen Vaisse before in this thesis, predominantly in Chapter 3. As prefect of the Rhône, Vaisse reinvigorated the work of the CLI in Lyon; but before that, he served as the prefect of the Nord during the Second Republic, and played a key role in making sure the law on *logements insalubres* was implemented throughout the department. Vaisse was evidently a prefect who was sensitive to the needs of the modern urban environment. His greatest legacy, however, was in the urban redevelopment of Lyon, which he began work on almost immediately.

Upon arriving in Lyon, Vaisse liaised with the commander of the local military garrison, the *Maréchal* de Castellane, who had repressed the 1834 revolt and, since April 1850, commanded

a military force of almost 50,000 men based out of Lyon.¹⁵⁸ De Castellane's journal from the early 1850s is full of paranoia and suspicion of the workers in La Croix Rousse, their familiarity with the *traboules*, and their past occupations of the centre of the city. In October 1850, when he was concerned a revolt may break out again, de Castellane had instructed his troops to avoid fighting in narrow streets and to be conscious of houses with entrances on two streets; a year later, following Louis Napoléon's coup, de Castellane had strengthened the military presence throughout the city after rumours of unrest in La Croix Rousse and for fear of *canuts*' plans to 'attack on the *Hôtel de Ville* and occupy the centre of the city'.¹⁵⁹ De Castellane communicated these fears about the *canuts*' knowledge and utilisation of the narrow streets and *traboules* to Vaïsse in a letter of 6 October 1853.¹⁶⁰ Vaïsse concurred, and in replying to de Castellane with a letter and a closely annotated plan for developing the centre of the city, the prefect showed that he was focusing on how both control of the spatial closely related to control of the social.¹⁶¹

Vaïsse's work between 1853-64 transformed the face of modern Lyon, and is too expansive to cover in detail here. In just over a decade, Vaïsse brought a range of changes: from leisure spaces like the grand *Parc Tête d'or* in the north-east of the city to infrastructure improvements like gas, water, and sewage networks; from reconstructed quays and banks on the two rivers of Rhône and Saône following the floods of 1856, to magnificent new buildings for the stock exchange and city hall (fig. 5.4).¹⁶² But the most striking of Vaïsse's improvements were the wide parallel roads of *Rue Impériale* and *Rue de l'Impératrice* which cut down through the

¹⁵⁸ Patrick Luiz Sullivan de Oliveira, 'Imagining an Old City in Nineteenth-Century France', *Journal of Urban History*, 43, 1 (2017), p. 6; Esprit-Victor-Elisabeth Boniface de Castellane, *Journal du maréchal de Castellane : 1804-1862*, 5 vols. (4; Paris, 1896), iv, p. 238.

¹⁵⁹ de Castellane, *Journal du maréchal de Castellane : 1804-1862*, pp. 288, 344-9.

¹⁶⁰ de Oliveira, 'Imagining an Old City', p. 7.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁶² Vaïsse's work also included grand new public spaces in the centre of the city. For a full account of the work undertaken by Vaïsse in this period, see Leonard, *Lyon Transformed*.

Presqu'Îl. Vaïsse appointed the architect Benoît Poncet, who had been active in Lyon before the prefect's arrival, to oversee the *Rue Impériale* project. This not only meant designing the uniform frontages of eighteen separate blocks of apartment buildings that would front the streets, but also managing the expropriation of tenants from over 270 different houses to make way for the new construction.¹⁶³ Officially, this equated to around 2,500 tenants who were paid expropriation fees and forced to leave their homes in the centre of the city; in reality, due to undocumented dependents or those who lacked leases and were therefore not subject to payments, the number of displaced people was closer to 12,000.¹⁶⁴ In removing the predominantly working-class inhabitants of the *Presqu'Îl*, demolishing their buildings, driving new streets in their stead, and constructing bourgeois apartments and business buildings, Vaïsse reinvented the *Presqu'Îl* as a central *cité*, similar to the commercial hubs of capital cities like London or Paris, but a *cité* complete with housing for the most wealthy Lyonnais.

Notably, La Croix Rousse was barely touched by Vaïsse's work. In his original plan of 1853, only a new hospital was planned for the silk weavers' town.¹⁶⁵ Eventually, he ordered the construction of new water and sewage systems, but the twisting *traboules* and high apartment buildings of the *canuts* were otherwise untouched in this area of Lyon.¹⁶⁶ What Vaïsse had done, instead, was to cut out a new, bourgeois centre of the city by eliminating old buildings and narrow streets. In so doing, Vaïsse had delimited a space where the *canuts* were no longer welcome. The *traboules* ended at the base of the hill, and by extension the *canuts* were excluded from the centre. What's more, by replacing the twisting streets of central Lyon with broad boulevards, Vaïsse had achieved an additional goal of imposing Parisian urban and architectural forms on the notoriously rebellious city of Lyon.

¹⁶³ Ibid., pp. 26-9.

¹⁶⁴ de Oliveira, 'Imagining an Old City', p. 9.

¹⁶⁵ Leonard, *Lyon Transformed*, p. 66.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 67.

On the surface, it would be easy to consider the work of ‘the Haussmann of Lyon’ as part of wider central French government imposition from Paris on Lyon, both in terms of managing social unrest as well as in terms of urban architectural forms. In Roubaix, Dupire-Rozan’s designation as the Roubaisian Haussmann was because of the architectural style and urban planning he evoked in his focus on uniform, bourgeois buildings, boulevards, and public parks; in Lyon, Vaïsse’s role was as an outsider and as a government figure, building in the same way as the Baron Haussmann in order to instil order on an unruly city. But this view is overly simplistic, and neglects the fact that the Lyonnais urban elite actually welcomed some of Vaïsse’s modernising changes. Shocked bystanders during each time the *canuts* descended through the *traboules*, Lyon’s urban elite would also have been grateful for the increased security Vaïsse’s work brought. Considering the context that Vaïsse’s installation as prefect of the Rhône aligned with a suppression of municipal government in Lyon, the new prefect would have been eager to appease the recently disenfranchised and potentially mutinous urban elite. As Pierre-Yves Saunier has argued, Vaïsse focused on remodelling the centre of the city ‘primarily because a powerful social group in a city that he had been given the responsibility of conquering desired this objective’.¹⁶⁷ While Vaïsse’s work benefited Lyon as a whole, the focus on the *Rue Impériale* as one of the largest projects of all was ‘an offering to the dominant Lyons [sic] groups, those most distressed by the loss of municipal autonomy’.¹⁶⁸ The social control element of nullifying the threat of another easy conquering of the city by descending *canuts* was only one motivation for Vaïsse: winning the support of the local elite through urban beautification and security was just as important.

¹⁶⁷ Saunier, ‘Center and centrality in the nineteenth century’, p. 453.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 443, 453.

Vaïsse's project was not universally accepted by the Lyonnais elite but, generally, the prefect's work was praised as modernising the city and for bringing control to the centre of the city.¹⁶⁹ Several sycophantic songs and poems from the 1850s and 1860s praised the changes in Lyon. One, written by 'C. T.' in June 1862 took the form of a sonnet, and contrasts the 'Old Lyon' with the 'New Lyon'.¹⁷⁰ The first stanza focused on 'Lyon, [the] Roman city constantly renewed' and highlighted the 'heavy, dark & gloomy mansions/In tight crossroads, asylums of death/ A muddy maze, without air & without exit'. But then, the author merrily declared in the second stanza, '[here] comes a great genius' in the form of Vaïsse, who 'ploughs through these fields of ancient rooftops/ And, in each furrow, traces a large street'. The rest of the sonnet was dedicated to how Lyon and its people would bless and praise Vaïsse's work eternally.

When Vaïsse died in 1864, obituaries paid tribute to the transformations he brought to the city. 'Look around us!' wrote Max Grassis in the 3 September 1864 edition of *Le Salut Public*.

Lyon, formerly a traveller's most dreaded destination because of its numerous deficiencies, has become one of the most grandiose cities in Europe. It is admired as the second capital of France and is the envy of all foreigners who come in crowds to visit.¹⁷¹

At Vaïsse's funeral, the president of the Lyonnais municipal council, Thierry Brölemann, declared that 'your glorious works will survive you on earth, and your work will stand before posterity, a vast and durable monument... Dear senator, noble friend, *adieu*'.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 444-5. Notably, the *Rue de l'Impératrice* was met with more opposition than its predecessor, as it threatened the business interests of those who had set up on the *Rue Impériale* or in the Brotteaux.

¹⁷⁰ C. T., *L'Ancien et le Nouveau Lyon* (Lyon, 1862).

¹⁷¹ Max Grassis, 'M. Vaïsse', *Le Salut Public* (Lyon), 3 Sep. 1864, p. 1.

¹⁷² 'Obsèques de M. le Sénateur Vaïsse', *Le Courier de Lyon* (Lyon), 3 Sep. 1864

In the years after Vaïsse's death however, this praise for the Haussmann of the south wavered. By the early decades of the Third Republic, as Roubaix's new quarter was being constructed and Mulhouse's third Catholic church had finally been approved, elite attitudes towards Vaïsse's public works had shifted, and the role of the *canuts* in Lyon's urban history and collective modern identity was being re-evaluated. Some of the seeds of this negative shift in attitudes has been sown during the Second Empire. One of the only recorded critiques of Vaïsse during his tenure came in the form of the anonymous November 1858 pamphlet *Un petit mot sur de grands projets*, released around the founding of the *Rue de l'Impératrice*. In this pamphlet, the author took aim at the massive costs Vaïsse's work inflicted on the town, which made the inhabitants of Lyon 'search with terror the bottom of our *caisse*, [and] see the future condemned to sterility and bankruptcy'.¹⁷³ In articulating this argument, the author drew on local history and traditions of Lyonnais opposition to Parisian imposition. The new *Rue de l'Impératrice* would be 'a gross injustice for most neighbourhoods of the old city' (fig. 5.4).¹⁷⁴ The author also used the redevelopment of the prefecture building to express hostility to Vaïsse. This 'vulgar camp' now dominated the old *Hôtel de Ville*, which had 'its memories of glory and liberty'.¹⁷⁵ Without explicitly naming the *canuts*, the author drew upon the motifs of the revolts of 1831, 1834, and 1848 to decry Vaïsse's actions: '[he wanted] to take possession of the *Hôtel-de-Ville*, to plant his flag in the heart of the square... In its solitude and abandonment, the echo of the past seemed to evoke a voice of the future'. Crucially, the author drew upon the repeated failures of the *canut* insurrections, but having Vaïsse epitomise the reactionary forces and, by consequence, the *canuts* stand for Lyonnais independence:

It was necessary to stifle that voice; to reduce this unyielding and ever-present protest... to take away from the successors, more or less... legitimate, a seat of government whose occupation is a force and a prestige of crucial importance.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ Anon., *Un Petit mot sur de grands projets - novembre 1858* (Geneva, 1858), p. 2.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 20.

While this 1858 critique stands out as isolated, it prefigured many of the anti-Parisian arguments that would come later in the century. In the copy of this pamphlet held at the *Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon*, there is a handwritten appendix added by an unknown author twenty years later in 1878. This appendix reinforced the anti-Vaïsse and anti-Paris sentiments of the pamphlet. Vaïsse ruled Lyon ‘in an almost despotic manner’ for eleven years, and, the anonymous author declared, ‘we will probably never know at what cost, what injustice, what iniquities, what administrative monstrosities these embellishments and improvements have been bought’.¹⁷⁷

The ferocity of this late-1870s addendum emerged in the years after a virulent decentralization campaign in Lyon at the end of the Second Empire. Louis Greenberg has shown how, in the departmental elections of 1867, independent candidates took the issue of a return of municipal rights to Lyon as a central part of their platforms.¹⁷⁸ The following year, in 1868, Charles Garnier founded the newspaper *La Décentralisation*, in which he repeatedly wrote about the ‘abuses of bureaucratic centralisation’ (ironically, the newspaper had its offices on Vaïsse’s *Rue Impériale*).¹⁷⁹ When the Second Empire collapsed and the communards seized Paris, Lyon was quick to follow suit in declaring the municipal independence of the ‘commune’ of Lyon.¹⁸⁰

This opposition to the political hegemony of Paris was manifested in a subsequent opposition to Parisian urban and architectural forms in Lyon. De Oliveira has recently studied how, as the Third Republic drew on, middle-class antiquarians invented a romantic image of ‘old Lyon’, based on the *canuts*, the *traboules*, and other supposedly native features of Lyon that

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., unnumbered handwritten appendix.

¹⁷⁸ Greenberg, *Sisters of Liberty*, p. 216.

¹⁷⁹ ‘Lyon, 11 janvier’, *La Décentralisation* (Lyon), 12 Jan. 1869, p. 1.

¹⁸⁰ Greenberg, *Sisters of Liberty*, p. 4.

were largely erased or suppressed under Vaïsse. The narrow streets of Lyon were, by the 1880s, portrayed ‘as an essential part of Lyonnais identity precisely because they contrasted with what [the cultural elites] saw as Parisian forms and because they harked back to supposedly simpler and better times’.¹⁸¹

In the 1830s and 1840s, the ease with which the *canuts* made their repeated descents through the *traboules* to seize the city-centre was a cause for concern by both central government as well as local elites. A generation later, in the 1870s and 1880s, these same *canuts* and their passageways were reinvented as symbols of the Lyon that was destroyed by a figure of central Parisian authority. In being forced out of the city centre, the *canuts* and *traboules* would later become central to Lyonnais identity.

Inclusion and exclusion in elite urban identities

By the final decades of the nineteenth century, the working-classes in Roubaix, Mulhouse, and Lyon occupied unprecedented positions in elite constructions each of their cities’ identities. The Roubaisian elite may have found a beautiful quarter they could call their own but, in doing so, they yielded control of the city, which became famous as the ‘citadel of socialism’ in the 1890s. In Mulhouse, meanwhile, the German annexation of 1870-1 complicated the increased threat of socialism. The eventual construction of a Catholic church for the inhabitants of the *cités ouvrières* – but a Catholic church with overt ties to the ancient industrial and municipal elite – showed the fragile compromise between priest and industrialist in the face of foreign government and socialism. Through adapting to the changed political landscape, Jean Dollfus was able to remain a popular political figure in Mulhouse, protesting

¹⁸¹ de Oliveira, 'Imagining an Old City', p. 2.

for a return of Alsace to France in the Reichstag right until his death in 1887. Finally, the 1880s in Lyon saw the urban elite repurpose their city's revolutionary past. While the *canuts'* revolts of the 1830s and 1840s were some of the first clashes between work and capital, by the Third Republic both the *canuts* and their twisting *traboules* became emblematic for staunch Lyonnais resistance to Parisian imposition, across the classes. The rose-tinted memory of these violent workers became central to the elite sense of Lyon as home.

In each case, elites consciously chose whether to include or exclude the working-classes from their conception of local identity. In the most extreme expressions – Dupire-Rozan's new quarter, and Vaïsse's boulevards – new interventions in the urban environment explicitly severed the spatial proximity of elite and worker. In its most nuanced case – the reasons behind Dollfus's decision to build a church in his *cités ouvrières* – the political consideration that worker mobilization necessitated resulted in concessions to a more welcoming urban environment. But in each of the situations considered above, the elite sense of the city as home by the 1880s had been indisputably shaped through urban interventions, interactions, and unwise inaction with the working-classes.

CONCLUSION

Applause rang through the banquet hall as Eugène Motte finished his speech to the 350 workers and dignitaries who had gathered to honour the work of *La Ruche Roubaisienne* building society in May 1897. Unlike his uncle (Louis Motte-Bossut), his father (Alfred Motte-Grimonprez), or any of the previous generations of Roubaisian industrialists, Eugène had made the decision to drive the construction of new housing in Roubaix away from the infamous *courée* form. Influenced in part by the legacy of Mulhouse (now lost to the new German state), and in part by the recent passage of the Siegfried Law on affordable housing, Motte's patronage of the homeownership scheme was also a calculated political tactic to wrest back control of Roubaix's city government. Two years prior, in 1895, Eugène ran for the election for *conseiller général du Nord* on a liberal platform, attempting to unify more conservative, Catholic elite votes with votes from workers who had backed the socialists in 1892 and 1893. In a speech of 28 July 1895 to workers in the centre of Roubaix, Eugène concluded by stressing the sense of a shared urban identity between himself and the workers: 'I love the worker, I live in his community, it is here, in this quarter, where our factories are'.¹

Motte was successful in this election in 1895; three years later in 1898, the year after his speech at the *Ruche* banquet, Eugène also overthrew the socialist Jules Guesde as deputy of the Nord.² Eugène Motte completed the return of Roubaix to the rule of the industrialists when, in 1902, he retook the city council from the *cabaretier* Henri Carette and the socialists, and ushered in a decade of liberal, *progressiste* rule in the French Manchester.³

¹ Quoted in Amaury De Baudus, 'Eugène Motte, député-maire de Roubaix', *Revue du Nord*, 75, 302 (1993), p. 678.

² Gordon, *Liberalism and Social Reform*, p. 14.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-2.

CONCLUSION

Motte's intervention into the domain of improved working-class housing marked a change from decades of inaction, limited inspection, and religious charity that had defined the previous generation's approach to the housing problem in Roubaix. It had taken the loss of the city council for the leading industrialists in Roubaix to realise the importance of dealing with their local housing problem. By emphasising the spatial proximity between his factories and his workers, and by supporting a housing society whose goal was the 'fusion of the classes', Motte was describing his home city of Roubaix as one with space for industrialists and workers to share in a communal identity.

This thesis has shown the different ways that the working-class home became central to middle-class elite attitudes towards their sense of local identity through the second half of the nineteenth century. This took many forms – whether this was through leading the European debate and discussion on the merits of single-family, worker-owned homes (as in Mulhouse), through promoting religious home visits by both men and women as a way to restore morality in the face of misery (as in Lyon), or through taking a national law on unhealthy housing and producing some of the most expansive local investigations and surveys created in the century (as in Roubaix). Ultimately, as the socio-political climate shifted in each city towards the end of the period, even those who had most ardently opposed intervening in the 'housing question' felt obliged to by the threat to the sense of the city as their home became evident, but they did so only after decades of conscious inaction.

I have demonstrated that we need to move away from histories of housing that flatten out the provincial experience in an attempt to privilege narratives of reform and success. Not only was there not a single provincial history of elite attitudes to housing, within the three cities themselves there also existed conflicting and shifting attitudes within the municipal and industrial elite themselves. Just because all provincial elites were not making direct

CONCLUSION

interventions in the construction of working-class houses does not mean that we should disregard the central importance that the working-class home played in the construction of local and regional elite identities in the Second Empire and early Third Republic. As Eugène Motte's declaration that he 'loved the worker' and lived 'in his community' shows, decades of awareness of the housing question in these cities led to an ability to accept that the city belonged as much to the workers by the final decades of the century as it did to the long-established industrial and municipal elites.

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Fig. 0.1. Population of Roubaix, Mulhouse, and Lyon between 1800-1901

Sources: 'Notice communale: Roubaix',

http://cassini.ehess.fr/cassini/fr/html/fiche.php?select_resultat=29736 (9 May 2018);

'Notice communale: Mulhouse',

http://cassini.ehess.fr/cassini/fr/html/fiche.php?select_resultat=24395 (9 May 2018); M.

Garden, C. Bronnert, B. Chappe, *Paroisses et communes de France, Dictionnaire d'histoire*

administrative et démographique, Rhône, (Paris, 1978), pp. 188-94 (Lyon and suburbs)

Year	Roubaix	Mulhouse	La Croix Rousse (Lyon)	La Guillotière (Lyon)	Vaise (Lyon)	Lyon
1800	8,091	6,018	4,530 (1801)	5,972 (1801)	2,012 (1801)	88,919
1821	12,170	9,603	5,524 (1820)	10,000 (1820)	2,476 (1820)	131,258
1831	18,187	13,000	9,213	18,294	4,737	149,733
1841	24,802	20,129	18,750	25,730	5,503	155,939
1851	34,698	29,574	28,711	43,524	9,169	177,190
1856	39,445	45,981				292,721*
1861	49,274	45,587				318,803
1866	65,091	58,773				323,954
1872	75,987	52,892 (1871)				323,417
1876	83,661	58,513 (1875)				342,815
1881	91,757	63,629 (1880)				376,613
1886	100,299	69,759 (1885)				401,930
1891	114,917	76,892 (1890)				438,077
1896	124,661	82,986 (1895)				466,028
1901	124,265	89,118 (1900)				459,099

* Population includes the newly-annexed communes of La Croix Rousse, La Guillotière, and Vaise.

Fig. 1.1. The 'Melun Law' on *logements insalubres*, 13 April 1850

Source: AN F 8 210, 'Dépot des lois et actes du gouvernement: B. 252, No. 2068, Loi relative à l'assainissement des Logements insalubres des 19 janvier, 7 mars et 13 avril 1850 (promulguée le 22 avril 1850)', 1850

ART. 1. In every commune where the municipal council will have declared it necessary by a special deliberation, [the council] will name a commission charged with researching and indicating the necessary measures to clean up insalubrious dwellings and outbuildings leased or occupied by others than the landlord, the usufruct, or the user.

The dwellings deemed insalubrious are those which are in conditions that threaten the life or health of their inhabitants.

2. The commission will comprise nine members at the most, and five members at the least.

It will be necessary to have a doctor, and an architect or any other man skilled in the art, as well as a member of the *bureau de bienfaisance* and of the *conseil des prud'hommes*, if these institutions exist in the commune.

The presidency belongs to the mayor or to the adjoint.

The doctor and the architect can be chosen from outside of the commune.

The commission is renewed *tous les deux ans par tiers*; the outgoing members are indefinitely re-eligible.

In Paris, the commission is composed of twelve members.

3. The commission will visit the places reported as insalubrious. It will determine the state of insalubrity, and will indicate the causes as well as the means to remedy them.

It will designate the dwellings which would not be susceptible of improvement.

4. The reports of the commission will be deposited in the secretariat of the *mairie*, and the interested parties to take notice and submit their comments within a month.

5. At the end of this period, the reports and observations will be submitted to the municipal council, which will determine,
 1. The works of improvement and the places where it will be necessary to be entirely or partially executed, as well as the completion deadlines;
 2. The lodgings which are not susceptible to improvement.
6. An appeal against these decisions is available to the people concerned in front of the prefectural council, within a period of one month from the date of the notification of the municipal *arrêté*. This appeal will be suspensive.
7. By virtue of the decision of the municipal council or of that of the prefectural council, in the case of appeal, if it is recognized that the causes of insalubrity are due to the owner or usufruct, the municipal authority, by the means of order and of police, will enjoin him to execute the works deemed necessary.
8. The openings used for the execution of sanitising works will be exempt, for a period of three years, from the contribution of doors and windows.
9. In case of inexecution of the work deemed necessary in the determined time periods, and if the dwelling continues to be occupied by a third party, the landlord or the usufruct will be liable to a penalty of between sixteen to a hundred francs. If the works have not been executed in the year following the condemnation, and if the unhealthy dwelling has continued to be occupied by a third party, the landlord or usufruct will be liable to a penalty equal to the value of the works, and could be doubled.
10. If it is recognized that the dwelling is not susceptible to improvement, and that the causes of insalubrity are dependent on the dwelling itself, the municipal authority will be able, in the time limit that it will fix, to prohibit provisionally the rental as a dwelling.

The absolute prohibition can only be pronounced by the prefectural council, and, in this case, there will be appeals to its decision in front of the Council of State.

The landlord or usufruct who contravenes the pronounced prohibition will be sentenced to a fine of between sixteen and a hundred francs, and, in case of recurrence in a year, to a fine equal to double of the rental value of the prohibited dwelling.

11. When, as a result of the execution of the present law, there will be a termination of leases, such termination shall not give the lessee any damages.
12. Article 463 of the *Code penal* will be applicable to all contraventions of the above.
13. When insalubrity is the result of external and permanent causes, or when these causes can only be destroyed by general work, the commune may acquire, following the forms and after the accomplishment of the formalities prescribed by the law of 3 May 1841, the totality of the properties comprised in the perimeter of the works.

The portion of these properties which, after the remediation has been carried out, remain outside the alignments for the new constructions, will be able to be resold at a public auction, without, in this case, the former owners or their beneficiaries requesting the application of articles 60 and 61 of the law of 3 May 1841.

14. The fines imposed by virtue of this law will be attributed in entirety to the office or establishment of *bienfaisance* of the area where the dwellings to which these fines are incurred are located.

Fig. 2.1. *Courées* indicated in the 1819 map of Roubaix

Source: ADN S 439, 'Plan d'alignement de la ville de Roubaix', 21 Oct. 1819

Name	Location of entrance	Entrance houses owners	No. of houses in cour	Owner(s)
Impasse appelé cour Grimonprez	10-12 Rue de l'Abreuvoir	Pierre Grimonprez (10) Vve François Lehembre (12)	6	François Lehembre (1-5 odds) Pierre Grimonprez (2-6 evens)
Cour de la Citadelle	6-8 Rue du Curé/2 Rue du Curé and 4 Contour de l'Eglise	Pierre Prouvost (6) Adrien Bonte (8)/ Duhamel (2) Constantin Philippe (4)	11	Adrien Bonte
Cour du Petit Lannoy	4-6 Rue des Bourbons	Boyaval Roussel (4) Lambin (6)	18	Lambin (nos. 1-9 odds) Duchatel-Malfait (2-12 evens, 11-23 odds)
Cour Boez	26-28 Rue des Bourbons	Pierre Watteau (26) Vve Salembier (28)	6	Vve Salembier (1-11 odds)
Cour Seloisse	62-64 Rue du Galandan	Vve Noel Seloisse (62) Vve Pierre Seloisse (64)	11	Jean-Bapt. Wacrenier (1-9 odds) Vve Noel Seloisse (2-12 evens)
Cour Legaire	64-66 Rue du Galandan	Vve Pierre Seloisse (64) Denis Legaire (66)	4	Denis Legaire
Cour St Antoine	14-16 Rue du Faubourg St. Antoine	Bouvier (14) Grimonprez-Bulteau (16)	5	Grimonprez-Bulteau (1-3 odds) Bouvier (2, 4)
Cour Malfait/Malfait	26-28 Rue d'Henry Quatre	Bayart-Lefebvre (26) Jean-Bapt. Beghin (28)	12	Beghin-Delcourt (1-5 odds) Delcourt-Chombart (7, 9, 12, 14) Bayart-Lefebvre (2-10 evens)
Cour Augustin Prevost	35-37 Rue des Bourbons	Augustin Prevost	11	Augustin Prevost
Cour Desbonnet	25-27 Rue de l'Abreuvoir	François Bonat (25) Louis Delcroix (27)	15	Louis Delcroix
Cour des Trépassées	29-31 Rue Nain	Vve Jean-Bapt Bussy (29) Jean-Bapt Tierce (31)	6	Roussel-Tierce
Cour de la Chapelle de paix	45 Rue Nain/Cour Bonave	François Bonat	5	Hospice de Roubaix
Cour Bonave	43-45 Rue Nain	François Bonat	6	Bonave-Decresne (sp)
			126 total	

Fig. 2.2. *Impasse dit Cour Grimonprez* (left) and *Cour Boez* (right), Roubaix

Source: ADN S 439, 'Plan général de la Ville de Roubaix', 1819, 1st sheet

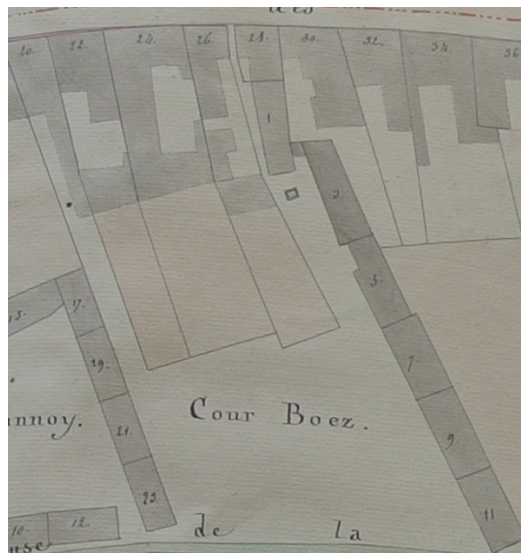


Fig. 2.3. *Cour Augustin Prevost* (left) and *Cour du Petit Lannoy* (right), Roubaix

Source: ADN S 439, 'Plan général de la Ville de Roubaix', 1819, 1st and 3rd sheet

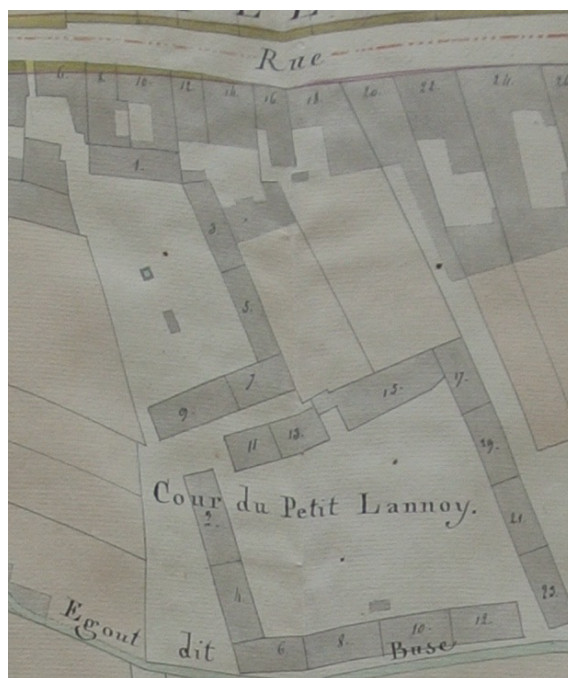


Fig. 2.4. Extract from map of Roubaix, 1847

A = Fort Bayart, central; **B** = Fort Frasez, top left

Source: ADN P 31/278, Cadastral map of Roubaix, 1847



Fig. 2.5. The *Fort Bayart*, Roubaix

Source: ADN P 31/278, Cadastral map of Roubaix, 1847

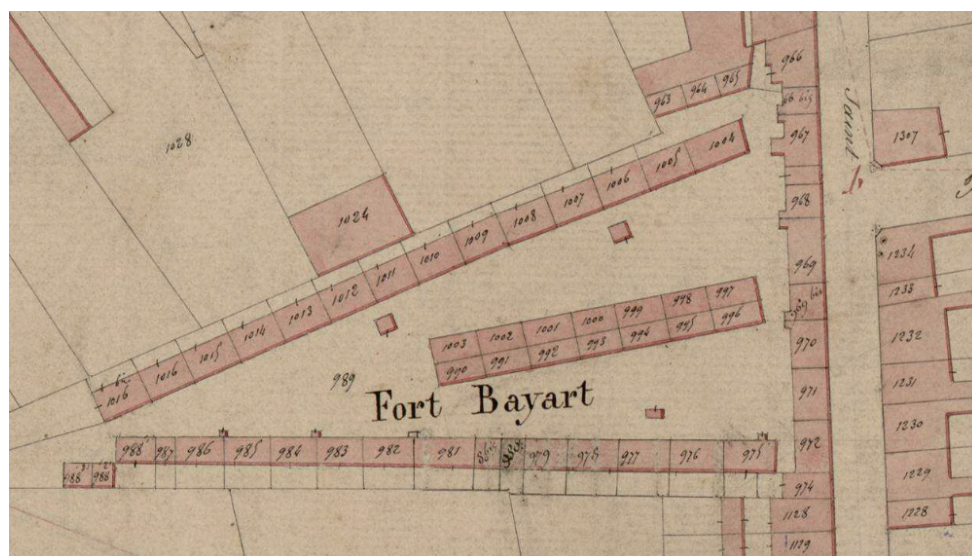


Fig. 2.6. The *Fort Frases*, Roubaix

Source: ADN P 31/278, Cadastral map of Roubaix, 1847



Fig. 2.7. Photo showing the impact of the flood of 1856 in Lyon

Source: Met. Museum, 2007.455, Édouard Baldus (1813-89), 'The Floods of 1856, Church of Saint-Pothin, Lyon (June 1856)', at

<http://metmuseum.org/exhibitions/view?exhibitionId={5992e04c-2a5a-4d34-9e0d-929a263289e6}&oid=288843> (accessed 9 May 2018)



Fig. 2.8. The *Cité de l'Enfant Jésus*, Lyon

Source: AML 744 WP 075, 'Construction de la Cité de l'Enfant Jésus', s.d. (c. 1856-7)

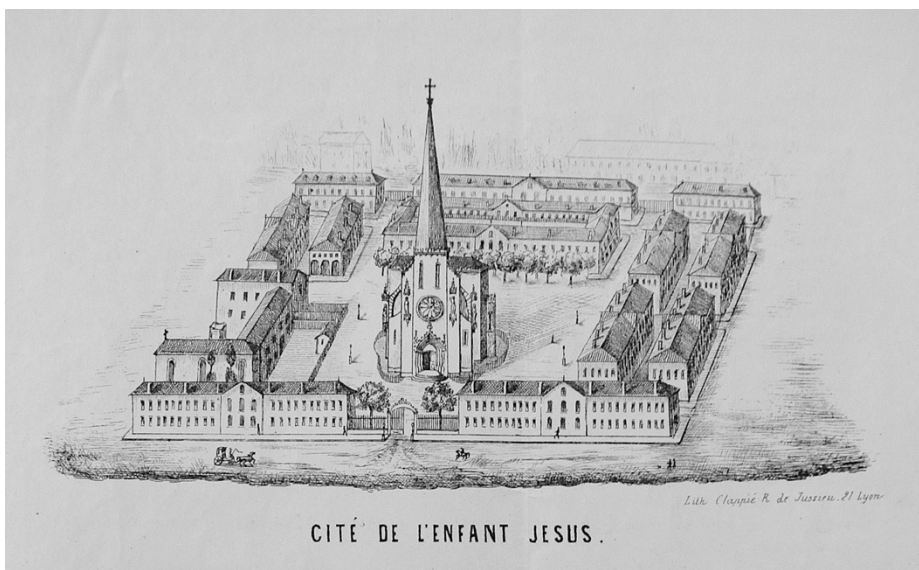


Fig. 2.9. The '*maisons contiguës*' style of house, Mulhouse

Source: Muller, *Habitations ouvrières et agricoles*, pl. 4

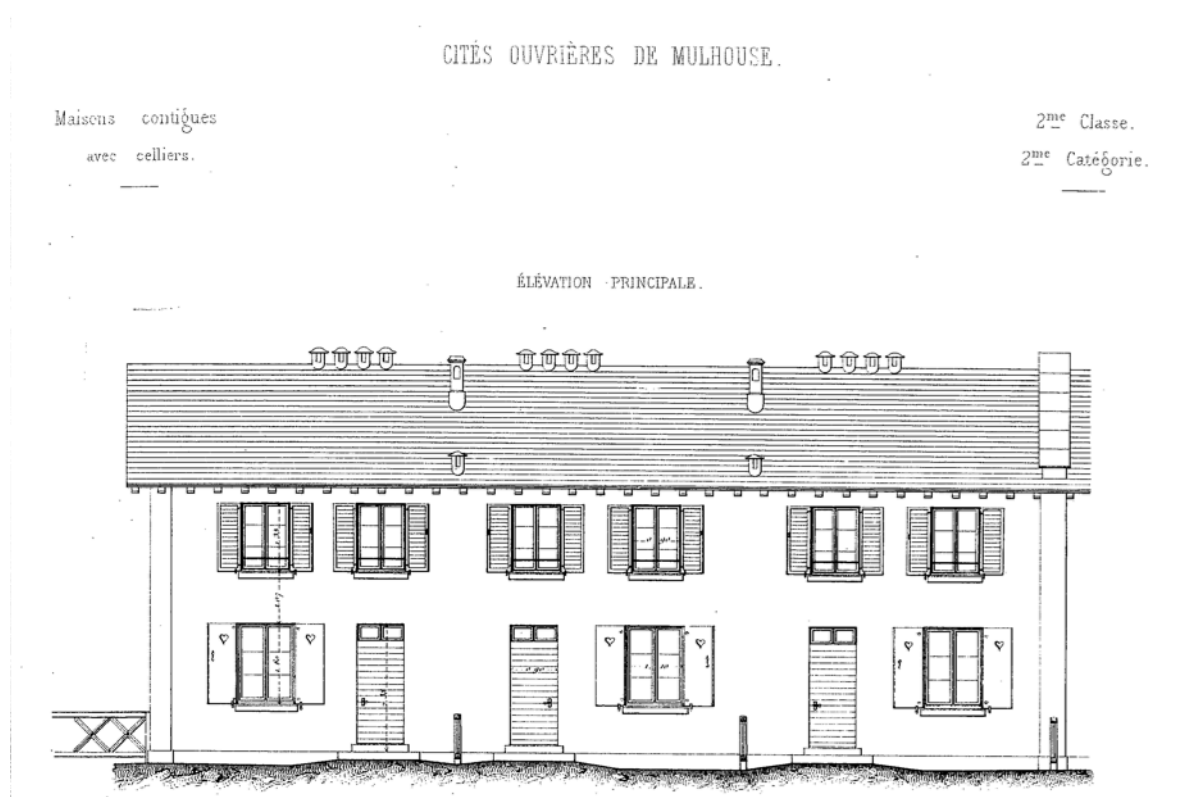


Fig. 2.10. The '*carré Mulhousien*' style of house, front elevation and top view, Mulhouse

Source: Muller, *Habitations ouvrières et agricoles*, pl. 9

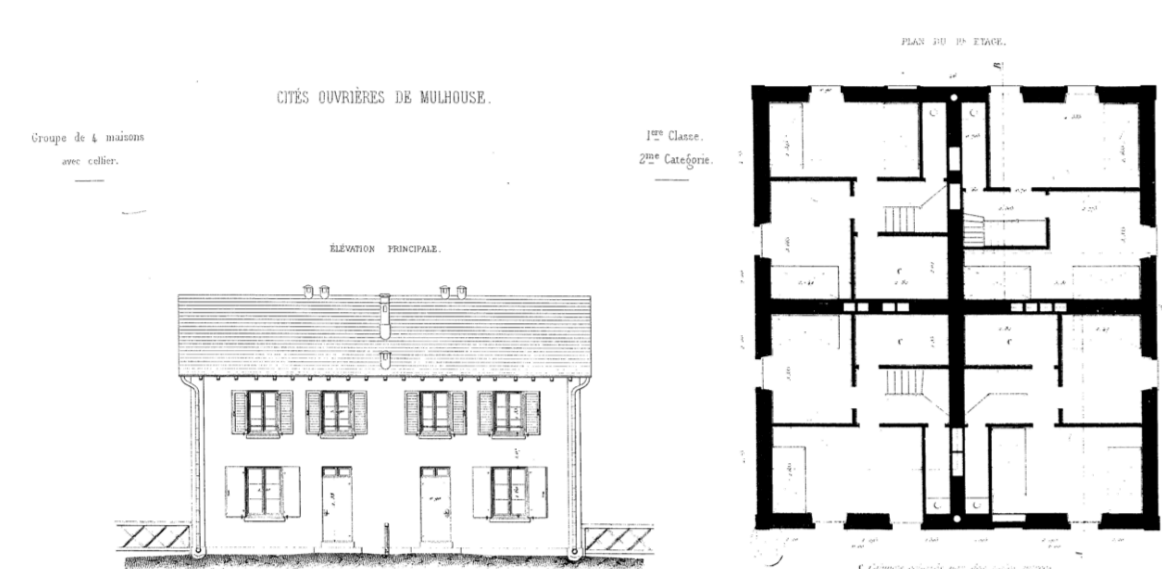


Fig. 2.11. Map of the *cités ouvrières*, c. 1855-6, Mulhouse

Source: Muller, *Habitations ouvrières et agricoles*, pl. 1

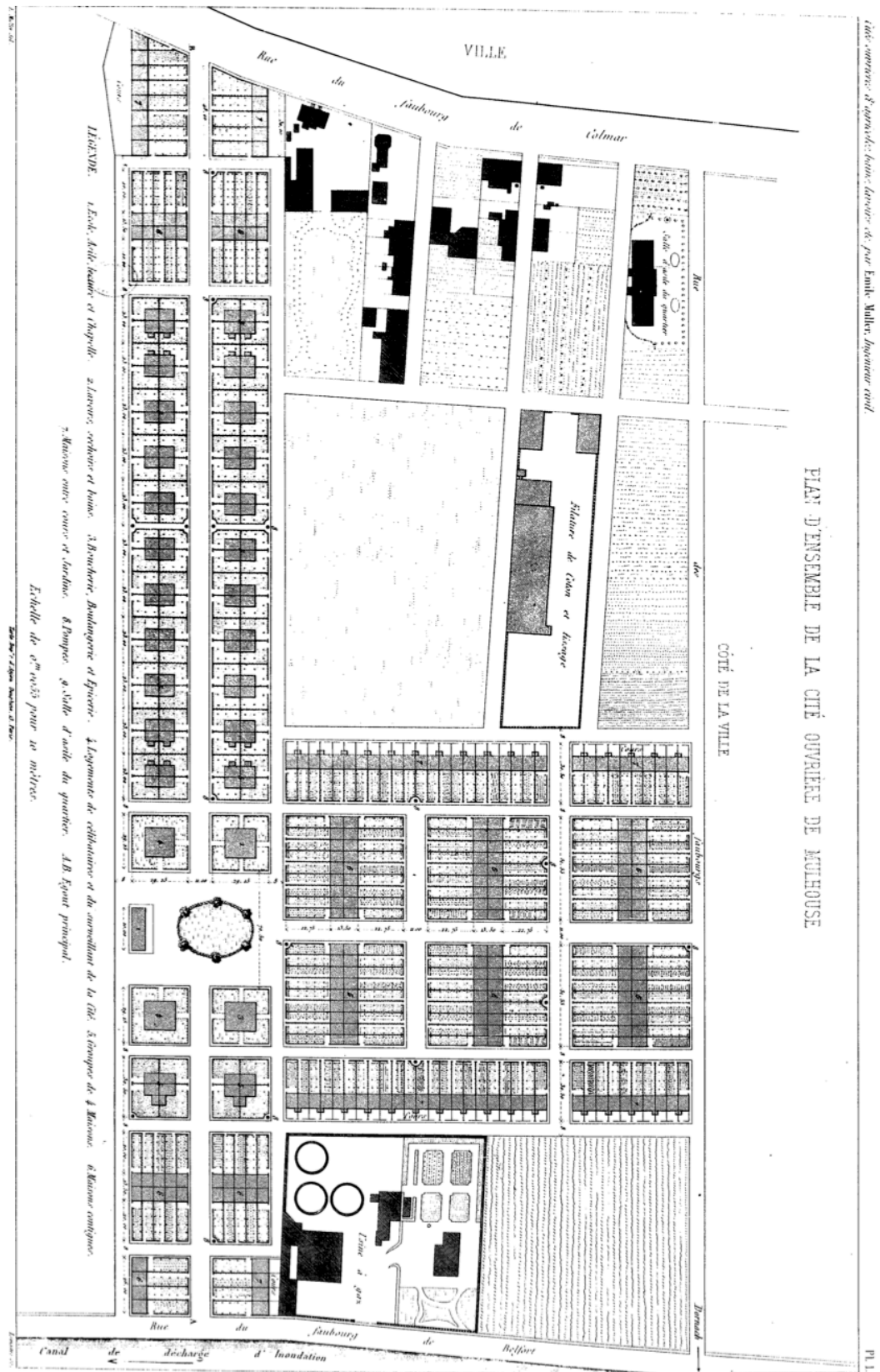


Fig. 2.12. Map of the *cités ouvrières*, c. 1865, Mulhouse

Source: Penot, 'Les cités ouvrières du Haut-Rhin', appendix

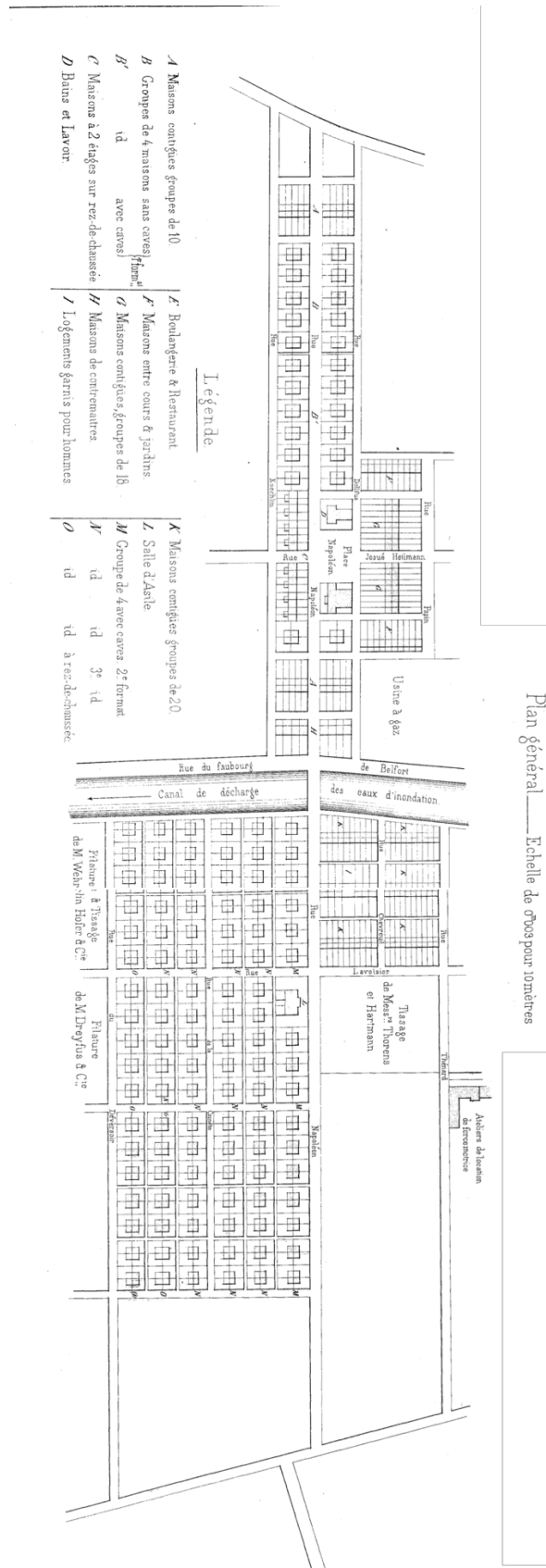


Fig. 2.13. The 1867 *Exposition Universelle* main pavilion on the Champ de Mars

Detail (below) shows the model *carré Mulbousien*.

Source: Leon & Levy, 'Exposition Universelle', Paris, 1867

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Fig. 3.1. Cross-sections of 'carré Mulhousien' style of houses, Mulhouse

Two separate houses shown, divided by shared central wall.

Source: Muller, *Habitations ouvrières*, pl. 10

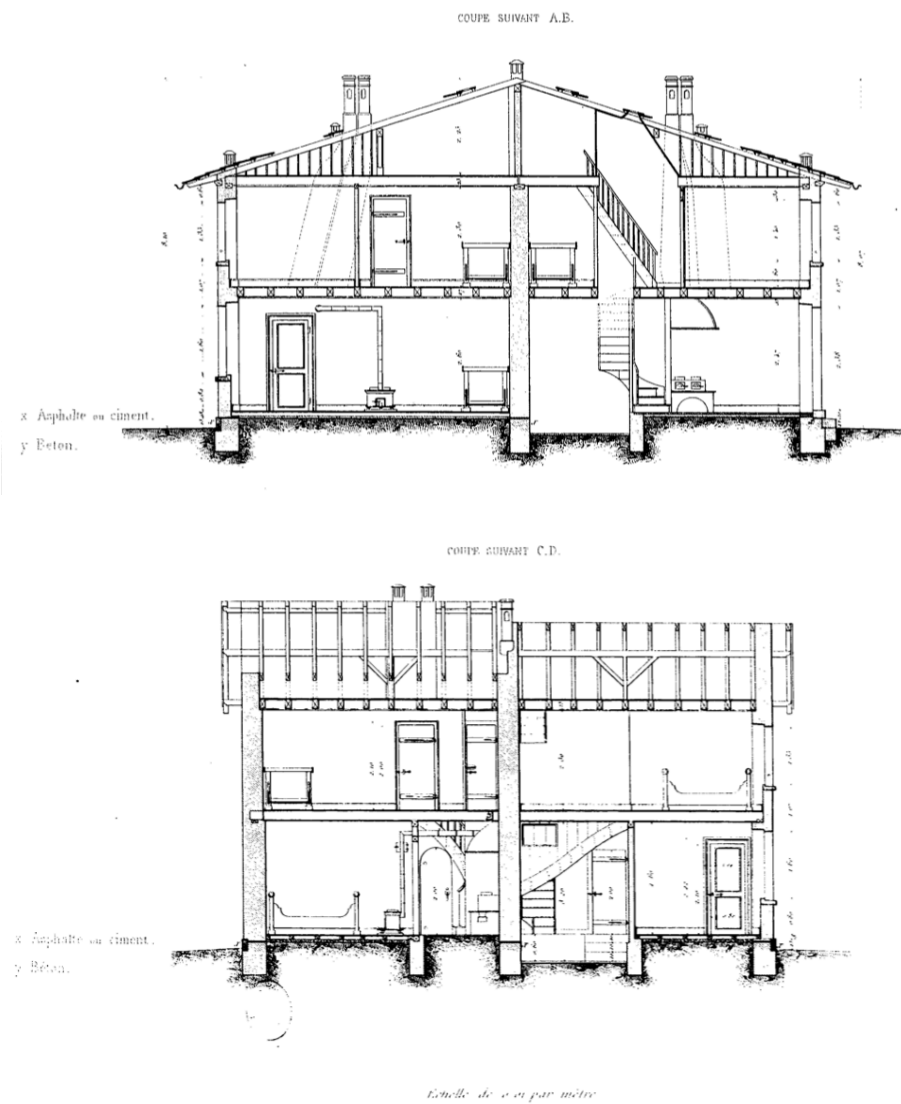


Fig. 4.1. Promotional images of the *carré Mulhousien* for the 1867 *Exposition Universelle*

Source: AN CP/F/12/11872/1, 'Exposition Universelle de 1867. Classe 93, Maisons d'ouvriers', 1867



Fig. 5.1. Extract of map of Mulhouse showing distinct quarters, 1868

A = medieval centre; **B** = '*Nouveau Quartier*', from c. 1826; **C** = *cités ouvrières*, from 1853

Source = BMM B 157 N14, 'Plan d'alignement', 1868



Fig. 5.2. Extract of map of Mulhouse showing location of different churches, 1868

A = Saint Marie (Catholic), c. thirteenth century; **B** = Saint Etienne (Catholic), 1855-60; **C** = Saint Etienne (Protestant), reconstructed 1858-66

Source = BMM B 157 N14, 'Plan d'alignement', 1868



Fig. 5.3. Cross-section plan of Saint-Joseph, c. 1880, Mulhouse

Note the exposed metal skeleton, meant to recall the interior of a factory

Source: Poinso and Scheurer, 'Église paroissiale Saint-Joseph', p. 20

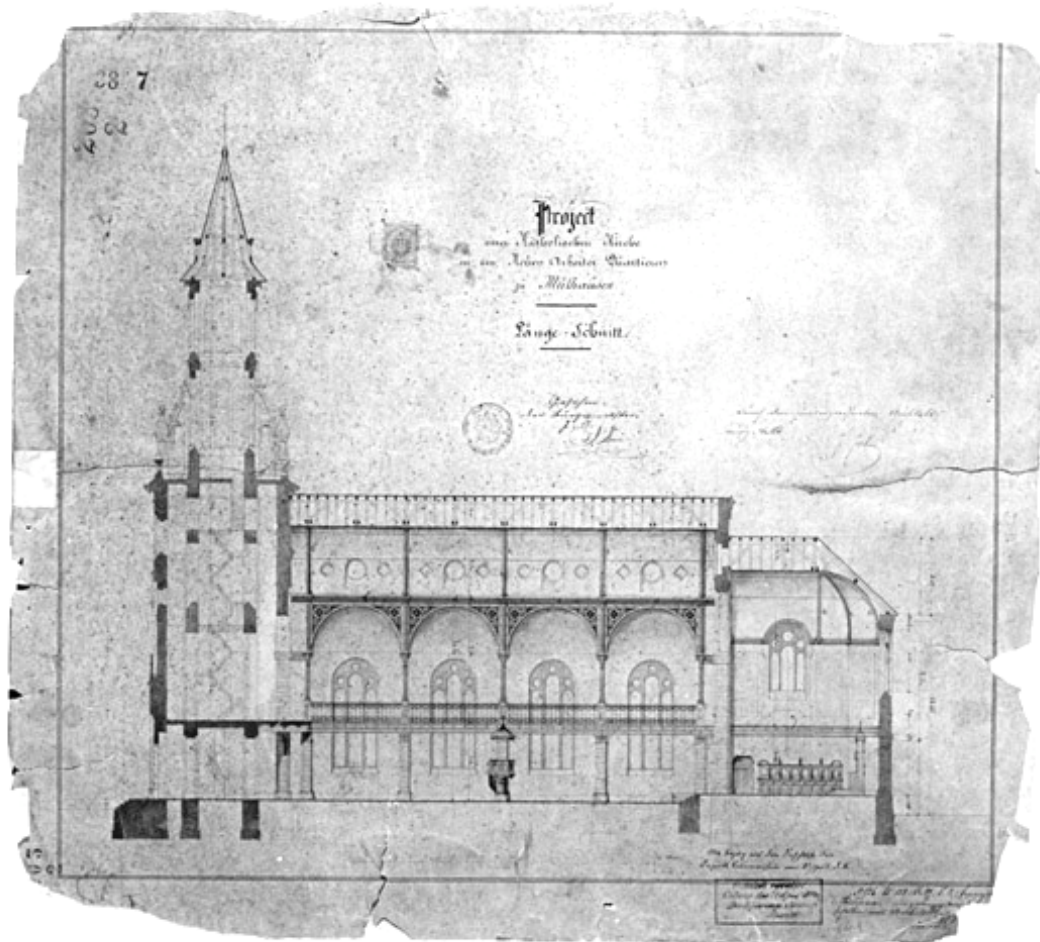
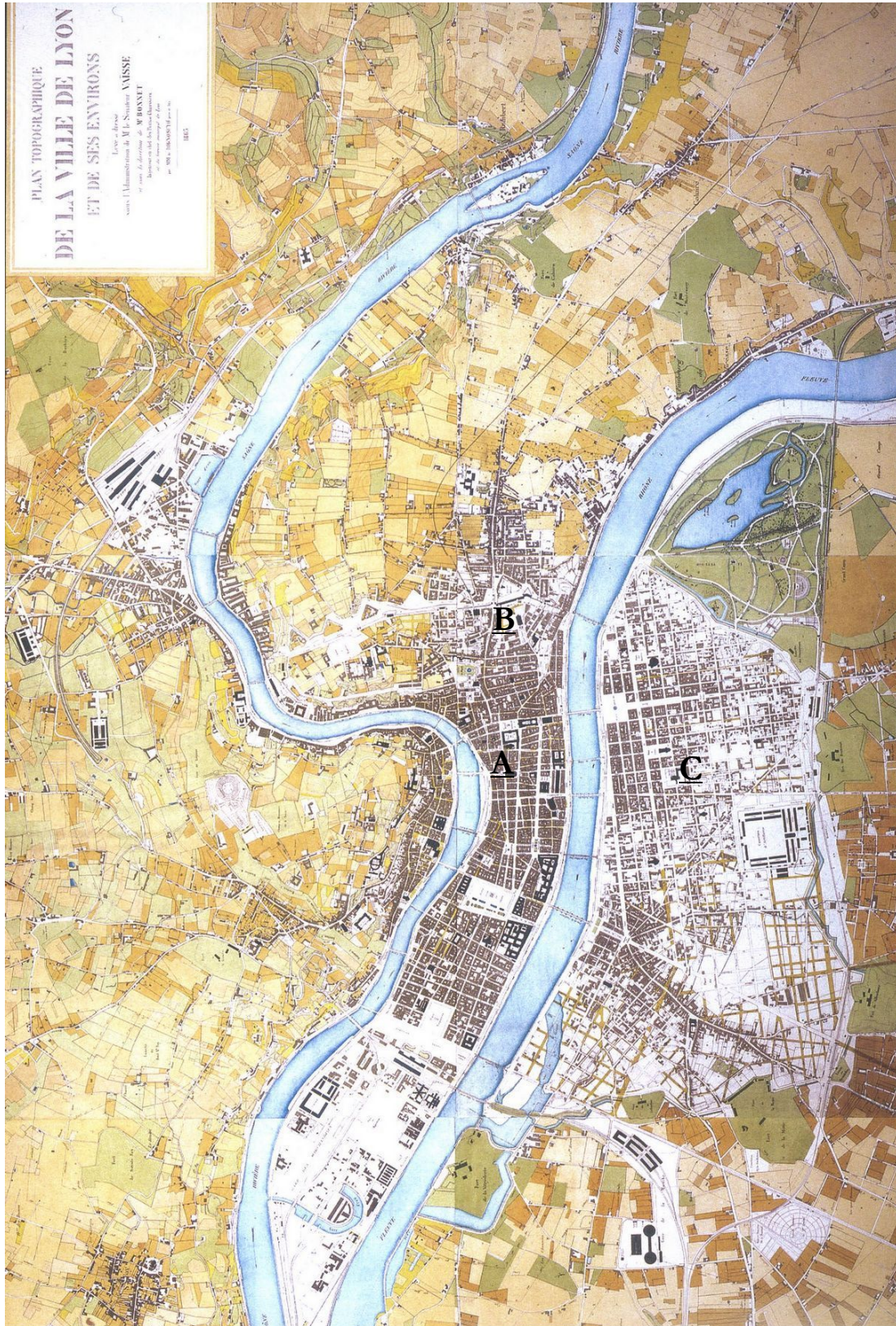


Fig. 5.4. Map of Lyon, 1863

A = Rue Impériale and Rue de l'Impératrice, B = La Croix Rousse; C = La Guillotière

Source: BML C 08001-M08, 'Plan topographique de la ville de Lyon et de ces environs', 1863



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