Bridge Between Theatre and Classroom

A Case Study of NTGent’s Spiegelproject in a Secondary School

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Declaration

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Bálint Juhász, 25 February 2020
Summary

This case study explored secondary school students' experiences in a Spiegelproject carried out by NTGent, the city theatre of Ghent, Belgium in comparison with the theatre's artistic agenda adopted in 2018. Spiegelprojects are organised by NTGent’s Public Outreach (Publiekswerking) department. They invite a group of non-professional performers from a variety of educational or non-educational contexts to attend one of NTGent's productions and to create their own version of it. In the 2018-2019 season, NTGent summarised its new artistic policy in the Ghent Manifesto, conveying a vision of a participatory theatre, which aims for the inclusion of underrepresented groups, and has social and political relevance. The purpose of the study was to analyse the correspondences between the actual project and the overall artistic mission of the house and to see how these play a role in the participants’ experiences of the Spiegelproject. To contextualise NTGent's endeavours for participation, the study included a review of literature about theatre companies’ educational theatre initiatives, their efforts to broaden the scope of audiences, and the pursuit to invite non-professionals to perform on stage.

The examined project was organised between January and April 2019, in collaboration with a secondary school in the neighbourhood of Ghent, and the participation of three parallel final year classes between. The sample included 53 students aged 17-19, four school teachers, the drama teacher commissioned by the theatre, and the head of NTGent’s Publiekswerking department. The research adopted a mixed methods case study approach. It gathered quantitative and qualitative data through three student questionnaires at three different points of the study. The programme leaders’ opinions were obtained through qualitative semi-structured interviews and a qualitative focus group interview was conducted with five of the students. In addition, the researcher made non-participant observations throughout the course of the project.

The study revealed that while the Spiegelproject incorporated participatory principles of the Manifesto, its design associated it more with theatre education approaches, which aim to create more appreciation and awareness of theatre arts. Overall, the project
increased students' interest in attending NTGent performances, it created stronger bonds among participants, and contributed to raise awareness of its key topics: homophobia and the challenge of protecting vulnerable people in a public situation. However, its approach engaged students unevenly, and did not enable them to equally benefit from their participation. The study implies that more complex and process-oriented drama methods would help to involve students more evenly. The key recommendation emerging from the research is to continue clarifying the role and the purpose of education and participatory practices within NTGent's agenda, as more synergies can contribute to the profundity of the projects.
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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 The Study

This case study examines 53 final year secondary school students’ experiences of a youth theatre project, administered by NTGent, the city theatre of Ghent, Belgium. The project was carried out between January and April 2019 by the theatre’s Public Outreach (Publiekswerking, PW) department in collaboration with the teachers from the school. It was an example of the PW’s Spiegelproject practice, which engages a group of non-professional performers to watch one of NTGent’s productions and create their own version of it. In 2018, the theatre’s new leadership pronounced a new artistic mission for the house, encapsulated in the Ghent Manifesto. The study compares the experiences of the Spiegelproject with the vision and principles expressed in the Manifesto.

1.2 Theatre and Education as Vehicles for Participation and Social Change

In publishing the Ghent Manifesto, NTGent set out new ways of operation, aiming among others to effect change beyond the boundaries of the theatre and to better include diverse communities. The latter goal is not entirely new, strengthening the inclusion of civic communities has been among the policies of the house. For more than a decade, the theatre has been offering a broad range of activities besides its productions, targeting people of different ages and diverse groups of society. This included various programmes for schools. However, the newly assigned mission of the theatre calls for the participation of non-professionals in its core artistic work. While the transformation of the house is still ongoing, the study can help the theatre to reflect on its educational and participatory activities, and assess how the already existing practice can integrate into the new vision. Despite the world-wide recognition of NTGent’s agenda, no study has been carried out about it to the author's knowledge. Furthermore, educational theatre programmes, as part of theatre houses’ overall agenda, is an area which is under researched. However,
pertinent studies can illuminate significant aspects of such projects' effectiveness and their impact on participants' lives.

1.3 The Aims of the Study

The aim of this study is to explore students' experiences in NTGent's Spiegelproject and examine the project in the light of the Ghent Manifesto to better understand how they correspond with each other. The research question guiding this study is:

What is the relationship between NTGent's Manifesto, the principles of a Spiegelproject and secondary school participants' experience?

The following sub-questions help to address the specific areas in the focus of the research:

1. How do students experience taking part in the Spiegelproject?

2. What do school teachers' and the theatre's team aim to achieve through the Spiegelproject?

3. Does the Spiegelproject participants' experience relate to the principles of the Manifesto? If yes, how?

4. Does the Spiegelproject enable students to develop a sense of ownership of the process?

1.4 Methods

This was a mixed-methods single case study with a longitudinal design. It included a literature review of comparable practices. The data were triangulated by obtaining responses from all 53 student participants, the four school teachers involved in the project, the drama teacher commissioned by the theatre and the Head of NTGent's PW (HPW). The researcher's non-participant observations supplemented an additional perspective. Students completed three mixed-methods questionnaires. The first two, before and after watching NTGent's performance, ‘La Reprise’, were part of the baseline
data. In the Post-Project Questionnaire, students reflected on the project. In addition, five of the students took part in a qualitative focus group interview following the project. School teachers participated in two qualitative semi-structured individual interviews: first, after students had watched ‘La Reprise’ and second, after the end of the project. The drama teacher and the HPW took part in semi-structured qualitative individual interviews during the project, and the HPW was interviewed for a second time after the project. The questionnaires were administered in Dutch, the interviews were partly in English, partly in Dutch according to the interviewees’ choice. During the analysis Dutch data was translated into English.

1.5 Personal Justification

I have been working with politically and socially engaged theatre and education for many years, foremost in Hungary, where finally our company, Krétakör, had to shut down due to its critical voice towards the political regime. These years meant an enriching experience about theatre’s capacity to engage various parts of society in a creative dialogue about public matters, and about the role education can play in that. The experiences also led to numerous questions about respecting the needs of those involved, and the projects’ impacts on their lives. NTGent’s current leader, Milo Rau is among the most recognised politically engaged theatre artists of Europe today. His appointment as the artistic director of a theatre house, and the Manifesto NTGent launched with him were gripping developments. I was motivated to explore how the new vision speaks to the theatre’s education practice.

1.6 Thesis Layout

Chapter One introduces the study and explains its purposes. Chapter Two reviews literature about theatres’ endeavours for participation: first, educational theatre initiatives of theatre companies; second, efforts to broaden the scope of audiences; and third, the pursuit to invite non-professionals to perform on stage. The final part of the chapter
contextualises NTGent’s PW work and the Spiegelproject practice. Chapter Three describes the methods and instruments applied to explore the subject of the research. Chapter Four presents the findings of the study. Chapter Five discusses the main emerging themes of the study, analyses the key findings in the light of the research questions, and outlines their further implications. Finally, Chapter Six summarises and concludes the research and indicates areas for further consideration about NTGent’s Spiegelproject practice and other participatory education projects.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The main aims of this study are to explore how NTGent’s vision represented in the Ghent Manifesto speaks to the education programme implemented by the theatre's Public Outreach (Publiekswerking, PW) department, and to better understand how this vision translates into the theatre’s practice.

Principles identified in the Ghent Manifesto and the fact that the study examined an educational theatre project, inform the selection of literature this chapter presents. These principles, examined more thoroughly in Section 2.12, are the following:

- Pursuing a vision of participatory theatre
- Inclusion of underrepresented communities
- Raising awareness about current social and political matters
- Conveying theatre as a process

First, the chapter examines educational theatre initiatives, primarily Theatre in Education (TiE) and Drama in Education (DiE). These are highly developed participatory and educational theatre methods which pertain to several of the above mentioned principles. Furthermore, it will look at theatre education and youth theatre programmes, as similar approaches to NTGent’s Spiegelproject practice. Later in the chapter, the work will explore key concepts around theatres’ endeavour for participation, which include broadening the audience by reaching out to underrepresented groups in society and involving non-professional actors to perform on stage. Finally, the chapter will discuss the context of the studied youth theatre project, the cultural inclusion policies in Flanders, NTGent's Public Outreach programme, the theatre's recently adopted agenda, and the concept of the Spiegelproject.
2.2 Roots of Participatory Endeavours in Education and Theatre

The deconstruction of the traditional teacher role as the exclusive source of knowledge in the progressive movement in education placed the child at the centre of its own learning and opened ways for more autonomous and dialogical education (Howlett, 2013). Progressive approaches aimed to invite students to be more active in their learning and consequently, to acquire a sense of ownership of their course of study (Bolton, 1999).

In somewhat analogous developments, 20th century innovatory performing arts trends sought to eradicate the separation of actors and spectators typical to the mainstream proscenium theatre (Schechner, 2003; Bishop, 2012). Performing artists aimed to enhance spectators’ engagement, to redefine the relation between the performer and its viewers and to re-establish the frame of a theatrical event.

In this context, Bertolt Brecht (1964a) is still a point of reference among both participatory and educational theatre concepts, although he advocated that audiences should remain pure observers during a performance. However, Brecht asserted that theatre should activate the spectators instead of reinforcing their passive role. He believed that the human being is capable of alteration, and theatre could catalyse social change. In his vision, theatre was entitled to provoke its audience to reflect and critically evaluate the theatrical experience. He considered theatre instructive, without revoking its “amusing” quality (1964b, p. 72). This simultaneity is reminiscent of Schechner’s (2003) theory, where efficacy and entertainment are implicit characters of all performances to some degree. Brecht’s notion of theatre as an engine of social change recurred in various artistic attempts to activate the audience or to engage with spectators in a dialogue.

Similarly, Brecht’s work finds resonance in Paulo Friere’s (2017) writings, the founder of critical pedagogy. Freire sought to challenge established oppressive relations in society. He appealed for a dialogical exploration of culture in education. In Freire’s vision, students take part in shaping the process of education, and teachers and the culture they represent are not the exclusive source of authority. Participation in Freire’s concept was a necessary component to reorganise society. According to him, traditional education and the established cultural values it imposed were often means of preserving social status.
quo. He asserted that education should strive for the opposite, through enabling the powerless to participate in forming the way they are educated. He conceptualised education as an instrument for change, beyond the boundaries of schools (Schugurensky, 2014).

In the field of theatre, both Freire’s theory and Brecht’s approach had a major influence on Augusto Boal’s (2008) vision. Active participation in a theatrical event is a key element in Boal’s practice. He developed several forms of interaction between performers and the audience. In Forum Theatre, his best known technique described in Theatre of the Oppressed, he sought to examine an oppressive social situation by involving spectators. As the performed situation intended to have direct reference to the social conditions of the actual audience, by participating, they reacted on both the presented fiction and their own reality. Boal applied the term ‘spect-actor’, implicating the active involvement of spectators. Participation for him was an instrument of emancipation.

In conclusion, it can be asserted that calls for participation appeared both in the progressive education movement and in innovative theatre practices of the last century. These endeavours were recurrently informed by political considerations and looked for ways to provoke critical reflection, transform power relations and challenge the current establishment. By proposing an active role instead of a traditionally passive one, the initiators aspired to reorganise established relations and to share their commonly privileged position. The following sections discuss TiE and DiE, practices that emerged at the intersection of theatre and education and were commonly discerned by their participative character (Bolton, 1993; Jackson & Vine, 2013).

2.3 Theatre in Education

The development of TiE can be associated with both the progressive educational trends and the pursuit to reconsider the role of the audience in performing arts (Bolton, 1999, Jackson, 2013 & Wooster, 2016). The present and the following sections consider key characteristics of TiE and DiE as prominent and well developed approaches to
participatory and instructive theatre and drama. The first TiE performance was created in 1965 by Belgrade Theatre of Coventry, following the initiative of Gordon Vallins. He negotiated with the local schools and authorities to set up a collaboration scheme and a dedicated company within the theatre (Turner, 2010). Their example started a movement across Britain and several TiE companies were founded (Wooster, 2016). The desire for political change through more empowerment (Wooster, 2016) and the endeavours of theatres to connect with broader parts of society (Jackson & Vine, 2013) meant strong impetus for companies engaging in the movement.

TiE offers a particular way of cooperation for theatre professionals and schools. TiE programmes most commonly invite students to discover a particular learning area through experiencing theatre played by professional artists and by taking part in carefully designed participative activities. Its key feature, “structured active participation” (Jackson & Vine, 2013, p. 5) invites students to explore an issue within a shared imagination. Since TiE programmes are typically designed to be attended by one class (C. Cooper, 2013), it creates a contained learning situation. The topic of the programme might have relevance to the curriculum or to the students’ own lives (Jackson & Vine, 2013). The educational objective of TiE is not to pass a particular information or message, but to explore values and universal questions. TiE does not provide answers, rather seeks to provoke a search for them (C. Cooper, 2013; M. Cooper, 2013). Although TiE might equally examine practical matters, these are often presented in a more complex perspective. As an example for this, M. Cooper (2013, p. 110) proposes the following overarching question for a play about road safety: “How can I feel safe in a world which seems unpredictably hostile?” Writing about TiE programmes with an instructive agenda, Winston (2005, p. 310) suggests that programmes should avoid reiterating a broadly agreed belief, which he describes as affirming “the opinion of believers” and “celebration of certain values”.

Bolton (1993) asserts that TiE is process-oriented, and divides it from other forms of drama in schools that prioritise performance creation or the improvement of students’ skills. He suggests that the aim of participation in TiE is experiencing and not presenting. In his view, the activity is akin to children’s make-believe play, where they have agency, but are simultaneously the “recipients of the experience” (p. 70). TiE programmes are led
by actor-teachers, who have both educational and theatrical expertise and have a twofold mission. They call students into an imaginary situation by acting and they are responsible for guiding participants’ learning process during the programme (C. Cooper, 2013).

After TiE’s peak period in Britain between in the 1970s and 1990s, several companies dissolved (Wooster, 2016). However, TiE remains internationally influential today in the context of educational and other forms of applied theatre (Pendergast & Saxton, 2009; Jackson & Vine, 2013). TiE and DiE practices influenced the development of each other and theoretical frameworks in the literature are often used interchangeably for TiE and DiE (Bolton, 1993; Jackson, 2013). The following section presents thus key features of DiE pertinent to this study in comparison with TiE.

2.4 Drama in Education and its Common Principles with Theatre in Education

DiE is a term most commonly used to describe a discipline that was developed in the 1960s and 1970s in Britain, simultaneously with TiE movement (Bolton, 2010, as cited in C. Cooper, 2013). The emergence of DiE is generally associated with the work of Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton (Piazzoli, 2012). It regards drama as a “mode of learning” (O’Neill & Lambert, 1982, p. 11) in school settings, wherein teachers use fiction to explore reality with students (Heathcote, 2015a). Similar to TiE, DiE is particularly apt to engage in cross-curriculum objectives. Heathcote (2015b) asserts that drama can serve as practice for real life, improving students’ emotional, social and expressive capacities, and it stimulates curiosity through emotional involvement. Bolton (1976, as cited in Davis, 2014) aims for students to understand themselves and the world better, and consider their relationship to it by participating in drama. Like Heathcote (2015a) and Bolton (1999), Cecily O’Neill emphasises that through drama students encounter an art form. David Davis (2014) suggests that drama enables participants to recognise and reflect on “social pressures that enter us” (p. 54).

A key feature of DiE is that teachers often facilitate the drama by taking roles, a strategy introduced by Heathcote, called “teacher-in-role” (Bolton, 1999). Bolton (1993) regards
the function of actor-teachers in TiE an extended use of DiE’s teacher-in-role. Students’ active participation is equally pivotal in DiE and TiE (C. Cooper, 2013; Wright, 2011). Bolton (1993) points out as main commonality that the whole group takes part in the activity and students are often framed to be in roles together as a group.

Neither DiE nor TiE concentrate on developing students’ performing skills (Bolton, 1993). Similarly to TiE, DiE is often characterised by the prominence of process and labelled as “process-drama”, a term coined by O’Neill (1995). She suggests that in process drama, students can take roles and engage in fictional events in a protected way, without the need to demonstrate subtle acting skills, as the aim is to explore a dramatic event and not the preparation of a theatre performance. O’Neill notes that she applies the word ‘process’ to distinguish the form from activities that concentrate on the latter.

Key distinction between TiE and DiE is that the former is performance-based, while the latter does not include theatrical scenes presented by actors to the students (C. Cooper, 2013). Consequently, in DiE, participants are never in pure spectator position (O’Neill, 1995). However, several authors emphasise that in DiE, students are self-spectators while immersing themselves in the fiction of the drama (Bolton, 1999; O’Neill, 1995; O’Toole, 1992).

In conclusion, both TiE and DiE are elaborate participatory activities that enable students to engage in learning activities by immersing themselves in the art form of theatre. TiE and DiE help students to reflect and critically evaluate their relationship to society and explore matters typically beyond school curriculum. Exponents of these practices put emphasis on experiencing in a fictional frame instead of concentrating on creating a performance as the outcome of the work. TiE and DiE generally aim for the participation of the whole group and frequently frame the entire group by offering a common role.

Although, initially both of these disciplines were employed in classroom settings, their evolution and influence go beyond the school environment and bear impact on a wide range of participatory and educational theatre practices. The next section will look at other educational theatre practices that can be associated with NTGent’s Spiegelproject practice.
2.5 Other Educational Theatre and Drama Practices

By the turn of the millennium, a large variety of participatory theatre forms with an educational profile were developed by professional companies (Jackson & Vine, 2013). More recently, these were often categorised under the broad term of Applied Theatre (Pendergast & Saxton, 2009). Although Jackson and Vine (2013) offer a brief and incomplete overview of various forms, they note that there is no universally applicable terminology. This study applies the term “educational theatre and drama” identically to its use in the policy paper of the DICE — “Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competences in Education” (2010) research, where it broadly referred to different kinds of drama and theatre activities organised for young people with educational objectives. Section 2.6 will discuss the DICE research in detail. The following sections will outline further practices that bear resemblance with NTGent’s Spiegelproject.

2.5.1 Theatre Education

Some theatre houses organise programmes for schools or offer regular activities for young people. Jackson and Vine (2013) simply label this work Theatre Education. Such programmes aim to establish connections with surrounding institutions to offer education about the nature of theatre, teach acting skills, prepare spectators before a visit and engage future audiences.

A report of an expert group set up by the European Council (OMC Report, 2012) suggests that such initiatives are increasingly popular in public theatres across Europe. Germany is a prime example of this practice, where theatre houses typically include an educational department called “Theaterpädagogik”, which is responsible for facilitating receptivity of the art form and of the actual productions. Originally, students were in the focus of these departments, but today all age groups are targeted (Pinkert, 2014).
2.5.2 Youth Theatre Projects Organised by Theatre Companies

Rehearsing and presenting performances with the participation of young people is one of the educational theatre activities with the oldest history (Bolton, 1999, & 2007). Jackson and Vine (2013) use the term Youth Theatre to describe the form, and indicate that some theatre companies offer such projects. Again, Germany is a distinct example of such work, where youth productions are prominent elements of theatres’ educational endeavours. Educators work with student groups, called “Youth Clubs”, a movement that started in the 1970s in West Germany and have diversified to a great extent until today (Pinkert, 2014). Various ways of working include plays developed with students that react to one of the theatre’s productions, as in the practice of Uta Plate (Mandel, 2002; Stegemann, 2014). Pinkert (2014, p. 33) defines this approach as “Broad Impact Modell”, and suggests that in this practice, creative interpretation of performances helps making theatre more accessible for as many young people as possible. Similarly, Plate aims to “awaken participants’ sensitivity” to theatrical ways of expression (Mandel, 2002). The latter way of working corresponds closely to NTGent’s Spiegelproject practice, which will be presented in detail in Section 2.13. Having looked at TiE, DiE and Theatre Education, the forms of educational theatre and drama most pertinent to this study, the following section will discuss what practitioners commonly hope to achieve through these activities.

2.6 Benefits of Participating in Educational Theatre and Drama

Theatre and drama activities in education may be applied to delve into particular areas of the school curriculum (Bolton, 1999), to learn about the form itself as an independent subject in the curriculum (Hennessy, 2016), to connect and synthesise several elements of the different curriculum-related subjects (Heathcote, 2015c) or to address broader competence areas, which have relevance across the curriculum (Heathcote, 2015b). As it was discussed in the previous two sections, when theatre companies develop educational projects, these frequently aim to develop students’ affection for theatre arts. In contrast, the TiE movement gave prominence to facilitating learning about matters
related to the students’ lives, and did not focus on engaging students in attending theatre events (Wooster, 2016). When looking at the impact of participating in educational theatre or drama on a social level, the previously mentioned DICE (2010) project was a major study exploring benefits of educational theatre and drama projects on a large international sample. The researchers emphasised the significance of cross-curriculum competences in education and drama’s role in addressing these. The study looked at five of the eight competences in the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council (2006), known as “Lisbon Key Competences” as main objectives of education for the member states. These included: “Communication in the mother tongue, Learning to learn, Interpersonal, intercultural and social competences and civic competence, Entrepreneurship and Cultural expression”. The study involved almost five thousand students, and compared those who took part in drama or theatre activities with their non-participating peers. The research found that those students who actively took part in educational theatre projects significantly improved in all areas the project examined. The breadth of the study makes the research a significant point of reference for the field. It included a qualitative assessment of drama descriptions by external experts. One of them, Cecily O’Neill (2010, p. 73) suggested that through these programmes, teachers can give “power, responsibility and ownership” to their students. The following section will discuss ownership as a key concept to assess the effectiveness of educational theatre and drama.

2.7 Ownership in Educational Theatre and Drama

Educational theatre and drama are often associated with the quality of ownership, as prerequisite for drama’s efficacy, and also as an aspect that these activities can help to develop in education. The concept of ownership denotes the students’ identification with the learning material, engagement, agency, and autonomy within the learning process (Dudley-Marling & Searle, 1995). Its acknowledgment as a valuable pedagogical outcome can be related to the progressive movement’s endeavour to enable students to become
active agents in their learning and to have an influence on their way of studying (Adler-Kassner, 1998).

In drama theory, Bolton (1999, p. 21) applies the concept of ownership to characterise students’ relation to the acquired knowledge, which is achieved through a “creative and collaborative way”, and to describe students’ identification with a fictional context. Similarly, Bowell and Heap (2013) emphasise the significance of ownership as a cornerstone of process drama. They assert that drama is effective by creating a sense of ownership among students about their learning and thus they become more committed and benefit more from their engagement. Both sources suggest that in drama, students have to make decisions within a fictional context, which is only possible through establishing ownership. Dorothy Heathcote (1984, p. 130) describes this process by stepping into a “no penalty zone” of a fictitious situation. She claims that students’ actions are real, but the frame allows them to freely explore without the burden of reality. The freedom of exploration might contribute to the feeling of security in the situation, and to the development of ownership. Similar to Heathcote, O’Toole (1992) and O’Neill (1995) suggest, that students acquire agency within the drama by having to negotiate its elements.

A number of studies examined ownership in youth theatre contexts (Danby & Upitis, 1989; Lehtonen, 2015; & Swick, 1999). The most detailed account focusing on the improvement of ownership in youth theatre is by Swick (1999). She proposes the criteria of personal investment, engagement, responsibility and empowerment to evaluate the emergence of ownership. Swick finds that the following might impede development of ownership: teacher’s own artistic ambitions, time constraints, and large number of participants that limit the negotiations, organisational complications, when teachers make decisions for the sake of effectiveness and when they are striving for excellence and feel the most competent to make decisions.


2.8 Summary of Educational Drama and Theatre Practices

In sections 2.2 - 2.7 educational theatre and drama programmes were discussed, highlighting the TiE and the DiE movements that emerged from Britain as preeminent practices enhancing students’ participation and learning through theatre. The forerunners of these movements (for example: Brecht, Freire, Boal) bore emancipatory political flavours, aiming to enhance critical thinking about the social order and empower marginalised communities. Both TiE and DiE are more concerned with allowing students to gain experience through the process, rather than practising to present something. These practices commonly aim to facilitate learning about the world and matters relevant to students’ lives, and can help to improve key competences applicable across the curriculum. As an alternative, the discussion highlighted theatre education programmes, aiming to create receptivity and awareness of theatre arts. Among these approaches, the closest example to NTGent’s Spiegelproject concept was a practice in German theatres’ Theaterpädagogik work, facilitating access to theatre productions by making student groups create their own versions of them. Finally, in the previous section the significance of ownership, as a quality educational theatre and drama can endeavour to develop when working with students was presented. The next part of the literature review will look at concepts around inclusion of underrepresented groups in theatre and participatory theatre arts as these are pertinent resources to better understand NTGent’s general endeavours and Spiegelproject practice.

2.9 Participation and Theatre

The following sections will retain the focus around participation, but will look beyond educational projects to contextualise the Ghent Manifesto’s principles about participation and inclusion of underrepresented groups. Both participatory theatre art projects and theatre houses’ efforts to actively involve their audience in various activities of the house became common mainstream practices in professional theatre in the last decades (Bishop, 2012; Lindelof, 2015). Although there is common ground between the principles of offering the stage to members of various communities, and organising additional
activities, these are two distinct ways of inclusion in arts. Without conflating the two, the discussion will explore theatre companies’ reasons for encouraging participation, and concerns around such endeavours.

A rationale for involving broad parts of society is often associated with theatre companies’ quest for the legitimacy of their work (Kawashima, 2000; Tindemans, 2011; Klaic, 2012). From an art policy perspective, the major concern is to democratise art’s accessibility (Reason, 2010; Lindelof, 2015). Creators of participatory art projects often employ very different reasoning for initiating participation, identifying particularly political purposes they aim to advance (Thompson, 2012). Claire Bishop (2012) presents in her book one of the most common claims of artists, that art should not reinforce the passive role imposed on society by the actual political establishment, such as the consuming logic of capitalism. Art should rather activate people to challenge the status quo. While the first concept urges participation to engage communities who are typically underrepresented in theatres, the second approach regards participation as a form of political engagement, and implies that art should instigate such activity. In the following two sections these approaches will be considered.

2.9.1 Participation in the Theatre Arts

The theory of Pierre Bourdieu (2010) is an important point of reference in the discussion about the participation of different social groups in the arts. He drew attention to how one’s cultural or lifestyle preferences (‘taste’) are unconsciously determined by upbringing and social status. As presented in his book, family and schooling generate predispositions and have an effect on how someone perceives different social situations, and unwittingly reacts to them. Bourdieau called this ‘habitus’. In his theory, habitus contributes to a sense of unease and detachment in situations where the appropriate codes are unknown to a person. He asserted that ‘consumption of art works’ requires familiarity with a range of codes. The awareness of these codes and their apt application creates value, which he labelled ‘cultural capital’. The part of the society that is at disposal of means, in his words ‘appropriates’ art works in order to gain cultural capital.
and preserve a privileged position in society. The notion of appropriation can be related to gaining a sense of ownership pertinent to this study.

Reason (2010) remarks a common underlying belief in art provision policies, which claim that everyone is entitled to the products and services of cultural organisations, such as theatre houses. This idea regards access to arts as a basic right which should be made available particularly to young people. Reason (2010) and Kawashima (2000) both summarise critiques of this idea, which can be linked to Bourdieau’s theory. Firstly, cultural institutions and the cultural canon produced and maintained by them are parts of the social establishment. The suggestion that these should be valued by everyone may contribute to social detachment. Freire (2017), referenced earlier in this text, criticises the education system exactly for its contribution to maintain power distribution in society partly by entrenching the cultural canon. Secondly, there is often the assumption in cultural inclusion practices that eliminating barriers is sufficient to tackle the challenge. However, access and exposure to art events may not change how involved people experience established culture and may not create a sense of ownership of what is happening with or to them. Reason (2010, p. 25) offers an example from one of his studies, in which groups of students who attended a performance were compared. He found that students from a private school and middle class families exhibited signs of “entitlement and ownership” of the experience, students from a deprived area, who studied drama, found ways to relate to it, but others, without such background, felt unwelcome in the theatre and thought it is not for them. His finding suggests that not only social privilege, but also experience of active participation in theatre activities can influence one’s receptivity towards theatre. In the case of theatre venues, multiple factors impact their accessibility. The character of the architecture and geographic location (Carlson, 1993), the division of the auditorium according to ticket prices (Harvie, 2009), the selection of plays (Benett, 2005), or language (Fleming et al., 2014) are identified as important decisive factors. Implications of the Ghent Manifesto suggest that the theatre aims to eliminate some of these factors. These will be further discussed in section 2.12. Yet, the Manifesto also pursues the principles of participatory art, which are discussed in the next section.
2.9.2 Participatory Theatre

Thompson (2012, p. 21) defines participatory art as “art that requires some action on behalf of the viewer in order to complete the work.” Although this suggests a rather traditional distinction between artist and viewer, participatory art is often associated with blurring such demarcation, even through what Bishop (2012) calls “delegated performance” (p. 4) when artists commission “everyday people” to represent the artists by performing in the artwork. A further claim of Thompson (2012) is that participatory art is anti-representational, as it rather seeks to interfere with reality.

Participatory theatre arts have been a remarkable trend throughout the twentieth century (Bishop, 2012). By the turn of the millennium, the practice significantly gained ground (Thompson, 2012). Observing a surge of such initiatives, Matarasso (1997) conducted a study of participatory art projects in England, suggesting that participation can lead to empowerment, resolution of social conflicts and better social cohesion. Bishop’s (2012) main critique of Matarasso’s work is that his study implicates participatory art as being beneficial to maintain existing social order by helping participants to better adapt to it, instead of challenging it.

Bishop (2012) draws attention to the fact that initiating participation signifies an unequal power relation. It is the choice of the initiators to allow different levels of participation. Borrowing from Arnstein’s (1969) article, Bishop (2012) offers “The Ladder of Participation” (Figure 2.1) as an instrument to evaluate the degree of involvement. The lowest rung of the ladders is ‘manipulation’ and it goes up to ‘citizen control’, as the ultimate form of participation. The chart acknowledges the latter along two other forms, ‘delegated power’ and ‘partnership’ as degrees of ‘citizen power’. ‘Informing’ the rung that might be best correlated to the concept of ‘barrier removal’ is only the third from the bottom, categorised as ‘tokenism’.
Bishop (2012) remarks that while the ladder is useful to evaluate the level of involvement, this does not necessarily correlate with artistic quality. She remarks, that participatory art projects have often been criticised for not sharing authorship with the involved people (Bishop, 2006). Her concern around authorship, as 2.12 section will present, is reflected in one of the principles that emerge from the Ghent Manifesto.

2.9.3 Summary

The previous discussion showed how theatre artists and institutions tackle participation in different ways. A common concern is around the broad accessibility of arts. By participation theatres often seek to engage underrepresented groups in art events, driven by the vision of making art widely available or by the hope of broadening an institution’s
audience. A different concept, commonly claimed by artists, regards participation as way of political emancipation, which can challenge the existing social order.

Accessibility of arts is often hindered by social barriers, as cultural choices are often unconscious and determined by one’s social environment. Thus, simple removal of barriers, and exposure to arts does not automatically effect a change of cultural preferences. Furthermore, the recognition of cultural values is linked to power relations in society. The acknowledgment of a specific art product may not resolve existing social divisions. Participatory theatre arts bring on a number of ethical considerations regarding their role in challenging or reinforcing social order and the way and degree in which participants are involved and when they are bestowed with genuine partnership in the work they are co-creators. The diverging concepts of participation are akin to the different approaches in educational theatre. while TiE is associated with “theatre for social change” theatre education programmes are typically concerned with “building audiences for the future” (Jackson, 2013, p. 23). Based on these ideas, the following sections will examine Flemish cultural policies that encourage participation in arts, NTGent’s artistic agenda and existing public outreach practice.

2.10 Cultural Inclusion Policy in Flanders

This section observes the foundations of Flemish cultural policy concepts and how related practices evolved. The principal catalyst of the Flemish policy recommendations aiming for the broad accessibility of arts was a report about poverty (Algemeen verslag over de armoede, 1994), commissioned by the Belgian Minister of Social Integration. The relation between poverty and culture was among the areas the report focused on. It suggests that cultural participation is a basic need of each individual, and claims that people living in deprivation cannot participate in cultural activities not only because of financial but other barriers as well. The report had a significant impact on the Belgian discourse around arts accessibility. ‘Sociaal-artiestiek werk’ became a defining term based on a policy setting article by Bert Anciaux (2001), who was then Minister of Culture in the Flemish Government. He advocated policy changes with the aim of overcoming social
exclusion by better participation in cultural activities and cultural production. It also emphasised the support of bottom-up initiatives to avoid a patronising impose of “high culture”. After this proclamation, Anciaux effected several policy changes, which influenced the Flemish cultural scene to a great extent and meant a critical incentive for the creation of programmes that aim at more accessible culture and empowerment through cultural participation. They also catalysed reforms of public institutions’ public outreach practices (Coussens, 2016). Today, the subsidy scheme of the government promotes integration through culture and the accessibility of culture on multiple institutional and governance levels (Gatz, 2015, p. 26). As a result, the term ‘Sociaal-artistic werk’ describes various practices that aim social inclusion through artistic activity. The Dutch term is matched with the English ‘participatory arts’, ‘community arts’ or ‘socially engaged art’ expressions (De Bisschop, Rutten, & Soetaert, 2011). However, in the Flemish cultural arena, the activities to broaden the scope of audiences are also subsidised within this scheme, such as theatres’ public outreach practices.

2.11 Publiekswerking

‘Publiekswerking’ (PW) is the term most commonly used in the Flemish public cultural institutions’ terminology for the departments that offer activities for the audience of the institutions (Coussens, 2016). These activities typically work alongside the main activity of the theatre house and offer various ways of engagement or react on the theatre’s performances. As an English translation of PW, NTGent uses ‘Public Outreach’ on its website (ntgent.be, n.d). To refer to the Flemish context, this work will apply the Dutch term (PW) from now on. PW practitioners interviewed by Evelyne Coussens (2016) unanimously refer to the General Report about Poverty as a landmark document that had a major impact on their practice.

It is interesting to look at PW practice in the light of the concepts around inclusion outlined in Section 2.9.1. Coussens (2016) describes PW practice as “offering a key to learn to appreciate art”. In her article based on interviews with various Flemish exponents, with different accents, they all present their work as facilitating access to arts.
They all agree that recruitment is not among the objectives of their practice. However, as Coussens remarks, it is among PW principles to make the institution and the art it creates attractive for communities in society who have less access to state funded culture. In this sense, PW aims to engage new public in the activities of the house. That said, it can be deduced that although PW endeavours to engage new audiences, it is not with the direct aim of selling more tickets, it rather works to establish a more thorough connection between the theatre house and communities around it.

Another area that PW is linked to is education, and the various practices in which theatre is applied for educational purposes. However, Flemish PW exponents do not use the term eminently to describe their work. In a report (Haasnoot, 2018), Dirk Crommelinck, the Head of NTGent’s PW differentiates the Flemish practice from the prevalent approach in the theatre houses of the Netherlands, where corresponding programmes are promoted under the term of ‘education activities’. The prevalence of using theatre as education in the Netherlands is distinct, where a strong TiE movement existed during the 1970s and 1980s (Van Erven, 2001), the impact of which can be identified even today. According to Crommelinck, the PW practice was more closely linked to education in the early years. At the time, the main PW activity meant introductions to the performances in schools. However, today in the Flemish approach, the word ‘education’ is often avoided as it is considered to have a “patronising” connotation (Crommelinck quoted by Coussens, 2016) and because “the term PW offers more freedom than education” (Crommelinck quoted by Haasnoot, 2018).

In the article by Coussens (2016), there are different perspectives discussed on how art should be made accessible by PW. Julie Roydens, a PW exponent presented in the article, opposes the idea that it is exclusively the audience who has to work towards the art work. In her view, the “artwork” has to work as well. However, at the same time she mentions the expression ‘low threshold’, a metaphor close to barrier removal, a concept Reason (2010) and Kawashima (2000), found problematic. The picture Crommelinck suggests for PW instead, offering a ladder, implies that in his view, the arts have an inherent and universal value and accessing it requires efforts. Several PW principles are
echoed in the Ghent Manifesto, implying a more comprehensive form of participation. This will be analysed in the next section.

### 2.12 The Ghent Manifesto

NTGent has been existing as a theatre company of Ghent since 1965. Its name stand for ‘Het Nederlands Toneel Gent’ (The Dutch Theatre of Ghent), however, NTGent is used officially. It was the last theatre house in Flanders with a permanent ensemble, until the new director, Milo Rau dissolved it (Coussens, 2019). In April 2017, Rau, was appointed as NTGent’s new artistic leader. Rau is well known and internationally acclaimed in the theatre world for his work that directly investigates recent and ongoing historical and public conflicts on stage (Beckers, 2017). Rau and his team announced a new artistic mission for the house, which came into effect from the season of 2018-2019, and was summarised in the document published by the theatre, entitled the *Ghent Manifesto* (Appendix J).

The 2018-2019 season brochure (NTGent magazine 2018 - 2019, 2018, pp. 2-7) contained an introductory letter to the audience and the ten rules of Manifesto. The letter outlined the leadership’s aim to create plays in an open and involving process “together with the public” and through “interaction with society”. It highlighted a few ways to achieve inclusion, for example it suggested that the house will be a platform for non-professional performers beside actors or that the theatre’s team will do research of ongoing political clashes by travelling to conflict zones.

The Manifesto’s ten rules aim to determine NTGent Theatre’s functions and the way its productions are created. The first rule reiterates the claim Thompson (2012) identifies as a characteristic of participatory art (Section 2.9.2), as it asserts that theatre should aim to change reality instead of representing it. The rest of the rules are pragmatic guidelines for the productions. However, they suggest further implications about the team’s vision. The following principles can be identified based on the rules.
- Rules three and seven pursue participatory arts practice by stipulating the involvement of non-professional actors in each production and by declaring common authorship of those involved.

- Rules five and six stimulate the inclusion of underrepresented groups by requiring the use of multiple languages on stage and rehearsals outside the theatre space.

- Rules four, five, nine and ten seek to raise awareness about current social and political matters by limiting the use of classical texts, by prescribing that the theatre has to work partly in a conflict zone and by previously mentioned external rehearsals.

- Rule two emphasises the significance of theatre as a process by claiming that preparations of a production should be made publicly available.

- Rules eight and ten facilitate accessibility by requiring the mobility of productions. (This last principle is not relevant to this study.)

In Rau’s (2018) introductory text to the Manifesto, he claims that the rules are supposed to counteract the binding traditions of city theatres, which impede innovation and exclude parts of the society. It is interesting to observe how the already applied inclusion practices of NTGent’s PW blend into the theatre’s newly adopted agenda and to look for areas where existing experience can enter into discussion with recently established objectives. The next section will describe the theatre’s Spiegelproject, which is in the focus of this study, and has been an existing PW practice before the Manifesto.

2.13 Spiegelproject

As a part of its diverse PW offer, NTGent organises projects for non-professionals, in which representatives of the theatre work together with a specific group of people to create an adaptation of one of the theatre’s productions. The theatre calls this work Mirror Project (Spiegelproject). There are no peer-reviewed texts on the Spiegelproject practice. A dissertation by Vandercruyssen (2014) and an interview published in the theatre’s magazine (van Caekenberghe, 2015) are the available written sources.
Vandercruysse’s text is mainly based on interviews with the creators of Spiegelprojects and the theatre’s internal documents and publications. Her findings might be one-sided. However, they serve as an important resource of the creators’ understanding of their own practice.

The first Spiegelproject was organised in 2008 for students from three different secondary schools. According to Crommelinck’s recollection (cited by Vandercruysse, 2014), the concept of Spiegelproject arose from Johan Simons’ artistic proposal for the artistic leadership of the house before his first term in 2005. It was originally labelled as ‘Schaduwproject’ (Shadow Project). In the initial concept, the invited non-professional group was supposed to create its adaption of the performance within the same set design, lighting, and costumes with the ones used in the original production. The name of the practice was changed after recognising that such a collaboration is not merely important based on its link to the theatre’s original production, but carries a value in its own right (van Caekenberghe, 2015).

The shift in the Spiegelproject’s framework and the change of its name implies a noteworthy clarification in the approach of these projects. ‘Mirroring’ something is a more subtle approach than the original idea of inviting civic people to create a ‘shadow’ performance. The original concept of inhabiting the theatre’s own performance’s set design and costumes is akin to the idea of inviting audience into the theatre’s facilities in order to demonstrate how it works. With similar aims, NTGent’s PW organises guided tours, open rehearsals and acting workshops. These endeavour to offer better understanding of theatre professionals’ work. In comparison with these aims, a project that facilitates a more free interpretation of one of the theatre’s productions creates more space for the inclusive participation of non-professionals and might be able to serve more diverse social or educational objectives.

The theatre distinguishes ‘long’ and ‘short’ Spiegelprojects. According to the plans outlined in 2015 by PW contributors, a ‘Long Spiegelproject’ lasts for two theatrical seasons. In the first year, focus is on getting acquainted with the house and its operation, while in the second year participants concentrate on creating their own performance.
Participants of ‘Short Spiegelprojects’ engage more swiftly in the creation process, which lasts only for a few months, and these are organised more infrequently on the request of the communities (van Caekenberghe, 2015).

Similarities between Spiegelproject and TiE, especially with focus on incentives for participation can be examined. Both forms use a theatre performance to stimulate students to actively participate, although in the case of Spiegelproject, the play is not created primarily for educational purpose. Spiegelproject is at least partly driven by educational aims. In the current case, the educational aspect is significant because it is created for students. This project concentrated on particular classes, just like a TiE programme does, and relied on a strong and active cooperation between the theatre and the school, as it is usual in TiE. However, there are significant differences as well. In the Spiegelproject, the performance experienced by the students and their reaction to it was separated in time and space. This Spiegelproject did not ask students to immerse in a fiction, so when students are acting, it is representational. Spiegelproject does not contain actor - student or teacher - student interaction within a fiction. Contrary to TiE, Spiegelprojects end with a public performance by the participants.

The participants of this Spiegelproject attended the performance ‘La Reprise’, directed by Milo Rau. The performance re-enacted the story of a homophobic murder that happened in 2012 in Liège, Belgium. The victim was from a Moroccan background. He was a religious Muslim and gay. The performance involved non-professional performers from Liège and it was played in two languages, French and Dutch. Although these are official languages of the country, it is unusual that both are used on stage at the same time. ‘La Reprise’ was highly acclaimed internationally (Wolf, Cappelle & Goldmann, 2018). The Spiegelproject ran between January and April, 2018, and it was defined as a short Spiegelproject by the creators.
2.14 Conclusions

The review implicated commonalities between NTGent's vision encapsulated in the Ghent Manifesto and the Spiegelproject practice. These included the endeavour to engage underrepresented communities in the theatre's life, and involving non-professionals to perform on the stage. However, when looking at different participatory and educational theatre traditions, the literature revealed differences among the two approaches present at NTGent. On the one hand, regarding its form and rationale, the Spiegelproject is most akin with Theatre Education methods, foremost the ones present in German theatres’ Youth Clubs. The primary purpose of these approaches is to help participants experience and learn about the artwork presented by the theatre. On the other hand, the Manifesto appears to draw from the participatory theatre tradition, which believes that art should pursue social change and participation should enable involved people to challenge the established political order. In terms of educational theatre, the TiE method is the closest to latter practice, as it shares participatory theatre’s search for political or social relevance, the critical approach to society and the concept of effecting change by participation. Furthermore, the literature elaborated on the complicated relationship between cultural choices and social differences, which makes art provision policies challenging. Ownership emerged as a key concept to understand and assess participants’ or students’ identification with the process they are part of.

The Spiegelproject in the focus of the study was developed in the first year of the new theatre policy and it was based on the performance created according the Ghent Manifesto, on the crossroad of these diverging concepts. The present study examined how all these had an impact on its outcomes, and how student participants were experiencing it. The next chapter will present the research design adopted to address these questions.
Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the chosen methodological design applied to study participating students’ experiences in NTGent's Spiegelproject and to facilitate the comparison of gained data with the principles of the Ghent Manifesto. The following sections contextualise the study by discussing the nature of educational research, and outline the most distinctive characteristics of the chosen mixed-methods approach. The chapter offers a rationale for the chosen case study approach. It presents the research question and subquestions, and describes the research sample. Then it outlines the applied research instruments, the ethical aspects of the research, and how piloting was administered. Furthermore, the chapter reflects on the reliability and the validity of the research, triangulation and the researcher’s bias.

3.2 Nature of Research

In theory, research is set against personal experience, and while both take part in constructing knowledge about social phenomena, the former aims to organise, control and verify the ways information is gained, assessed and used to make conclusions (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Newby (2010) offers three main objectives for educational research: exploring phenomena, influencing policy, and developing practice. Because of its objectivity, research provides a justifiable frame to evaluate the functioning of policies that aim to influence social matters, such as, in the case of this study, the impact of the practices of a city theatre.

Advocates of critical research argue that research is inherently a political act. It addresses and evaluates societal issues and thus plays a role in reinforcing or questioning social power relations (Cohen et al., 2007). This is an important consideration within this study,
as it looks at policies of a public institution that aims to stimulate cooperation with members of underrepresented communities.

Educational research design can adopt quantitative, qualitative, or a combination of these two, a mixed methods approach. A quantitative approach collects measurable data as evidence and uses them to substantiate the major outcomes, generally in a deductive way. It is suitable for testing theories and concepts and enables gathering comparable data from large samples (Bryman, 2012). In comparison, qualitative research is pre-eminently interpretative and it typically applies inductive argumentation. It is commonly associated with collecting “words” (Bryman, 2012). It is most concerned with revealing meanings behind phenomena, and it allows a descriptive in-depth examination of problems. (Cohen et al., 2007). Qualitative research allows theory to emerge from the analysis of collected data (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative research commonly takes place in the natural settings of the studied group and typically employs open-ended questions (Creswell, 2003). The qualitative and quantitative are not necessarily exclusive approaches (Bryman, 2012). An example for that can be when transcripts of qualitative interviews are arranged into categories, and trends among dominant concepts are quantified.

Mixed-methods combine both strategies to explore complementary sides of a problem. The varied ways of inquiry allow the analysis of different angles of a matter (Creswell, 2003). It can contribute to the triangulation of data (discussed in Section 3.9) and to illustrate or explain quantitative data with qualitative findings (Bryman, 2012). It is frequently applied in educational research for its capacity to explore an issue of remarkable scale and the conditions linked to it (Newby, 2010). It is a common design in case studies (Bryman, 2012). The following section will present the approach chosen for this study.

3.2.1 The Applied Approach: Mixed Methods Case Study

This was a mixed method study, with primarily a qualitative, interpretative approach, with the use of a number of quantitative questions in the questionnaires for the students. The
two main reasons behind this choice were, on the one hand size of the sample, and on the other hand the significance of exploring participants’ views and opinions. Quantitative elements helped to access all members of the sample and gain comparable information from them. Furthermore, the quantitative character enabled the application of elements of the DICE (2010) research about cultural expression, social interpersonal and civic competences, which were pertinent to this study. The qualitative aspect of the study was essential to inquire about participants’ expectations and reflections connected to the project and to understand why students have given specific answers.

The study adopted a single case study approach. A case study explores a particular instance of a bounded system, such as one person, or a community (Cohen et al., 2007). The significance of the single case commonly goes beyond itself (Bryman, 2012). Yin (2009) lists three cases when case studies are favourable: when the research applies the questions why and how to explore a matter, when the events are primarily not under the researcher’s control, and when the inquiry is about a real-time and real-life occurrence. Case studies might be criticised for their focus on a single instance, and being unable to cross-check information (Cohen et al., 2007). However, case studies typically complement other forms of inquiry and help to build detailed discussion around one matter (Yin, 2009). This research looked at one instance of NTGent’s Spiegelproject practice to explore its principles, applied methods and participating students’ experiences. However, the research aims to contextualise the studied case with the help of the literature review and to look for further implications of the studied project. This study interpreted its findings in an inductive way when referring to existing claims in the literature and making assumptions based upon them.

### 3.3 Research Questions

Research questions and the connected subquestions are responsible for guiding and organising each segment of a research project. They identify the main focus of a study. Research questions in qualitative studies tend to be phrased in an exploratory open-ended way (Creswell, 2003). In mixed methods research they typically pertain to the
inquiry’s prevalent approach (Bryman, 2012). As outlined the Chapter One, the research question and subquestions guiding this study were the following:

What is the relationship between NTGent’s Manifesto, the principles of a Spiegelproject and secondary school participants’ experience?

1. How did students experience taking part in the Spiegelproject?

2. What did school teachers’ and the theatre’s team aim to achieve through the Spiegelproject?

3. Did the experience of the Spiegelproject participants relate to the principles of the Manifesto? If yes, how?

4. Does the Spiegelproject enable students to develop a sense of ownership of the process?

3.4 Research Context

This research explored participants’ experiences of a Spiegelproject carried out by NTGent’s Publiekswerking (PW) department in collaboration with a secondary school. PW runs programmes with the aim of engaging and activating diverse communities in the life of the theatre house (Coussens, 2016). The examined Spiegelproject was realised in collaboration with a secondary school. It ran between January and April 2019. In this time the students participated in three half-day and seven full-day workshops, including the first meeting and the day of the performance. The introductory workshop of the project was organised in the classrooms of the school. Consequently, the students watched the performance ‘La Reprise’ on the main stage of NTGent in January 2019. The following two workshops took place in a community centre close to the school. The last seven workshops were organised in Ghent, in NTGent’s spaces. The student’s work was performed on the last workshop day in Arca Theatre, a studio venue of NTGent.
3.5 Research Sample

The research was conducted with a “technical” school in Ghent’s agglomeration. Technical secondary education is one of the four types of secondary education in Belgium, which aims to provide specialised knowledge (onderwijskiezer.be). Such schools prepare students for technical studies in higher education. These schools are typically less competitive and associated with a lower status in relation to ‘General’ schools (Lavrijsen, Nicaise, & Poesen-Vandeputte, 2014). The vocational orientation of the participating classes was “Social and Technical Studies”. This prepares students to continue their study or work in the social, education or health-care sector. The research gathered data from student participants of the selected Spiegelproject, their teachers, the drama teacher commissioned by NTGent and the Head of the PW (HPW) department.

Three parallel classes participated in the project, with 53 final year students, aged 17-19, of which 38 were girls and 15 boys. The sample included three class teachers, and the school counsellor (zorgcoördinator) assigned to the classes, who also took part as a school teacher in the Spiegelproject. Two of the teachers were men, two were women. The three class teachers took part in previous Spiegelproject collaboration with NTGent six years earlier. This was the first time the drama teacher was commissioned to lead a Spiegelproject by the theatre, while the HPW have overseen the theatre’s education and outreach programmes since 2002.

3.6 Research Methods

The research applied three mixed methods questionnaires to collect data from students. Each questionnaire contained quantitative and qualitative questions. Further research instruments used purely qualitative methodology. These included the review of literature, a focus group interview with five students, an individual interview with the drama teacher and two individual interviews with the school teachers and the HPW. Finally, non-participant observations were recorded in a Researcher’s Journal. The next sections will present each research instrument and the rationale of their application.
3.6.1 Literature Review

The review of literature is an essential part of the research that explores what has been already published about area, discusses pertinent concepts to the study (Bryman, 2012), and establishes the need for further inquiry (Newby, 2010). In quantitative research the literature review commonly determines the research questions. In contrast, in a qualitative design the researcher looks for uncovered areas in the literature or explores participants’ opinions and to establish an understanding of the issue. A mixed method research should use either of these approaches according to the more prevalent element of the research design (Creswell, 2003). This review informs and contextualises the study by presenting the most relevant theories and findings from the literature. It provides a useful frame for focusing the study and shows gaps in the literature.

The review found scant literature about the Spiegelproject practice, and no peer-reviewed publications. Therefore it was necessary to situate the project in the context of other educational theatre approaches, including Theatre in Education (TiE) and Theatre Education. Furthermore, to situate NTGent’s policy objectives, the review examined major concepts around theatres’ endeavours for participation. This included on the one hand broadening the scope of audiences, and on the other hand creating participatory productions. The review discussed sources about NTGent’s PW and Spiegelproject practices, and the recently launched Ghent Manifesto in the light of these concepts. The discussion revealed that while the form of Spiegelproject is closer to the tradition of theatre education, which aims to raise awareness and interest about theatre, the Manifesto evokes participatory art models, which regard participation as a form of political action.

3.6.2 Mixed Methods Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a structured data collection strategy used both in qualitative and quantitative approaches (Bryman, 2012). It is a commonly used instrument in educational
studies to gather comparable data from a large sample. The impersonal nature of the instrument can limit the depth of the gained evidence (Cohen et al., 2007). Questionnaires require careful planning to avoid ambiguity, too complicated or leading or questions (Bryman, 2012). The effort required from the respondents affect the results of questionnaires. Too many open-ended questions, for example, may discourage respondents (Cohen et al., 2007). Questionnaires in this research served a vital role by being the main strategy to access information from all of the participating students. They enabled the comparison of data gained from different students and at different times, as questionnaires were completed individually.

Students first completed a Pre-Performance Questionnaire, after the first introductory workshop and before they saw ‘La Reprise’. This document sought to question students’ expectations about the project, their relation to arts and their social competences. Some questions were adopted from the DICE (2010) survey, which measured cultural expression and social, interpersonal and civic competences of young people. The DICE (2010) questions provided a useful tool to examine the improvement of the mentioned competences when entering into the project and after the project. Students filled out the Post-Performance Questionnaire four weeks after they watched the La Reprise. It inquired about their impressions and experiences of the performance and helped to collect evidence of the effects of ‘La Reprise’ on the individual participants before they started to create a composite reflection of the play. Finally, the Post-Project Questionnaire was administered six weeks after the end of the project. This echoed or repeated questions from the first questionnaire. In addition it asked students to reflect on the process and the performance they created. The purpose of this questionnaire was to produce comparable evidence about students’ skills from the beginning and the end of the process and to examine their perceptions on the Spiegelproject.
3.6.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews resemble a guided conversation. They are particularly valuable ways of collecting evidence in a qualitative study. (Yin, 2009). The researcher follows a list of questions, but the structure allows further elaboration of the answers by adding probing and prompting questions. (Bryman, 2012). Oral interviews can enable a more personal discussion between the researcher and the participants. (Yin, 2009). Focus group interviews are specific types of semi-structured interviews, wherein the researcher stimulates conversation among several interviewees and allows them to discuss their ideas about a particular subject. Participants are often selected for such interviews based on their involvement in the same event (Bryman, 2012). Focus groups interviews are useful to making young people feel more at ease, and to encourage the interaction between the participants (Cohen et al., 2007).

This study used both individual interviews and focus group interviews. The school teachers, and the HPW were both twice individually interviewed during and after the Spiegelproject. This enabled the comparison of their expectations of the project and their retrospective reflections. The drama teacher also took part in an individual interview during the project, yet later she was not available for a second discussion. The focus group interview was chosen in this study to make the participating students more comfortable during the discussion, and to allow them to develop opinions by reflecting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
<th>Date of Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline Data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Performance Student Questionnaire</td>
<td>100% N=53</td>
<td>15 January 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Performance Student Questionnaire</td>
<td>98% N=52</td>
<td>18-19 February 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of Baseline Data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Project Student Questionnaire</td>
<td>94% N=50</td>
<td>17 May 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 Overview of Questionnaires
and contending each other’s views. Two focus groups interviews were planned. However, due to availability by the end of the school year: the school could only enable a single instance with one group of students from an English class. Two of the three participating classes were represented among the interviewees and there were participants who had a central role in the performance, and others, who only participated in group scenes.

Both the individual interviews and focus group interviews were audio-recorded. The ‘Voice Memos’ application of an iPhone 5s was used. The mobile phone was password and fingerprint protected. The recordings were stored on the password protected hard-drive. Every interviewee was informed beforehand of the audio-recording, further storage of the data and that anonymity would be ensured in the transcriptions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Date of and Length Recording</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline Data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Individual Post-Performance School Teacher Interview</td>
<td>3 class teachers, and 1 school counsellor</td>
<td>15 February 2019 00:16:29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>00:22:04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>00:33:52</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>00:20:36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of Baseline Data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interim Interview with the Drama Teacher</td>
<td>Drama Teacher</td>
<td>12 March 2019 00:25:27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interim Interview with the HPW</td>
<td>HPW</td>
<td>1 April 2019 00:43:45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Project Student Focus Group Interview</td>
<td>SSAF2, SSBM4, SSBF1, SSBM3, SSAM5 (see explanation for codes in Chapter Four)</td>
<td>17 May 2019 00:36:55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Individual Post-Project School Teacher Interviews</td>
<td>3 class teachers, and 1 school counsellor</td>
<td>17 May 2019 00:20:27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>00:16:27</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>00:17:53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11 June 2019 00:22:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Project Interview with the HPW</td>
<td>HPW</td>
<td>17 June 2019 00:30:08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2 Overview of Interviews
3.6.4 Non-Participant Observations

Observation is a valid instrument in qualitative and quantitative research, which allow the researcher to gain firsthand experience on the subject (Creswell, 2003). The instrument is often used in case studies (Yin, 2009). A non-participant observer does not take part in the activities of the observed group. It can provide a new perspective and enable the comparison of the participants’ claims with their behaviour (Bryman, 2012). I conducted non-participant observations, which contributed to adding a different perspective to the study and triangulating the collected data. To mitigate the possible disturbance caused by my presence, I outlined orally and also in the information letters my position within the project and the purpose of my presence. As the span of the project was several months long I perceived that all participants got used to my presence and accepted it as an inherent part of the activity.

In this study a two-step method was applied. During the workshops I took handwritten fieldnotes. As a second step I created entries in the Researcher’s Journal within maximum 48 hours after each workshop. This text was based upon the notes taken during the workshops and it had two aims. Each entry tried to outline the major events in each workshop, what kind of activities the students had to accomplish and how the community of the students reacted to the events. It also recorded my thoughts and reflections on the experience and pedagogical considerations.

3.7 Piloting the Study

Piloting means testing the research instruments with a comparable sample. This is a pivotal step in the development of the most apt tools for the research. Piloting can highlight structural problems or issues affecting comprehensibility in the design of the instruments, and can help to rectify these and fine-tune the applied instruments (Bryman, 2012). Pre-Performance, Post-Project Questionnaires and questions of the Focus Group Interview were piloted with three students of the same age as the participants of the study in a Brussels based school. The Post-Performance Questionnaire was piloted in
the school where the research took place with six students from the grade below the participants. The feedback helped to better phrase questions and statements in each instrument. The interviews with the teachers and the drama teacher were piloted with two secondary school teachers from Brussels. The interviews with the theatre’s team were piloted with a former public relations employee of Stuttgart State Opera. These tests helped to restructure the order of the questions, and to phrase them more clearly. In one instance a pilot interviewee suggested a useful additional probing question for one of the interviews.

3.8 Outline of the Intervention

The initiative for this Spiegelproject arose from the school teachers based on their earlier good experiences in a similar project. After the school contacted NTGent and negotiated the terms, the project was scheduled for the first months of 2019. I contacted the theatre in order to carry out my dissertation research project around one of their PW projects. After an initial discussion, when the HPW offered to follow several projects, I chose this particular Spiegelproject based on its educational relevance and its suitable timing. The HPW contacted the school and sought preliminary approval from the school for the research proposal. As a next step, I sent information about the study and the research instruments to the school’s principal, the school teachers and to the drama teacher and sought their consent (Appendix I). The same information was shared with the students, their parents and their consent was also requested before the project. Once I gained approval, I attended each workshop, and participated in most of the planning discussions between the drama teacher and school teachers. During the workshops I took field notes and these served as a reminder for the entries in the Researcher’s Journal.

Based on the school teacher’s preference, the questionnaires were filled out during lessons with class teachers. This method contributed to the high response rate of each questionnaire, which can be difficult to achieve with large samples (Cohen et al., 2007). To protect confidentiality, I received the forms immediately once they were finished and
collected in a sealed envelope. Interviews with school teachers and the focus group interview with students were conducted in the school outside the Spiegelproject workshop times. The drama teacher and the HPW were interviewed in the theatre spaces. I returned to the school six weeks after the project to administer the Post-Project Questionnaire and the interviews with teachers and the focus groups interview with the students and another two weeks later to interview the HPW.

3.9 Triangulation

Triangulation denotes the practice of using multiple sources or multiple methods to obtain data in a research (Bryman, 2012) with the purpose of reducing the bias of all involved sides and to serve the validity of the study (Cohen et al., 2007). Relying on multiple source of evidence is widely used strategy in case studies in order to achieve triangulation (Yin, 2009). Accordingly, data was sought from different sources in this study, at different times and through different instruments. The study incorporated the perspectives of the students, the school teachers, the drama teacher, and the HPW, and finally, through my observations, an external researcher’s point of view. Different methods included mixed methods questionnaires, and qualitative interviews and observations. The research methodology included a Literature Review in order to present existing relevant findings from the field and to link the study to the appropriate area of research.

3.10 Reliability, Validity

Reliability and validity are two complementary qualities that determine value of the research findings. In quantitative approaches reliability refers to the extent to which the outcomes of a process are similar under identical circumstances. In qualitative research the term is interpreted in multiple ways. However, it most commonly refers to the level of accuracy between the recorded data and the actual occurrences in natural settings (Cohen et al., 2007). Validity is applied to evaluate the integrity of the conclusions of a study (Bryman, 2012). Reliability and validity are key factors in a research, and the design
and application of the research instruments have to be developed with this end in mind. In this study, piloting and the triangulation of data were both means to endeavour reliability and validity. Piloting helped to verify the functionality of inquiring procedures and to modify unclear phrasings. Using multiple different research instruments, such as questionnaires, interviews, and observations to gain information enabled diverse ways of accessing data.

Loyalty to the school or to the theatre could have played a role in the responses of all participants. This was addressed through various means. Anonymity of all collected data was ensured for each participant. Teachers, the drama teachers and the HPW were interviewed individually as it was assumed that their possible critical remarks can be more freely expressed. Students filled out questionnaires individually and it was emphasised that the results will not be shown to anyone from the school or the theatre. Focus group interviews were applied partly to avoid students trying to live up to what they could assume as my expectations (Cohen et al., 2007).

The matter of cultural validity is especially relevant, when the researcher is from another culture than the studied sample. The concept is putting in focus the ability of the research to recognise and authentically interpret the codes of a specific culture (Cohen et al., 2007). Since I am not from Belgium, before the application I checked the adoptability of all research instruments with the HPW and the school teachers. The questionnaires were corrected by native speakers. My experience of leading drama programmes in intercultural environments and working in collaborations between theatres and schools helped me to safely navigate in the situations of this study.

3.11 Ethics

Ethics in educational research ensures the protection of participants’ rights and the commitment to seek the truth within the study (Cohen et al, 2007). As educational research deals with people and often with minors, it is especially important to consider the ethical involvement of all participants, and the ethical ways of processing the data gained during the research.
For this study, an Ethical Approval was sought from the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Education at Trinity College Dublin (ET7259-A-Y-201819: Research Ethics). Following clarifying amendments to the first application, the application was approved on 21 December 2018.

Before getting involved in the study, information letters were provided to each participant and their consent was sought, requiring a separate approval for each element of the research. Additionally, the principal of the participating school and the parents of the involved students were informed and their consent was equally requested and received. A sample consent form is provided in the Appendix I. Privacy and confidentiality were protected throughout the research. To guarantee anonymity participants’ names were changed to codes. This will be introduced in detail in the following chapter. Any identifying information from the interview transcripts was removed. The name of the school does not appear in the study. The data collected throughout this research can only be accessed by the researcher, the supervisor and in case of request, by the examiners. The data will be kept for five years, as stipulated by the regulations of Trinity College Dublin. The above mentioned procedures were explained to the participants in the information letters.

3.12 Bias

Every researcher has a set of values, which inform his or her opinions and decisions. To seek accuracy, these have to be reflected and the research design should aim to eliminate bias from every element of the study (Bryman, 2012). I was not affiliated with NTGent nor the school outside the research, which helped me to look at the collaboration from a relatively neutral position. However, my interest in educational theatre and politically engaged art led me to do this research. In order to avoid my bias influencing the research, I aimed to capture the variety of known information about the research area in the literature review. I obtained information from multiple sources and means, and cross-checked and compared the data gained through the different research instruments.
3.13 Data Analysis

In research, data analysis arranges, compares, and makes sense of collected information in order to answer the research questions. It provides the primary means of understanding the explored issue (Cohen et al., 2007). Quantitative analysis measures numerical data, and identifies percentages, frequencies, quantifiable variations and connections. It allows the examination of trends across the whole sample (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative analysis organises the collected data to identify patterns, commonalities and differences. It aims to summarise the gained information, but seeks to preserve the authentic voice of the sources. It commonly deals with richer data from smaller samples (Bryman, 2012). One of the most common ways to access and arrange qualitative data is thematic analysis. It entails the thorough examination of transcripts and putting labels on the information. These labels are compared and organised into categories, which enables the identification of themes. Themes emerge from information present throughout the data and help to form a theoretical understanding of the findings (Bryman, 2012).

This study used quantitative data by identifying trends and percentages to gain an overall perception of students’ reactions to the project, and to test the validity of qualitative responses across the sample. The quantitative elements in the student questionnaires applied nominal and ordinal scales as means of measurement. Nominal scales differentiate among categories without any order among them (Cohen et al., 2007). The student questionnaires’ binary questions pertain here. Ordinal scales add order to the data, as for example measuring levels of agreement with a statement (Cohen et al., 2007). The student questionnaires used Likert scales to obtain participants’ opinions about a number of variables in relation to the Spiegelproject. Several statements measured different angles of the same quality. For example, in the Post-Performance Questionnaire questions 9, 13-15 examined students’ opinion about the relevance of ‘La Reprise’ to themselves. The results of the questions on the same quality were combined in the course of the statistical analysis of data. The following chapter will present them together.
The qualitative element of the research applied thematic analysis. I reviewed all qualitative answers in the student questionnaires and arranged them in spreadsheets. Then I transcribed the interviews. After multiple readings, comments were added to both qualitative questionnaire answers and interview texts, and both data types were arranged into categories and colour coded, based on commonalities and differences. Emerging themes were identified after carefully reviewing the categories. The Findings Chapter will present data following a chronological order and according to research instruments. The key emerging themes inform the discussion of the findings in Chapter Five.

3.14 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the mixed-methods case study approach and the instruments used in this research to explore NTGent’s Spiegelproject and its experience for the participating 53 final year students from a Flemish secondary school. The study applied three mixed methods student questionnaires, one before and one after students saw NTGent's performance, and a third one after the end of the project. Furthermore, it included eleven individual and one focus group qualitative semi-structured interviews with five students, four school teachers, the drama teacher and the HPW. The HPW and the school teachers were interviewed twice, once during and once after the project. Finally, non-participant observations were conducted and reported in the Researcher’s Journal. Chapter Four will describe the findings of the research, and Chapter Five will discuss them along the main emerging themes.
Chapter Four: Presentation of Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the data obtained from this research. The study aimed to explore how NTGent’s recently adopted principles relate to a Spiegelproject, and how secondary school participants experienced taking part in it. The chapter’s sections will present the results following the chronological order of the research instruments presented in Chapter Three. Firstly, sections 4.2 – 4.2.4 present baseline data, including Pre- and Post-Performance Questionnaires with students and Post-Performance Interviews with teachers. Secondly, Interim Interviews with the theatre’s team are discussed (sections 4.3 – 4.3.3). Then, sections 4.4 – 4.8 describe all data collected after the project. Finally, data presentation ends with the outline of the observations made during the Spiegelproject and recorded in the Researcher’s Journal (section 4.9). The section headings describing data from the questionnaires will follow the original structure of these instruments. Data from the interviews are organised under the themes and sub-themes that emerged through the thematic analysis. The table below provides an overview of the research instruments and the emerging themes from qualitative data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of data</th>
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<th>Social Bonding</th>
<th>Reacting on Homophobia and Bystander Effect: Social Engagement</th>
<th>Product - Process</th>
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<td>Baseline Pre-Performance Students Questionnaires</td>
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Table 4.1 Overview of the source of major themes

The major themes will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five. The Appendices of this work include all questionnaire and interview questions. The following table shows the composition of codes covering the respondents’ names.

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<tr>
<th>Source of data</th>
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Table 4.2 Explanation of codes applied to anonymise participants

For example, “SSBF29” is a female student from class “B”, who received the 29th serial number from the whole sample.
4.2 Baseline Data

As the Literature Review discussed, the key feature of a Spiegelproject is that participants respond to an NTGent production by conceiving their own performance. In this case, the creation process started a month after watching ‘La Reprise’. Thus, all data collected before the students’ creation process are categorised as baseline data, which includes Pre- and Post-Performance Student Questionnaires and the Post-Performance School Teacher Interviews.

4.2.1 Baseline Data from Pre-Performance Students Questionnaires

Before watching ‘La Reprise’ students completed a questionnaire (Appendix A) that comprised 30 quantitative and 3 qualitative questions. The questions sought to examine students’ cultural expression and awareness, interpersonal, social and civic competences, and expectations about the project. Questions 1-8, 13-16 and 25-33 were adopted from the DICE — “Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competences in Education” (2010) research questionnaire (with kind approval of Ádám Cziboly). As it was discussed in detail in Chapter Two, DICE compared students’ improvement in five competence areas after participating in drama activities. I added questions 9-12 and 17-24 to tailor the questionnaire for the actual research. The questionnaire had a 100% response rate (N=53). Although originally, qualitative questions (10-12) were in the middle of the questionnaire, here, quantitative data will be presented first, and qualitative answers will be described after.

4.2.1.1 Quantitative Questions about Cultural Expression and Awareness

The questionnaire asked students whether they have ever attended particular cultural events, and how much they were interested in them (Questions 1-6). Figure 4.1 shows the percentage of students who have already been to such events, and Figure 4.2 displays students’ interest in attending them.
Participants did not show a strong degree of interest in theatre. Cinema was the most popular, while classical concerts were the least favoured choice among responders.

Question 7 asked students if they have participated in drama or theatre activities before. 92% had not had such experience, and only 4 of them (8%) marked ‘yes’.
4.2.1.2 Quantitative Questions about Students' Interpersonal, Social and Civic Competences

Students were asked to respond to a set of statements (Questions 13-24) related to their empathic concerns and perspective-taking of other groups, their willingness to work as a team and their emotional openness. Figure 4.3 shows what percentage of the sample expressed agreement, uncertainty and disagreement with the statements.

The results are discussed in more detail in comparison with Post-Project findings in Section 4.4.3. Here, it is important to note, that while the majority of the group could identify with empathic attitudes, their commitment to work as a team and their degree of emotional confidence were varying. Students were also asked about their sense of belonging to different groups in society. As Figure 4.4 shows, students’ answers reveal a strong sense of belonging to their families and a moderate sense of belonging to their school. The weakest connection was shown to the European Union.
Figure 4.4 Pre-performance Questionnaire. Students’ sense of belonging to certain groups. (Questions 25-30). Average score on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = the least 5 = the most). N=53

Students were asked about their interest in active participation in public matters as well (Questions 31-33). On average, 61% said they would not advocate a social issue, while 39% expressed commitment.

4.2.1.3 Qualitative Questions about Students' Views on Theatre and their Expectations about the Project

Students had two distinct ways to discuss their perception of theatre, namely experientially and conceptually (Question 10-11). These categories were overlapping among the answers, as many contained both elements. 62% of the sample described the experiential aspect of theatre, 30% positively, as the following examples express: “Theatre for me is something very beautiful. … I think it is most of the times nice to see” [SSAF44]. Among the answers displaying positive feelings, 16% mentioned entertainment and 14% accounted that theatre has an emotional effect. One student wrote that her experience had already changed thanks to earlier theatre visits: “Not much at the beginning, but now, as we do it with school, I think it is nice” [SSCF16]. 28% of the students expressed indifference, such as: “I see theatre, since we must attend because of school.” [SSCF7], or even negative experiences: “A tedious play, which is boring” [SSBM26]. One answer was neither positive nor explicitly negative: “That it will be quiet and dark” [SSAF39]. A conceptual understanding of theatre appeared in 48% of students’ answers, as this example shows: “Theatre is a story presented on the basis of
emotions and feelings. It wants to create a certain feeling in the people who watch it [SSBF32]. 28% linked it to the notion of ‘story’. 11% mentioned that it has a ‘message’, and 9% mentioned that it is ‘art’.

When students were asked about their expectations of the Spiegelproject (Question 12), 57% revealed an outlook related to the process, while 30% had expectations linked to the product. 13% had no expectation or did not answer. The following categories were present among expectations related to the process. 35% mentioned learning something new, such as: “To expand my own physical and mental limits” [SSAM6], 13% hoped it would be a community experience, 8% expected it to be fun. Responses concerning the product referred to the performance (13%), for example: “That we can show something to others that can stay with them” [SSCF9], to some kind of anxiety (13%), such as: “I don’t want to be on stage myself” [SSAF51], while 4% hoped that they would have a particular role.

4.2.2 Baseline Data from Post-Performance Student Questionnaires

Watching NTGent’s performance was a major milestone of the Spiegelproject. Students’ impressions were measured by a mixed-methods questionnaire containing 24 quantitative and 7 qualitative questions. This sought to account their experiences about the play, before they started to work on their creation. The questionnaire was filled out by 98% of the participants (N=52). The following sections first present data gained in a quantitative way, then, students’ answers to qualitative questions.

4.2.2.1 Quantitative Questions on Students’ Experiences about the Theatre Visit in General

Students were first asked whether they felt at ease at NTGent (Questions 1-3). Broadly speaking, 62% of the sample reported that they had a good experience, 34% was undecided and 4% disagreed. However, 48% was undecided whether they would be interested in other programmes of NTGent, 31% marked they were not interested and 50
only 21% showed interest (Question 4). 50% of the participants revealed that they would return with their family or friends, while the other 50% said they would not (Question 5). Students had to answer (Question 29) whether they had heard about the Ghent Manifesto, which was displayed in the theatre’s entrance hall. Only 2 students indicated that they had heard about it.

4.2.2.2 Quantitative Questions about Students' Experiences of ‘La Reprise’

The next block of questions examined students’ perception of ‘La Reprise’.

Figures 4.5-4.7 compare participants’ reaction to statements designed to measure their experience. The pie charts show that students reacted heterogeneously to ‘La Reprise’. Only slightly more than half of the sample assessed it as a positive experience (Questions 8, 10-11, 16), merely a quarter agreed with statements about its relevance to them (Questions 9, 13-15), and one third was confident about having learned about theatre or social matters represented by the play (Questions 18-23). Students were also asked about the strangeness of 'La Reprise'. 46% found it unusual, 50% could not tell, and for 4% it was not strange (Question 7). Finally, 56% of the sample indicated that ‘La Reprise’
gave them ideas for the Spiegelproject, 27% was undecided, and 17% disagreed (Questions 12, 17).

4.2.2.3 Qualitative Responses about the Visit at NTGent

Participants were asked to explain why they would or would not return to the theatre (Question 6). The predominant reason for not returning was a lack of interest in theatre (37%), while 15% referred to no interest among family or friends. (One student marked yes previously, yet here she wrote, she does not like theatre.) As reason for returning, 33% of the sample mentioned good experience. 12% said they would only return if the offer is interesting. One responder suggested that she would only return if her family initiated it. When students were asked how they would make NTGent more accessible (Question 31), 25% mentioned promotion, 19% raised socially relevant themes, 13% suggested the involvement of the audience, 10% proposed another style and 8% addressing young people. 33% did not respond.

4.2.2.4 Qualitative Responses to ‘La Reprise’

In students’ answers to questions asking about the significance of the performance (Questions 24-26), the major preoccupations revolved around homophobia and violence. Figures 4.8-4.10 present their responses.
The figures show the recurrent theme of homophobia when sharing ideas about possible spectators, when highlighting a memorable moment, and when reporting a personal experience evoked by the performance. Although most students could not link the play to their own lives, a remarkable number of students (22%) revealed that their friends, family members or themselves are affected by the issue, as in the case of this student: “I am bisexual, my ex-friend committed suicide after s/he felt bullied because of her/his homosexuality. So I was really moved during the play” [intentionally hidden code]. Other personal experiences linked to the performance included fragility of life, as the example shows: “Life can end swiftly in every moment because of stupid things” [SSBM31].

Similarly, when students had to suggest an alternative title, ideas linked to homophobic injustice were mentioned in most cases (23%). Two students mentioned the experience of being abandoned in distress in public, an issue school teachers later identified as “bystander effect”. When asked which scene they found the most remarkable (Question 27), most participants mentioned the ending, when one of the actors proposed to hang himself, unless the audience saved him. Students recalled they were unsure how to react.
Students were also asked if they would change anything in the performance (Question 28). Altogether, 56% of the sample mentioned that they would change something, recurring elements were: omitting auditions (19%), nudity (17%) and video-recording (6%). 40% said they would not change anything, and 4% did not reply. Two different predominant motives could be identified behind the answers of those who would not change. 12% of them emphasised, that “it was good as it was” [SSAF38], whereas two students implied that they did not feel competent to answer the question: “I don’t know so much about it” [SSAF39]. The rest of the sample did not explain their choice (Question 28).

4.2.3 Baseline Data from Post-Performance School Teacher Interviews

Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with four school teachers responsible for the project after students had seen ‘La Reprise’, before the start of the creation process. The purpose of the interviews was to explore the interviewees’ expectations and ideas about the Spiegelproject and their views about the educational value of ‘La Reprise’. The following sections discuss the data along the emerging themes.

4.2.3.1 Non-formal Learning

The interviews revealed that three teachers have already participated in a Spiegelproject with the school in 2013. Their good experience was a key reason to engage in the current project. As further factors for their commitment in the project, two teachers mentioned that students of this year were suitable for a Spiegelproject: “They have a good bond between them […] and they like extra activities around school” [SDTF]. All teachers hoped that participating in the project will mean a community experience, and that teachers and students will get closer. Two teachers mentioned that working in a different environment will stimulate students differently and allow more time and space for in-
depth learning. One teacher mentioned cross-curriculum objectives: “cultural enrichment, arts, self-expression, social development” [SETM].

4.2.3.2 Social Awareness

All teachers agreed that the social relevance of ‘La Reprise’ can add to the project. They hoped that students can become socially more aware through the Spiegelproject. All teachers claimed that students are affected by the subject as they encounter violence in their lives. One teacher even remarked: “I noticed that there are a few students who also have homophobic thoughts sometimes.” [SCTM] Three teachers were aware of the Manifesto, and believed that reflecting on a performance created according to it, makes the Spiegelproject more valuable.

4.2.3.3 Cultural Awareness

All teachers expressed that they expect students’ relationship to cultural activities and theatre to change. Three teachers mentioned that students do not attend theatre or other cultural events regularly. As reflective of this, a teacher commented: “We are often looking for ways to make culture accessible for them. And to watch a theatre performance is actually not sufficient. [...] Culture is very scary for them and they see it as an obligation” [SRTF]. One teacher linked it to students’ family background: “A lot of parents are not interested in culture. It is just not their thing to go to NTGent” [SDTF]. Three teachers mentioned that NTGent’s quality was an asset for them when engaging in the project. One of them mentioned that she expects NTGent to have an overview of the Spiegelproject during the process.

4.2.4 Summary of Baseline Data

To sum up all baseline data, the following key observations can be made. While school teachers remarked that students were not interested in what teachers labelled as culture,
they also mentioned their relative openness. In fact, most of them had attended cultural events listed in the questionnaire, except for classical concerts. Theatre had a significantly high attendance rate. Students’ reaction to theatre was heterogenous. One third expressed particularly positive emotions, while another third showed explicitly negative feelings at the beginning of the project.

Conversely to the high theatre attendance rate, the vast majority had never participated in a drama workshop before. However, a significant majority revealed expectations about the project with a positive overtone. Most of these were linked to the process, while a third was connected to the product. Teachers described goals related predominantly to the process, including social cohesion, learning about social matters such as homophobia, and about theatre as culture.

Regarding their experiences of ‘La Reprise’, teachers' and students' views diverged. While teachers thought that ‘La Reprise’ was relevant to the participants’ context, only 25% of the students shared that idea. Nevertheless, almost everyone could mention a remarkable moment in the play and 44% could connect it to a personal experience. Among them, a significant number mentioned having had experiences concerning homophobia. Responses reveal that in fact, homophobia was the most striking matter in the play for students. Regarding their future interest in theatre, half of the group said they would return to NTGent, while the other 50% indicated no interest in attending, the predominant reason being the lack of interest in theatre. Another factor for the lack of interest, mentioned by 15% of respondents, was family habits.

4.3 Interim Interviews with the Drama Teacher and the Head of Publiekswerking

Two qualitative semi-structured interviews aimed to capture the perspective of the involved persons on the theatre’s team. Similarly to the Post-Performance Interviews with the school teachers, these intended to explore interviewees’ expectations and aims related to the Spiegelproject. However, these two interviews are discussed separately from the baseline data, since they were conducted already during the creation process, due to the interviewees’ availability. The following sections present the responses organised under the main emerging themes.
4.3.1 Bridging Theatre and Society

Both the Head of PW (HPW) and the drama teacher underlined connecting theatre and society as a key purpose of Spiegelprojects. HPW accentuated “embracing the people in the city” [TPLM]. The drama teacher highlighted the opportunity for young people to experience theatre and the collaboration between the school and the theatre. Both interviewees found it important that non-professionals can actively explore theatre in a professional environment. There were slight differences in emphasis in their answers regarding the aims of Spiegelproject. The drama teacher identified as key feature of Spiegelproject that it is based on a “high-quality” performance, and put it in contrast with “commercial” theatre, where she found that the “message is less essential” [TDRF]. She suggested as a main benefit of Spiegelproject, that students can attend high-quality productions and can get closer to them by working with the material. For HPW, the priority was learning “common sense about the world” [TPLM]. He found it essential that students were confronted with homophobia in this Spiegelproject.

As a secondary goal, raising social awareness through theatre was also emphasised by the drama teacher. She claimed that ‘La Reprise’ is high-quality because it dealt with socially relevant issues, and suggested that the Spiegelproject can improve students’ “empathic capacity, so they can put themselves in the shoes of the people in the story” [TDRF]. Both creators found that the project allowed students to create better community bonds and improve their self-awareness.

4.3.2 Process and Product

HPW distinguished between “large” and “small” Spiegelprojects. In his view, a large Spiegelproject bears more artistic relevance, where process and product have equal significance. He suggested that in the case of small Spiegelprojects, like the one students were participating in, the process should be more emphasised. He expressed concerns that school teachers were too concentrated on the end result. He found a main advantage of the Spiegelproject to be that students could learn differently outside the
walls of the school, and that the theatre contributed to this by offering its production, infrastructure and a commissioned drama teacher. The drama teacher emphasised the significance of collaborating in the creation process and enabling teachers and students to have their own choices in it. However, her understanding of her own role in the project appeared to counteract this approach. While being responsible for the project design, she described her role as: “making sure that the teachers’ and students’ ideas get a theatrical form on the stage” [TDRF].

4.3.3 Summary of Interim Interviews

Similarly to the school teachers, the Drama Teacher and the HPW shared the vision that students can build better social coherence and learn about society by participating in the Spiegelproject. HPW discussed the dichotomy of process and product, and claimed that this Spiegelproject should be process-oriented. However, the drama teacher’s self-reported role in the Spiegelproject implied an emphasis on creating an end product. The way she described her task corresponds with my observations about the project’s organisation, which will be discussed in section 4.9.

4.4 Post-Project Student Questionnaires

6 weeks after the project, students completed a mixed-method questionnaire consisting of 32 quantitative and 7 qualitative questions. 94% of the participants (N=50) completed this questionnaire. It sought to gain data about students’ reflections on the project and their own role in it. The purpose of qualitative questions in this questionnaire was to elicit elaborations of binary quantitative questions. Thus, quantitative data are presented first in each section, and in some cases, this is followed by qualitative questions. The findings are described at the end of each section.

4.4.1 Students’ Experiences about the Spiegelproject

Figures 4.11-4.14 show students’ reactions after the project.
In all four aspects of this project, students reacted more positively than negatively. A large majority indicated that participating in the project was a good experience (Questions 1, 3, 8). Roughly two thirds of students expressed a sense of agency and ownership (Questions 2, 5, 6, 7). More than half of the sample indicated that they have learned something new during the Spiegelproject (Questions 10-15). When asked about the relevance of the Spiegelproject, responses were more varying, with roughly half of the group finding the content relevant to themselves (Question 4). 53% of the sample was uncertain about the project’s difficulty. 27% marked that it was difficult for them and 20% thought it was not.
Students also reflected on the project by answering three qualitative questions. When asked what they found most interesting in the project (Question 16), 52% of the students highlighted an aspect of the creation process, for example: “It was exciting to see how well everything was put together” [SSCF18]. 22% mentioned community experience, such as: “How a fairly unconnected group can bond in a short time” [SSCF11]. 16% wrote performing or something related to the end result, for instance: “To stand in front of an audience and to look at them directly” [SSAF48]. Two of the students referred to the theme of the project, and one student did not find anything interesting.

In the replies to the question (17) asking what students found the most difficult, the following matters were recurrent: overcoming boundaries (22%), such as: “To dare to speak” [SSAF48], repeating something several times (12%), standing still (10%) and waiting (8%).

To the question (18) asking whether they have learnt new things during the project, students referred to theatre skills: “Acting things, such as sorrow, but also talking” [SSBF32]. Some reported that their concept of theatre has changed: “Everybody can do theatre” [SSBF29]. 10% mentioned a community experience, such as: “How some fellow students work and think together” [SSCF17]. A few participants highlighted other skills: “Before it was difficult to concentrate, but I learned it thanks to the project” [SSCM53]. Only one student mentioned that she had learnt about homophobia. A quarter of the students did not responded to this question or noted that they had not learnt anything.
4.4.2 Students’ Interest in Participating in Cultural Activities

The Post-Project Questionnaire repeated the question whether participants would attend a performance at NTGent (Question 19). The percentage of students interested in returning increased to 66%, compared to the 50% rate of the Post-Performance Questionnaire (See section 4.2.2.1). However, only 40% of the sample said that the project has inspired them to participate in more cultural events in the future, and 60% was of a different view (Question 20). When asked in a qualitative question (21) to explain their answer, 40% referred to a lack of interest in theatre, while 28% revealed a change in their views about theatre: “Now I can see that theatre is not necessarily boring” [SSAF48]. 18% of students mentioned appreciation of theatre in general, 8% mentioned that the Spiegelproject did not affect their choices, and 6% of the participants referred to family habits as a reason for not attending.

4.4.3 Students’ Interpersonal, Intercultural and Social Competences and Civic Competence

To compare students’ own post-project account about their social and interpersonal competences with the pre-performance data, participants were asked to react to the same set of 12 sentences as in the Baseline Pre-Performance Questionnaire (Section 4.2.1.2). Figures 4.16-4.18 show the differences between the results in the two questionnaires.

Figures 4.16-4.18 Differences in the overall average score of students’ self reported social competences between Pre-Performance (Questions 13-24, N=53) and Post-Project (Questions 22-33, N=50) Questionnaires, on a scale of 1-5.
As is visible from the charts, students’ average score increased regarding their empathic concerns (difference: 2.7%) and their emotional openness (difference: 3.9%), while there was a slight decrease in their willingness and interest to work as a team (difference: 1.4%).

Finally, the questionnaire focused on students’ sense of civic responsibility. Three binary questions (34, 36, 38) echoed the themes examined in the last part of the Pre-Performance Questionnaire, when looking at students’ sense of belonging to different communities and their intention to stand up for social issues. These questions asked if participating in the project has inspired the students to change their views or to engage in the mentioned issues.

![Figure 4.19 Has the project inspired you to...? Post-Project Questionnaire, students' answers to questions 34, 36, 38. N=50](image)

As Figure 4.19 displays, the majority of the students reported that their sense of belonging to social groups had not changed. However, in the case of protecting and standing up publicly for vulnerable people, the majority accounted that the project affected them. Responders were also asked to elaborate their answers in a qualitative way (Questions 35, 37, 39). Those who said ‘yes’ to these questions typically indicated that they have realised something through the project, for example: “Now I really..."
consider before I judge someone” [SSAF44]. Students indicated (32%) that they had marked ‘no’, because the project did not alter their thinking: “I already had this instinct before” [SSBF36]. 14% found it too challenging to become active: “It is still scary [SSAF43]”, and 18% did not respond or said that they were not inspired by the project. While students’ answers typically expressed values and judgements related to the issue of homophobia, they contained more hesitation or doubt when speaking about the “bystander effect.”

4.5 Post-Project Student Focus Group Interviews

To capture students’ views in more depth, 6 weeks after the project, five students were interviewed in a qualitative semi-structured focus group interview. Due to availability by the end of the school year, the school could only enable a single interview with one group of students from an English class. Two of the three participating classes were represented among the interviewees. Two of the interviewed students had a specific role in the performance, and three of them were playing only in group scenes. The following sections present the data according to the emerging sub-themes in the thematic analysis.

4.5.1 “Get the Freedom” — Non-formal Learning in New Spaces

All students commented on how they experienced being outside school. Four of them had mixed feelings at first about being in a new environment. “We really went out of school and we really went out of a comfort zone” [SSAM5]. The first workshops after seeing ‘La Reprise’ still took place in a community centre close to the school. One student found it was a “trusted place, because we eat our lunch there everyday, so I did like to sit there” [SSBM3]. Another student shared her mixed feelings about the first period: “The first workshops were a bit strange, you are still learning a lot of things, like to make those sounds, that was kind of cool” [SSAF2]. Another girl indicated, that it was “boring, but when we were in Ghent, it was more fun” [SSBF1]. In Ghent, students
worked at different venues of the theatre. Some of the students reported feeling at ease in the theatre’s building during the workshops: “Like the red carpets building thingy, the theatre house. I really liked it there, I really felt comfortable” [SSAF2]. Three students suggested that they felt more free being outside school. “I could walk wherever I wanted. […] I like getting the freedom from teachers to do our thing” [SSBM3]. Students also mentioned that it changed their relation to their teachers: “We could call our teachers by their first name” [SSAF2]. Two of the students highlighted group cohesion as a benefit of the project. Students also expressed that the professional setting of the theatre had an impact on their experience. “It was a bit unreal […] our show, we did here, in school, it’s different, because it’s much less professional” [SSBM3]. Another participant reported on increased expectations because of the setting: “You even get more stress in a way, because when they do all those things to make our stage, we definitely have to perform” [SSAM5].

4.5.2 Homophobic Violence

In the Spiegelproject, students concentrated on the motive of homophobic violence and the “bystander effect” of the original play, and excluded other matters represented in ‘La Reprise’ such as unemployment, the victim’s ethnic background, or the meta-level of the performance meditating over the concept of theatre. Students were divided in their initial interest in the theme of the Spiegelproject. One of them said: “…first the subject was something I am not concerned with at all. […] And when you play, you learn more about it, and you definitely think that it happens […] too much” [SSBM3]. Another one of them suggested: “Gay bashing [sic] is something that is kind of close to us” [SSAF2]. She thought that the performance presented it in an alien way to them: “it was partly [in] French, and [it was about] older people” [SSAF2]. These answers correspond with the results of the Post-Performance Questionnaire, where only 25% found the Spiegelproject’s theme relevant (Section 4.2.2.2.).
4.5.3 A “good skeleton for us to finish” — Process and Product

The above heading is a quote from a student. The interview was conducted in English which is his second language. The student suggested that it was an “important first step” [SSBM3] that they watched ‘La Reprise’, as it served as a “good skeleton for us to finish” [SSBM3]. One of them emphasised that the play was a tangible example for them: “we could imagine the feelings better, because we have seen the parents and friends who talked about how they missed the person who was killed.” [SSAF2]. The same student found it essential that they adapted the play to their context: “I was worried that we are going to put in […] the weird moments I didn’t get. But we didn’t. We made our own version, and I was really happy” [SSAF2].

When asked if they did new things in the project, two students highlighted ‘acting’ as something new for them. Another student, who played in the group scenes, mentioned that he learned about: “to stop in the right spot” [SSBM4]. One of the students mentioned concentration skills: “I found it hard to stay focused and not laugh” [SSBF1]. Three students expressed that the Spiegelproject was difficult for them: “I thought theatre was easier. […] you have to practice that much to get everything perfect. […] You really have to get in the right mind to start acting” [SSBM3]. The students agreed that showing their performance was an important part of the project for them. “We got to show our project to everyone, that felt good” [SSBM4]. They also suggested that the feedback they got from the audience made their investment more meaningful. “I saw a few people crying and I think, it had a great impact on them” [SSBF1].

4.5.4 Project Design

Students had diverse experiences about the course of the project. Several of them suggested that it was difficult that they did not have an overview of the work until they started to put the scenes together in the last days: “I was irritated because I didn’t know what was going to happen next and it was all a little bit of dit-dot” [SSAM5]. Three additional school teachers had other commitments and they attended the workshops.
irregularly. One student remarked that this was confusing: “Some teachers, they irritated me […] the teachers, who were not always there” [SSAM5].

Students implicated in their answers that their tasks in the performance did not equally keep them busy: “…sometimes they practiced scenes that I was not a part of over and over again, and then I had to wait.” [SSBF1]. A student playing an important role reacted to this: “I had to do more than waiting a lot” [SSBM3]. Two of the students asserted that on the day of the performance, the last arrangements were too late: “the lighting and practising was sort of last moment” [SSAF2]. One student suggested that the presentation of their performance was “perfect timing” because “I was getting kind of tired practising” [SSBM3]. The students agreed that it was encouraging to see the motivation of the four teachers who were involved throughout the whole project.

4.6 Post-Project School Teacher Interviews

6 to 8 weeks after the project, I conducted semi-structured individual interviews with the four school teachers involved in the Spiegelproject. These took place according to the availability of the interviewees. The following sections present the data gained from the interviews according to the emerging themes.

4.6.1 Social Bonding

When asked about the benefits of the project, all school teachers highlighted that it had a positive impact on group cohesion between the classes. “The boundaries between the classes became very thin” [SCTM]. Two teachers emphasised that students experienced cooperation in a group, and those who were marginalised in the class became more integrated. One particular student, who did not want to join the project, was mentioned by two interviewees. They claimed that the student had conflicts with classmates, that being a motive for refusing to join the project. In the last week of the project, the student decided to join in as well. The teachers remarked that thanks to the project, some
students’ relationship with their teachers or with their parents changed, for instance: “A mother came to me and she said: ‘Now we have some positive things related to school. We can talk about it at home’” [SDTF]. Teachers implied that students’ awareness around the subject expanded also through such family discussions. All teachers suggested that students’ self-reflection and self-awareness improved by taking part in the project.

4.6.2 Civic Awareness — Homophobia and “Bystander Effect”

Three school teachers emphasised the social relevance of the Spiegelprojects theme as another essential characteristic. Two of the teachers compared this project to the first Spiegelproject collaboration between NTGent and their school 6 years earlier, and highlighted that this time it was more beneficial because of the topic’s significance. Three teachers thought the theme was relevant to the students. The fourth teacher suggested that themes of ‘La Reprise’ were not interesting for the students in the beginning, but “they made it their own play. They took the topic of gay bashing [sic], and they started looking for situations in their own lives where this could have happened” [SDTF]. All teachers remarked that the themes of the original performances were adapted to students’ own context and this helped them to identify with the content of the Spiegelproject.

Social responsibility and civic engagement were emphasised by all interviewees as something students were confronted with in the project. “The question of what do you do when you see violence, that is a competence, social responsibility. And that is expressed here very practically” [SRTF]. Three teachers underlined that students became more aware of homophobia as a problem in society and were confronted with the challenge of protecting vulnerable people, especially against social pressure.

4.6.3 Non-formal Learning

All of the teachers identified working outside the classroom as an advantage of the project. “When the students are in a regular class situation, they are [...] filtering what
they take in. But thanks to the fact that you leave the school, they are much more open” [SRTF]. All teachers mentioned that the setting changed their relationship to their students, and they were able to get to know them better. Three teachers also asserted that the new environment and activity motivated students, even those who were indifferent to school, or were on the periphery of their class community. “We had a student who really hated coming to school, and who always fights with his parents, because his grades are not good. […] he had a major part in the play, he was so enthusiastic about it. And I see now, that his grades are better. […] he has found an extra drive” [SDTF]. Finally, all teachers regarded the experience of performing and trying out stage skills beneficial for the students.

4.6.4 Project Design

All of the interviewees asserted that watching ‘La Reprise’ was a useful base for the project. For example, one teacher emphasised that it meant a practical input: “you can’t just tell them about a situation and ask them to imagine it or how it would be. I think they have to experience something and that is what theatre does” [SETM]. Speaking about their role in the project, school teachers unanimously reported that they have enjoyed participating, and all of them said they would definitely engage in a similar project again.

Three teachers suggested that although they were involved and led workshops during the Spiegelproject, they did not have an overview of the desired outcome and sometimes lacked information about the exact task they had to do with their group: “I had the feeling, that I was just filling time. […] We weren’t able to rehearse a lot of things simultaneously. There were some students who had nothing to do. So we had to take them and try to keep them busy.” Two of the teachers found that there was not enough preparation among project leaders: “It is not okay to see each other in the morning five minutes before we start, and then we have to talk about what we are going to have today” [SCTM]. Teachers reported that this caused confusion among the students.

All of the school teachers reported that the project required a lot of extra work from them. When they were asked in the interviews about what could prevent them from engaging
again, two of them referred to their family situations: “If there is not a little baby running around…” [SDTF]. Two of the school teachers mentioned that the project was also very demanding on the rest of the school, because graduating students were absent from the school for many days. According to one teacher, she experienced resentment from her colleagues when they returned to the school after the project.

4.7 Post-Project Interview with the Head of Publiekswerking

The HPW’s reflections on the project were recorded 10 weeks after the project through a semi-structured qualitative interview. The interview aimed to explore his reflections on the Spiegelproject and his perspective on links between NTGent’s policies and the Spiegelproject.

4.7.1 Community Achievement

According to HPW, the major achievements of the Spiegelproject were that “everybody was on stage” [TPLM], implying that the community experience helped to overcome individual boundaries, that students had their own contribution to the project and that they showed signs of being aware of the issue they represented on stage. He claimed to be satisfied with the drama teacher’s work and emphasised the great extent of involvement of the school teachers as a significant factor of the project’s effectiveness. As a flaw of the project, he repeated his concern about the insufficient focus on the process and remarked that he could have had closer contact with the drama teacher during the Spiegelproject. Finally, as a side note, he brought up the case of a student, which was discussed on the evaluation meeting with the school teachers. The student had an important role in the project and came to school several weeks after the project with a symbol of a radical group. The HPW found it strange that there was “no real impact once the project is closed” [TPLM] in this particular case.
4.7.2 Publiekswerking and the Ghent Manifesto

When asked about the links between the policies of NTGent, PW and this Spiegelproject, he claimed that the key principles of PW were realised in the project. He suggested that the Spiegelproject can be seen as a “translation of the Manifesto”, since “young people get involved with themes which are present now in society” [TPLM] and as a group connected to Ghent, they got the chance to create something on one of NTGent’s stages.

4.8 Summary of Post-Project Findings

Figure 4.20 compares how students’ overall assessment of four key factors changed between after watching ‘La Reprise’ and the post-project experience.

![Figure 4.20 Comparison of 4 key Baseline Post-Performance (N=52) and Post-Project (N=50) data. Percentage of students, who agreed with statements measuring…](image)

The figure vividly illustrates that after actively taking part in the project, students’ responses were more unanimous in reporting good experiences than only after having...
attended NTGent’s performance. The subject became relevant to more of them, more students reported having learned something new, and the percentage of those indicating interest in returning increased. As section 4.4.3 showed, the average score of students’ self-reported empathic skills and emotional openness increased while there was a decrease in the score regarding ‘team work’. The latter data seems to contradict the overall opinion of the school teachers, the HPW and several students’ claims from the Post-Project Questionnaire, since they found that the project brought participants closer as a team. However, the sample reported heterogenous experiences, and there were a few students by the end of the project, who said, they have not learnt anything (12%), or did not enjoy the Spiegelproject (5%).

Homophobia became a concern of students after watching ‘La Reprise’ and their performance was built around a manifestation of “bystander effect” around a homophobic murder. A significant number of the students reported that they became more aware of vulnerable people in society and that the project had inspired them to do something. Students also expressed doubts related to the “bystander effect”, mentioning they were unsure if they could take action. However, when students had to highlight something they had learnt about in the project, the majority mentioned theatre skills and social bonding, and only one mentioned the theme of the project. Both teachers and the HPW mentioned issues around the project design. HPW was concerned about not focusing enough on the process, while teachers mentioned a lack of overview and not having enough preparation time. Some students in the focus group reported too much waiting time without anything to do, which implies the unbalanced distribution of tasks.

4.9 Non-Participant Observations of the Spiegelproject Process

By taking field notes and creating an entry in the Researcher's Journal after each workshop, I made unstructured non-participant observations. The focus of these observations was to capture key elements of the process and explore the way participants were involved in the Spiegelproject. The following key findings arise from the text:
- The Spiegelproject consisted of ten workshops. The third workshop already focused on working on preparing scenes for the performance, and students worked only on the elements of their production from this moment on.

- The process enabled every student to explore the perspective of one of the characters at least in one instance, when they were writing texts in the first person. Students could choose which perspective to identify with. This was the only activity during the project which allowed all participating students to explore the events from a perspective inside the story.

- Students had varying choices, responsibilities and independence in the process. Roles were distributed by taking into account students’ interests. However, there were 15 students (28%) without a particular role. They only performed in group scenes.

- Throughout the process, the main elements of the students’ creation were defined by one group of participating students (15-19%), the “concept group”. This group worked under the guidance of a school teacher and the drama teacher. The group made decisions based only on theoretical discussions, without using role play or other tasks that could help experiential identification.

- While homophobia was a matter students identified directly in ‘La Reprise’, the “bystander effect” was an issue emphasised more by the teachers in the discussions of the “concept group”.

- School teachers were highly involved from the first moment of the project and guided smaller groups during the process. Their tasks were predominantly akin to the role of the director’s assistant in a rehearsal process. They helped the drama teacher to prepare scenes for the performance.

- Many planning discussions among school teachers and the drama teacher happened during the workshops, which often caused long waiting times for students, and delayed feedback on their work.
4.10 Conclusions

In conclusion, research data shows that at the beginning of the project, 53 final year students from a Flemish secondary school had limited interest in theatre and almost no experience in actively working with it. Students had varying outlooks for the Spiegelproject, but twice as many students expressed expectations regarding the process than the number of those who mentioned something related to the product. Teachers’ expectations of the project were related to learning about theatre and culture, learning about the themes of the project, and social bonding. The HPW emphasised learning about the world, and claimed a process-oriented approach for similar small Spiegelprojects to be ideal. The drama teacher highlighted encountering high-quality art as the primary aim of the project.

According to all participants, the opportunity to learn outside the regular school context played a key role in the project’s effectiveness. The project contributed to the social bonding of the participating three classes. Actively taking part in creating a reflecting performance largely affected students’ overall experience of theatre. Compared to baseline post-performance data, more students found the subject relevant, believed to have learned something and reported good experiences after the Spiegelproject. Students’ interest in attending NTGent performances increased from 50% to 66%.

All programme leaders asserted that ‘La Reprise’ (created according to the Ghent Manifesto) was efficient from an educational perspective, particularly thanks to its social relevance. This was corroborated by data from the students, as the majority of the sample reported to be more concerned about social issues after the Spiegelproject. The thematic analysis revealed that homophobia was a recurring concern in students’ responses already after watching ‘La Reprise’, while the phenomenon labelled as “bystander effect” became a frequent concern only after the project. However, other aspects of the Spiegelproject appeared to impress more students than the social questions did. When students had to name what they had learnt, only one mentioned the theme, and most of them talked about theatre skills or social bonding.
The data revealed that roughly two thirds of the group experienced a sense of agency and ownership throughout the project. The lack of sense of agency of one third of the group corresponds with observations, which revealed an imbalanced distribution of tasks and autonomy of students. This relates to findings that revealed mixed reactions to the Spiegelproject, as a few students indicated that they have not learned anything new, or have not found the Spiegelproject relevant to themselves. Students, teachers and the HPW mentioned a few shortcomings of the project related to a lack of planning or too much emphasis on the product instead of the process. Observations found that the design of most tasks oriented participants’ focus on the product of the Spiegelproject. The following chapter will analyse the findings following the four key themes that emerged from the qualitative data.
Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings based on the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data of the research as presented in the previous chapter. It will interrogate them against the main themes that came forward from the thematic analysis of the qualitative data, the principles of the Ghent Manifesto identified in Chapter Two and the indications of the literature review. The discussion will address the research questions and consider implications that go beyond the boundaries of this study, and have significance for further practice.

The four major themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of qualitative data organise the chapter's discussion. These are:

- Raised awareness and appreciation of theatre
- Social bonding
- Social awareness: reacting to homophobia and to the “bystander effect”
- Product and process

The principles of the Ghent Manifesto (2018) that are relevant to the context of this study were identified in Chapter Two. These are:

- Pursuing a vision of participatory theatre
- Inclusion of underrepresented communities
- Raising awareness about current social and political matters
- Conveying theatre as a process

The above mentioned themes and these principles will serve to address the following research question, and sub-questions:

What is the relationship between NTGent’s Manifesto, the principles of a Spiegelproject and secondary school participants’ experience?
1. How do students experience taking part in a Spiegelproject?

2. What do school teachers’ and the theatre’s team aim to achieve through the Spiegelproject?

3. Does the experience of the Spiegelproject participants relate to the principles of the Manifesto? If yes, how?

4. Does the Spiegelproject enable students to develop a sense of ownership of the process?

5.2 Raised Awareness and Appreciation of Theatre

Interpreting and appreciating theatre as an art form and as part of established culture was a theme that appeared across the responses of all programme leaders and in some of the students’ qualitative data as well. This helps to discuss the research question about the aims of the school teachers and the theatre’s team in the Spiegelproject. In Chapter Four participants of the study had different ‘takes’ on the benefits of attending theatre performances. On the one hand, school teachers linked the visit to NTGent to cultural habits. Although they did not define their notion of culture, it was evident that theatre was representing a cultural asset for them. They implied their hope that students will have more affinity to such assets thanks to the project. Similarly, the drama teacher made a distinction between the values of different theatres, and underlined the significance of encountering high-quality theatre. On the other hand the Head of the Publiekswerking (HPW) prioritised the instructive potential of the performance. However, all in all, attending performances was considered advantageous by all programme leaders.

In the case of the students, as described in the previous chapter, the highlighted aspect of theatre varied from entertainment through learning to boredom. Yet, there was a small element in the student body that saw being capable of relating to theatre as a competence. Several students conceptualised theatre as something that contains a message, or mentioned that “Sometimes you need to think twice about it” (SSBF1, Pre-
Performance Questionnaire, Question 10). The lack of competence was implied in two students’ answers as a reason for not being able to tell what they would change in ‘La Reprise’ (Post-Performance Questionnaire, Question 28). Another student’s example quoted in the Researcher’s Journal (2/4/2019) revealed anxiety connected to interpreting theatre. Before the students’ performance, she expressed concern about her parents being able to understand the play without being experienced in theatre. This speaks to Bourdieu’s (2010) concept, discussed in Chapter Two. He found that socially ingrained cultural predispositions (habitus) can be reinforced by uncomfortable feelings in situations different from one’s regular social environment, when the person can be uncertain about codes and appropriate reactions. The theory describes the feeling that could be associated with the lack of belonging rather than the lack of interest as a motive behind non-attendance. The fact that 15% of the students linked their lack of interest in theatre to family habits in the Post-Performance Questionnaire, similar to one school teacher’s remark in the Post-Performance Interview about parents being indifferent towards theatre, also connects to Bourdieu’s (2010) theory about family being one of the primary decisive factors of one’s cultural choices. As the number of students who mentioned such concerns was small compared to the whole group, this is an area where further study could implicate the validity of the theory in similar settings.

Bourdieu (2010) identifies schooling as the second decisive factor for one’s cultural preferences (‘taste’). The finding that students’ overall interest in attending theatre increased by the end of the Spiegelproject indicates the potential of similar education projects in creating awareness of theatre. Several students’ qualitative answers reveal that actively doing theatre in the Spiegelproject has contributed to the shift in their attitudes towards theatre (Section, 4.4.2). The finding is in alignment with the outcomes of the DICE — “Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competences in Education” (2010) study regarding increased interest in attending cultural activities. It also substantiates the claims that active participation in theatre activities contributes to awareness of the art form (Bolton, 1999; Heathcote, 2015a; O’Neill, 1995). As discussed in Chapter Two, that is the key concern of theatre education programmes (Jackson & Vine, 2013; Pinkert, 2014). The finding of the research also shows that while there was an overall increase in
interest in attending theatre, a significant group of students (38%) still reported a lack of interest after the project. I will argue in section 5.5 that the project’s design engaged students unevenly and that this played a role in students’ diverse reactions after the Spiegelproject.

Regarding the research question identifying comparisons with the Ghent Manifesto (2018), the declaration does not identify raising awareness about theatre as a key endeavour of the NTGent. The company’s leadership (Rau, Bläske, Heene, & De Boelpaep, 2018, p. 4) gives priority to connecting the theatre to reality and effecting change that goes beyond the theatre’s frame. As Chapter Two revealed, this vision is closer to the traditions of participatory art, than to the concept of evoking appreciation of theatre arts through participating in it.

In conclusion, the findings reveal the difference in emphasis in the outlooks of school teachers, the drama teacher and the HPW regarding raising awareness of theatre. While the school teachers and the drama teacher underlined their hope that students will have more interest in attending theatre, the HPW did not emphasise this as a goal, nor was it in line with the principles of the Ghent Manifesto. Beside these inherent differences, the group’s overall interest in attending increased after having participated in the project.

5.3 Social Bonding

Greater social cohesion among students and even among students and teachers as a benefit of the project emerged as a theme from all responders’ data. The discussion about pertinent findings aims to offer answers for the research questions about participants’ and programme leaders’ expectations and experiences. As presented in the previous chapter, the findings of this project show that stronger connection among students was mentioned as an outlook by all school teachers and by 13% of the students (Chapter Four, Section 4.2.1.3.). Retrospectively, both students in the focus group interview and teachers expressed that the project strengthened the students’ bond, established new connections among members of the different classes, and had a bonding impact on some of the students’ relationship with their parents. Furthermore,
students in the focus group interview as well as teachers suggested that through the Spiegelproject they got to know a new side of each other. The comparison of quantitative data from Pre-Performance and Post-Project Questionnaires revealed that the average score of participants measuring emphatic skills and emotional openness increased, while there was a decrease in the score measuring working in a team. The latter finding works as a contradiction with participants’ qualitative claims about improved social bonds. It also diverges from the “community-building effect” of drama pointed out by the DICE (2010) research. An explanation for that can be students’ different level of engagement in the project mentioned already in section 5.2. A further study could explore the motives behind this contradistinction.

The qualitative data discussed above are congruent with the findings of DICE (2010) research regarding the overall improvement of empathy, tolerance and handling of stress among students who participated in educational theatre and drama activities. Data from the student focus group interview and teachers’ interviews show that both groups linked the improved relationship among students on the one hand and teachers and students on the other hand to working outside the school. It could be argued, that other group activities done outside school could have similar effects. While this may be accurate to a certain extent, according to the school teachers’ accounts the Spiegelproject enabled students to learn through emotional involvement and strengthened their self-reflection. Chapter Two demonstrated these are factors inherent to drama, emphasised by Heathcote (2015b), and Bolton (1976, cited in Davis, 2014). Furthermore, as the next section will discuss, school teachers found especially valuable the social relevance of the content the work was based on. When returning to the research question about the Spiegelproject’s relationship to the Ghent Manifesto, the research shows that the Spiegelproject provided an opportunity for a particular community for emotional learning, improvement of social skills and better social cohesion among group members.

In conclusion, NTGent through this educational project, served as a platform for the community of the school in their pursuit of pedagogical goals. In this way NTGent could offer its capacities to effect change, which had relevance beyond the theatre’s
boundaries. This implicates that educational aspects should be among the considered factors for NTGent, when it plans future projects with the aim of working for change.

5.4 Social Awareness: Reacting on Homophobia and the “Bystander Effect”

As previously presented, all involved programme leaders recognised as an essential educational advantage of the Spiegelproject that it allowed the exploration of significant social matters with the students. Enhanced awareness about two social issues, homophobia and the “bystander effect” were themes emerging from school teachers’, the theatre’s teams’ and students’ qualitative responses. As Chapter Four presented, participants used the label “bystander effect” to describe the challenge of getting involved in public situations, when someone is harmed. The discussion around the main theme of social awareness allows for the addressing of the research question exploring programme leaders’ expectations about the Spiegelproject.

The HPW’s claim that learning “common sense about the world” (Chapter Four, Section 4.3.1) is the central principle of the Spiegelproject, and school teachers’ assertion that this Spiegelproject was especially valuable thanks to its social relevance, were key findings discussed previously. Defining the Spiegelproject’s objective as learning about the world or society parallels what Bolton (1976, cited in Davis 2014, p. 22), or C. Cooper (2013) attributed as one of the main aims of DiE or TiE discussed in Chapter Two. However, as Chapter Two revealed, the main characteristic of the Spiegelproject form, its origins, its overall framing, and its methods make the activity most akin with the theatre education tradition, where the activity is centred around learning about theatre.

Findings are incongruent in how students were dealing with the social issues in the focus of the Spiegelproject. When taking into consideration, the significant percentage of students who indicated having encountered homophobia (Chapter Four, Section 4.2.2.4), and the remark of one of the teachers, about recognising homophobic ideas among students (Chapter Four, Section 4.2.3.2), the theme of homophobia appears highly pertinent to the school’s community. However, previously presented data from the Post-Performance and Post-Project Student Questionnaires showed students’ heterogenous
perception of the project’s relevance. After having actively participated in the project, the number of students who found the themes of the Spiegelproject relevant increased, and many of them reported, that the project raised their awareness. Yet, still only roughly half of the students remarked that they found the project’s theme relevant to them (Chapter Four, Section 4.8), which suggests that the Spiegelproject’s design did not enable a significant part of the student body to bring forward their own issues and concerns.

Another implication of the findings was that students’ reflections about the themes contained mostly value judgement about homophobia and more self-reflecting, doubting thoughts were expressed in relation to the “bystander effect” (Chapter Four, Section 4.4.3). This indicates that while the programme did not open questions about homophobia, the issues around the “bystander effect” posed more complex challenges to the students. Stimulating students’ own search for answers is regarded essential in TiE (M. Cooper, 2013). The Spiegelproject’s capacity to offer complex questions helped to avoid the risk of being merely instructive about the subject (Winston, 2005). This offers a rationale to the programme leaders’ decision to place this matter in the focus of the Spiegelproject.

Considering the research question about the Spiegelproject’s connection to the Ghent Manifesto, the links are obvious between learning about society through the Spiegelproject and the Manifesto’s principles. The goal of gaining better understanding about the world and society is in line with the commitment of bringing “the world’s issues to the city” (Rau et al., 2018, p. 2) proclaimed as NTGent’s mission, discussed in detail in Chapter Two. As discussed in the previous chapter, two school teachers contrasted this and the former Spiegelproject the school had engaged with earlier, asserting that in the recent case the subject was more relevant and thus more beneficial. This implicates that the change of the theatre’s mission had an impact on the Spiegelproject practice, and contributed to its social relevance.

In summary, the present discussion demonstrated that a significant part of the students’ group got engaged with the social matters in the focus of the project. As ‘La Reprise’ was created according to the principles of the Ghent Manifesto, these findings can indicate that the endeavours of the theatre to bring contemporary political and social
matters on stage contributed to the effectiveness of the education programme. The following section will identify factors in the project, that precluded some of the students to identify more fully with the Spiegelproject’s subject.

5.5 Product and Process

Various issues about the project’s design mentioned by students, school teachers, the drama teacher and the HPW all point at the theme around ‘product and process’, and the factors related to the dominance of either of the two. The discussion of this theme addresses the research questions inquiring about the students’ experiences in the Spiegelproject and about their ownership of the Spiegelproject. Chapter Four revealed a number of findings related to this matter. There was an inherent tension between the HPW’s claim that such a “small Spiegelproject” should principally be process-oriented, and the project’s run driven by tasks mostly related to the final product. Furthermore, while teachers’ and students’ expectations about the project were predominantly related to the process, the Spiegelproject comprised a number of factors that directed participants’ attention to the product. This had an effect on their experience of the project. Additionally, in Chapter Four, the following three factors that had a decisive impact on the Spiegelproject’s orientation are referred to. First, workshops wherein students were preparing the performance significantly outnumbered workshops allowing more open exploration of the topic. Second, most of the time students worked in groups with compartmentalised tasks around the performance. Finally, the drama teacher’s understanding of her own role in the project also implied the pre-eminence of considerations around staging the play.

Consequently, the methods the Spiegelproject adopted gave prominence to the project’s output and participants applied acting in a way that Bolton (1999) associates with “presenting”. Exploration of situations and characters was subordinate to preparing the students’ performance. This also meant that students were engaged with only parts of the story. Whole group exploration through imagined situations (Bolton, 1993), gave students the opportunity to see the story from the perspectives of various characters
(Bolton, 1999) in a “no penalty zone” (Heathcote, 1984). A lack of concern about performing skills (O’Neill, 1995) inherent to TiE and DiE methods, and associated with learning through drama (Heathcote, 2015b) were applied in a limited way or were not applicable to this project.

The uneven distribution of tasks indicated by students in the focus group interview (Chapter Four, Section 4.5.4.) and the uneven control over the concept (Chapter Four, Section 4.9.) were also consequences of participants’ focus on their performance. In practical terms, it was more efficient to delegate decision-making only to a selected number of students in the “concept group”, and to give roles to students more open to perform. Yet, such design affects students’ sense of ownership. As Swick (1999) remarks, large number of participants limit negotiating possibilities. The significance of common negotiation of meaning in drama enables the development of ownership of the process (Heathcote, 1984; O’Toole, 1992; & O’Neill, 1995). The ratio of students and teachers is equally an important aspect, and affects learning opportunities (C. Cooper, 2013). Although the school teachers were involved in co-leading the Spiegelproject together with the drama teacher, two of them mentioned that they had a limited sense of agency, as they lacked having an overview of the project. My observations corroborated the fact that teachers’ tasks were predominantly about assisting the preparations of the performance.

Chapter Four revealed that roughly two thirds of the students reacted positively to statements related to ownership, while the rest of the group was undecided or disagreed (Section 4.2.2.4). As discussed in Chapter Two, obtaining a sense of ownership can facilitate identification with the learning process (Dudley-Marling & Searle, 1995). When looking at the varying results concerning students’ engagement with theatre or sense of relevance discussed in the previous sections, it is noticeable how these were equally affected by the project’s design and its dominant focus on the product. The fact that those who showed less interest at the beginning had fewer tasks, sensibly played a role in the degree of their sense of ownership.

When addressing the research question about the connections with the Ghent Manifesto, we see that on the one hand the significance of process is emphasised both in the
Manifesto, and associated with the Spiegelproject by the HPW, the way the project run hindered the prevalence of process-oriented activities. On the other hand the design of the Spiegelproject offers implications about the theatre’s pursuit of participatory theatre. Firstly, NTGent offered its resources to the participants through the Spiegelproject, which enabled them to develop their own understanding of an issue and to represent it on the theatre’s stage. This associates the Spiegelproject with the rung of ‘partnership’ on Arnstein’s (1969) “Ladder of Participation”, presented in Chapter Two, and indicates a high level of involvement. Secondly, as previous sections discussed, the project was most effective in raising awareness of theatre as an art form, which places it on the lower rung of involvement, labelled ‘informing’ on the ladder. The diverging findings concerning students’ sense of relevance and ownership implicates that the Spiegelproject allowed different degrees of involvement. While it empowered a significant number of students, it did not enable the full participation of all of them.

In summary, the discussion surrounding the project’s design revealed an inherent conflict between what the HPW expected from the project, what the theatre’s Manifesto implies and the project’s actual structure and focus. The project’s aim was defined very closely to DiE and TiE principles by the HPW: learning about the world through participating in theatre activities, and focusing on the process. However, the goal of creating a performance made every other purpose subordinate. This can explain why significantly more students wrote that they have learnt something about theatre through the Spiegelproject than those who mentioned learning something about the project’s theme. This result demonstrates the Spiegelproject’s kinship again with theatre education projects endeavouring foremost the better understanding of theatre. The previous sections of this chapter demonstrated that the Spiegelproject improved most students’ awareness of homophobia, and made them contemplate the “bystander effect”. Furthermore, the majority reported a sense of ownership of the process. However, this section pointed at the evidence, that the project’s design made the engagement of those with the least interest more difficult throughout the project, and left a small group detached even by the end of the Spiegelproject.
5.6 Conclusion

Participating in the project was a community-forming experience for most of the students, which enabled a significant number of them to form or re-establish their experiences about theatre, even in cases when attending theatre events was not among the habits of their families. In the case of some students, based on their feedback, it can even contribute to a change of cultural choices. The political character of the project’s theme, which stemmed from the subjects presented in ‘La Reprise’ was identified as an essential feature of the programme by its leaders. The majority of the students expressed that they became more aware of homophobia and the “bystander effect”. Different layers of the project’s subject enabled the students to relate differently to the discussed issues. The more complicated dilemma of the “bystander effect” without a pre-existing implied moral stance allowed students to engage better.

However, overall, students reported that they have learnt more about theatre through the project than about its theme. This is not surprising considering the project’s form that is akin to theatre education projects, and the drama teachers’ focus on the student’s performance. This showed a divergence from the participatory art paradigm implied by the Ghent Manifesto, which prioritises raising awareness of social and political issues, and effecting change beyond the boundaries of the theatre. The dominant focus on creating a performance limited the possibilities of free exploration of its topics and contributed to the unbalanced distribution of tasks and agency among participants. Most students expressed having a sense of ownership of the process. However, it varied depending on the level of their involvement. NTGent’s offer to use its spaces, technical service and equipment allowed school teachers and many students to feel at ease and empowered by working and performing in the Spiegelproject.
Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.1 Thesis Summary

This case study examined 53 final year secondary school student participants’ experiences in NTGent’s Spiegelproject in the light of the Ghent Manifesto. The Manifesto was adopted as the theatre’s key policy document in 2018. The study reviewed literature about theatres’ endeavours for participation. This included educational theatre initiatives of theatre companies, most prominently Theatre and Drama in Education practices as elaborated ways of participatory educational theatre, and distinguished from the Theatre Education approach, highlighting Youth Theatre projects akin to NTGent’s Spiegelproject. The review examined efforts to broaden the scope of theatre audiences, and the pursuit to invite non-professionals to perform on stage. And finally, it contextualised NTGent’s Spiegelproject practice. The review found that while the vision represented by the Manifesto drew from the participatory theatre arts tradition, which pre-eminently aims to effect change beyond the boundaries of the theatre, the Spiegelproject’s concept was closer to theatre education practices concerned with evoking appreciation of theatre.

The research adopted a mixed methods approach, and applied questionnaires, semi-structured individual and focus group interviews and non-participant observations to obtain data. The data were triangulated from four different perspectives in addition to the researcher’s viewpoint, including students’, school teachers’, the drama teacher’s and the Head of Publiekswerking’s opinions. The study found that on average, students’ interest in attending NTGent performances increased, their awareness of homophobia and of the challenge of protecting vulnerable people in a public situation improved. The relationships among group members became stronger. A further key finding was that the project’s structure was performance-oriented, which limited participants’ opportunities to freely explore the project’s themes. This led to an uneven distribution of tasks among students and made the engagement of uninterested students more difficult.
6.2 Major Findings

The study found that while the Spiegelproject incorporated participatory principles of the Manifesto, its design and outcomes associated it more with Theatre Education approaches, which aim to increase appreciation and awareness of theatre arts. The following major findings support this:

- The literature review revealed that the form and structure of the Spiegelproject is most akin to Theatre Education practices in German theatres' Youth Clubs, which aim to create more receptivity of theatre.

- Students' interest in attending NTGent performances increased in general, and significantly more students discussed having learnt more about theatre than about the project’s topic.

- Students' average score responding to statements about empathy and about emotional openness improved. The majority of the students reported that they became more aware of the situation of vulnerable people in society thanks to the project. However, there were a number of students who did not find the theme of the project relevant to their lives. The discussion linked the latter finding to the uneven distribution of the tasks, students' imbalanced ownership and the project's orientation towards the final performance.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the implications of the study, the recommendations are the following:

- Allowing significantly more time for planning among the PW team, the commissioned drama teacher and school teachers can help the programme leaders to have a shared understanding of the project's goals.
- This could help the school teachers to obtain a full overview of the applied methods and their significance for the process in order to protect the ratio between competent leaders and participants.

- The application of more diverse and process-oriented drama methods would help students to better find the topic's relevance to them and involve the group more evenly.

- Continuing to clarify the role and the purpose of education and participatory practices within NTGent's agenda and more synergies among different areas of work can contribute to the profundity of their projects.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

This study only looked at one Spiegelproject with secondary school students, and did not examine how it works with other students, or non-students. NTGent commissions different drama teachers to work with different groups, but the study could only examine the work of the drama teacher in this project. Other drama teachers might apply different methods. In some other cases, Spiegelprojects are developed in stronger cooperation with NTGent’s artistic team. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalised for every Spiegelproject. Furthermore, data were not gathered from other stakeholders of the theatre, who might have information about the relationship between the Spiegelproject practice and the new agenda. Similarly, other projects and events of NTGent with participatory elements were excluded from this study. The study explored the Spiegelproject in the first theatrical season that was organised according to the principles of the Manifesto. Change takes time in such a large team with already existing traditions. The adaptation was an ongoing process in this period. A later study would probably capture a more developed stage of this transformation.
6.5 Areas of further study

The Spiegelproject’s impact on the students could be revisited in a long-term study to assess lasting effects and consequences of their participation. A broader study could explore the full scale of NTGent’s programmes, to analyse how the Ghent Manifesto affected the operation of the house, and audiences’ and involved peoples’ perception of projects developed according to the new mission.

6.6 Final Reflections

Milo Rau (2018) explains that the Manifesto is necessary, because instead of implicit rules that often govern theatre institutions, his team wants to make explicit guidelines to frame their work. I hope that this research can assist the pursuit of making the theatre’s governing principles more detectable. Conducting this study was an enriching experience on multiple levels. First, it was enlightening to observe elements of the institutional transformation of a theatre house, where the biggest concern of the theatre team is how to bring its practice closer to the people. As for the school, it was remarkable to see how dedicated teachers could make use of the resources of a public theatre to enrich education. In students’ final year, when concerns typically revolve around tests and competition, this cannot be valued enough. Finally, this was the first educational research project I have conducted, and I gained a lot by it. After going through the steps required in research practice, now I also better understand why Newby (2010) compares research to an iceberg. These experiences have strengthened my curiosity about the role theatres can play in society. They also serve as useful resources for my professional development.
References


Coussens, E. (2019). “We should do this now”: Wat veroorzaakt Milo Rau bij NTGent?. *Theatermaker*, 140(1), 60-63.


Appendix A

Pre-Performance Questionnaire for Students

Dear Student,
I will ask you some questions in order to better understand the project and how it effects you.
It is very important that you realise that this is not a test! There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. People are different, and what I am really interested in is what you are like. I ask you to write your name in order to be able to match your answers given at the beginning, during and after the project. All of your responses will remain confidential, and I will not show them to anyone except my university supervisor and examiners. Your teachers, the leaders of the program or your classmates will never see them. Please write your full first and last name. Please avoid nicknames or shortenings.
While your participation is incredibly important to this research, it is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw your answers from this research. All responses will remain confidential and you are free not to answer any questions.
Thank you very much for your help!

Your name:
Your age:
Your gender:  
Male ☐  Female ☐  Non binary ☐  Prefer not to specify ☐

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Me and culture</th>
<th>How much would you like to participate in each of these cultural events? Mark with a number from 1 to 5 (with 1 being least and 5 being most)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever actively participated in these cultural events? (Please circle the right answer)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Watching / attending an exhibition</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Watching / attending a theatre performance</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Watching / attending a dance performance</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Listening to a concert of classical music</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Listening to a concert of popular music</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Watching films at the cinema</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Me and theatre</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Have you ever participated in a theatre / drama workshop?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. If yes, how often?</td>
<td>................. times a month, and a programme lasts ........ hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Have you ever been in one of the following theatres already? (Please circle if yes)</td>
<td>NTGent Arca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NTGent Minard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A

Pre-Performance Questionnaire for Students

10. Please explain what theatre means to you:

11. What do you expect when you go to theatre?

12. What do you expect from participating in this project?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Me and others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please read the following sentences carefully and circle the one which seems true for you. There are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers. The best way to do this is to mark the option that strikes you first, without any further hesitation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I believe that there are two sides to every question and I try to look at them both.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Before criticising somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I like to work together in a group.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Pre-Performance Questionnaire for Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18. It is important for me to have common goals for our class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. It is important for me to express my emotions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I can easily express my emotions to my classmates.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I can easily express my emotions to my teachers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I like to undertake new challenges.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. It is important for me to take responsibility for in my school community.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. It is important for me to seek to understand people with a different ideology than mine.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Me and society

**Please specify how much you feel you belong to the following groups:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Not much</th>
<th>To some extent</th>
<th>Quite a lot</th>
<th>Very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25. My family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. My class in the school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. My street, my neighbourhood</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. My town / city / village</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. My country</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. The European Union (EU)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Can you imagine yourself campaigning or arguing for an important public issue? (Please circle the right answer)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Pre-Performance Questionnaire for Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32. Can you imagine yourself expressing your opinion in the papers, in the radio or on TV on a certain issue? (Please circle the right answer)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Can you imagine yourself campaigning as an activist for some humanitarian matter? (Please circle the right answer)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Post-Performance Questionnaire for Students

Dear Student,

In this questionnaire I am interested in your impressions about the performance ‘La Reprise’ what you saw at NTGent.

I ask you to write your name in order to be able to match your answers given at the beginning, during and after the project. All of your responses will remain confidential, and I will not show them to anyone except my university supervisor and examiners. Your teachers, the leaders of the program or your classmates will never see them. Please write your full first and last name. Please avoid nicknames or shortenings.

While your participation is incredibly important to this research, it is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw your answers from this research. All responses will remain confidential and you are free not to answer any questions.

Thank you very much for your help!

Your name:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>About the visit at NTGent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please read the following sentences carefully and circle the one which seems true for you. There are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers. The best way to do this is to mark the option that strikes you first, without any further hesitation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I felt at ease in the building of the theatre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The theatre’s employees, who I met in the building were friendly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The building is an attractive place for young people like me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am interested in other programmes of the theatre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Would you come back to NTGent with your family or friends?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Please explain why you would come back or not come back.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix B

## Post-Performance Questionnaire for Students

**About the performance**

Please read the following sentences carefully and circle the one which seems true for you. There are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers. The best way to do this is to mark the option that strikes you first, without any further hesitation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. The performance was unusual.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The story was interesting.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I could identify with at least one of the characters.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I enjoyed the performance.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I liked the style of the performance.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I can imagine myself playing in a similar performance.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The performance was about issues that are important for me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The performance was about issues relevant to my studies.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. The performance was about issues relevant to the place where I live.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I would attend similar performances in the future.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. The performance gave me ideas, what I want to work with in our Spiegelproject.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I got to know more about my environment (town, village, country) through the performance.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I got to know more about discrimination through the performance.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix B
### Post-Performance Questionnaire for Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20. I got to know more about the situation of homosexual people in the society through the performance.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21. I got to know more about the situation of Moroccan people in Belgium through the performance.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I got to know more about unemployment through the performance.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. I got to know more about theatre through the performance.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### My ideas about the performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>24. To whom would you recommend to see this performance?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25. Please describe a remarkable moment of the performance. Why was it remarkable?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Did the performance make you think or feel anything about your own life? Please tell how and why.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. What different title could you give to the performance?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. What would you have changed about the performance?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### About NTGent’s Manifesto
## Appendix B

### Post-Performance Questionnaire for Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29. Have you heard about the Ghent Manifesto?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. If yes, what do you think about it?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. NTGent Theatre wants to create programmes with and for people who never came to the theatre before. What would you recommend them to do in order to get closer to their aim?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Student,
I followed your project with NTGent Theatre, and will write my university dissertation about it. I will ask you some questions in order to better understand the project and how it effected you.
As before: it is very important that you realise that this is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. People are different, and what I am really interested in is what you are like.
I ask you to write your name in order to be able to match your answers given at the beginning, during and after the project. All of your responses will remain confidential, and I will not show them to anyone except my university supervisor and examiners. Your teachers, the leaders of the program or your classmates will never see them. Please write your full first and last name. Please avoid nicknames or shortenings.
While your participation is incredibly important to this research, it is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw your answers before handing in this questionnaire. All responses will remain confidential and you are free not to answer any questions.
Thank you very much for your help!

Your full name:

### About the project & performance you created

Please read the following sentences carefully and circle the one which seems true for you. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. The best way to do this is to mark the option that strikes you first, without any further hesitation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I enjoyed creating our performance.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I could choose the role(s) I played in the performance.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I liked the style of our performance.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Our performance was about issues that are relevant for me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I was able to share my ideas during the creation process and the programme leaders were interested in my ideas.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Other students were interested in my ideas.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. My ideas were incorporated in the performance.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The creation process was exciting.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The creation process was difficult.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I got to know more about my fellow students through this project.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I got to know more about my teachers through this project.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I got to know more about my environment (town, village, country)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>through the performance we made.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I got to know more about discrimination through the performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we made.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I got to know more about the situation of homosexual people in the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>society through the performance we made</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I got to know more about theatre through the performance we made</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. What was the most interesting for you in the project:

17. What was the most difficult for you in the project?

18. Did you learn something new during the project? If yes, what?
## Appendix C

### Post-Project Questionnaire for Students

#### Me and Theatre / Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19. Would you come back to NTGent with your family or friends?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Has participating in the project inspired you to attend more cultural events than you did before? (Please circle the correct answer)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Please explain why it has or why it hasn't.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Me and others

Please read the following sentences carefully and circle the one which seems true for you. There are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers. The best way to do this is to mark the option that strikes you first, without any further hesitation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22. When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. I believe that there are two sides to every question and I try to look at them both.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Before criticising somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. I like to work together in a group.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. It is important for me to have common goals for our class.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. It is important for me to express my emotions.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. I can easily express my emotions to my classmates.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix C

**Post-Project Questionnaire for Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>30. I can easily express my emotions to my teachers.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31. I like to undertake new challenges.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. It is important for me to take responsibility for in my school community.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. It is important for me to seek to understand people with a different ideology than mine.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Me and Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>34. Has participating in this project made you change your mind about your relationship to the society or communities (family, neighbourhood, town, country, EU) you belong to?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35. Please explain why it has or why it hasn't.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Has participating in this project inspired you to protect vulnerable people?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Please explain why it has or why it hasn't.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Has participating in this project inspired you to publicly stand up for vulnerable people?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Please explain why it has or why it hasn't.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Post-Performance School Teacher Interview Questions

[Preliminary questions:]

Name,  
Which class(es) do you teach: What are your subjects:  
(These will be recorded as well.)

1. For what reasons did you engage in a collaboration with NTGent?
   [Prompt questions:]
   " If the former SP is mentioned: What were the benefits of the former cooperation? How did it enrich the school? How did it enrich the students?
   " What can NTGent theatre add to the education in your school?]

2. Why did you choose to show the performance ‘La Reprise’ to your students?
   [Prompt question: How are these (the mentioned) issues, challenges relevant to your students?]

3. Can you describe how the project will run?
   [Prompt question: What are the key milestones?]

4. What is your own contribution to the project?
   [Prompt question: Is it very different from your teaching routine?]

5. Please name competences you want your students to improve in by doing this project.
   [Prompt questions:]
   " Why are these competences especially important?
   " How does the project help to achieve these aims?]

6. What are the overall aims of the project, that could be beneficial for the community of the students and/or the school?

7. What do you expect from NTGent program leaders in the project?
   [Prompt question: What kind of expertise do they bring to the project?]

8. Have you ever used drama in your classroom before?
   [Prompt questions:]
   " Why did you use drama?
   " What kind of drama activities did you apply?]

9. Have you heard about the Ghent Manifesto? What do you think about it?
   [Prompt question - if the answer is yes - Do you think this project aligns with the aims outlined in the Manifesto?]
Appendix E

Interim Drama Teacher and Head of Publiekswerking Interview Questions

The interview will be recorded

1. What is a Spiegelproject?

2. Who are the targets Spiegelprojects?

3. Why did you engage in a collaboration with [the school’s name] secondary school?

[Prompt questions:

1. If the former SP is mentioned: What were the benefits of the former cooperation?

2. What can NTGent theatre add to the education in a school?]

4. Why do you consider the performance ‘La Reprise’ as a suitable base for this project?

[Prompt question: How are these (the mentioned) issues, challenges relevant for the students?]

5. Can you describe how the project runs?

[Prompt question: What are the key milestones?]

6. What is your contribution to the project?

7. What are the overall aims of the project?

8. Please name competences you want the students to improve in through project.

[Prompt questions:

1. Why are these competences especially important?

2. How does the project help to achieve these aims?]
Appendix F

Post-Project Student Focus Group Interview Questions

1. Please describe your feelings and experiences connected to the different venues of the Spiegelproject.

2. Did you try out new things in this project that you have never done before? How was that?

3. What did you enjoy the most in the project?
   [Prompt question: Why?]

4. What did you enjoy the least?
   [Prompt question: Why?]

5. How did the original performance (‘La Reprise’) influence your own creation (the work during the project and your performance) in this project?
   [Prompt question: Would your performance be very different if you had not seen ‘La Reprise’?]

6. What was the students’ contribution to the performance and what was the teachers’ and programme leaders’ contribution to it?

7. Was it important that you showed your performance at the end of the project? Why?
   [Prompt question: Was it important that you showed it at NTGent Arca? Why?]

8. Did you learn new things in this project? What?

9. Did the project change the way you think about theatre?
   [Prompt question: If yes, what has changed?]
Appendix G
Post-Project School Teacher Interview Questions

1. Based on your experiences, do you think it is useful for secondary school students to participate in a Spiegelproject?
   [Prompt question: Why?]

2. In your opinion how did the students benefit from participating in the project?
   [Prompt question: Can you think of specific examples?]

3. How did the class communities benefit from the project?
   [Prompt question: Can you think of specific examples?]

4. Do you think if the students hadn’t seen ‘La Reprise’ the project and its outcome would have been very different?
   [Prompt question: How did the original performance influence the students’ work? How close was the outcome to their own interests and concerns?]

5. How did you enjoy your role in the project?

6. Looking back at the project now, what would you do differently, if you could?
   [Prompt question: Why? What could the theatre’s team have done differently?]

7. Would you engage in a similar project in the future?
   [Prompt question: Why?]

8. What would prevent you from engaging in a similar collaboration?
   [Prompt question: Why? Do you think it is suitable for students with a different orientation?]
Appendix H

Post-Project Head of Publiekswerking Interview Questions

1. Looking back at the Spiegelproject, what were the highlights of the project for you?
   
   [ + Can you give specific examples? ]

2. According to you, which Spiegelprojects principles were realised in this particular project?

3. A significant number of the students had not been regularly attending theatre events before the SP. According to your experience, how did the project affect them?

4. Is there anything you would do differently in a future SP based on your experiences of this project?

5. Is there anything that would prevent you from engaging in a similar collaboration?

6. How would you link this Spiegelproject to the general aims of Publiekswerking?
   
   [ + What are the aims of PW?]

7. How did this project reflect the aims pronounced in the Ghent Manifesto and other mission statements of the “Theatre of the Future”?

   [ + How does the theatre’s new mission affect the PW approach?]
Appendix I - Sample Information Sheet and Consent Form

PARENT / GUARDIAN INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I will conduct a research in your child's school, and I am contacting you ask for your consent about your child's participation in my research.

Title of the Study Project:

Bridge Between City Theatre and Classroom: A Case Study of a NTGent's, Belgian City Theatre's Public Outreach Programme in a Secondary School

The Study:

I am a Master in Education - Drama in Education student in the School of Education, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland. As part of my course, I am carrying out research in the area of Theatre Education. In this study I will investigate the impact of the collaboration between NTGent Theatre and [the school's name] on students' social and civic competences, cultural expression and on their ownership of the project. Throughout the study I will participate as an observer on the weekly workshops facilitated within the frame of the project. My observations will be recorded in a journal using a semi-structured format. The study will take place between January and April 2019. Dr Susanne Colleary, Theatre / Performance Studies Lecturer and theatre practitioner is supervising my research.

Participation information:

If you and your child agree to take part in this study, (s)he will be asked to complete three questionnaires: one before, and one during, and one after the project. In addition, (s)he may be asked as well to take part in an audio-recorded group interview. All questionnaires will take about 25 minutes and the interview will take 30 to minutes to 1 hour. Both the questionnaires and the group interview will take place during school hours but not during class time. The first questionnaire will ask students about their expectations about the project, their opinion about watching and doing theatre and about their self-judgement regarding the above mentioned the competences. The second questionnaire will ask them about their experience of the theatre performance what they saw and the third questionnaire and the group interview will ask students to reflect on their experiences during the project and will repeatedly ask the students to assess themselves regarding the earlier mentioned competences.

I foresee no risks for your child's participation in the study, beyond those experienced in everyday life. The information gathered will be treated with privacy and anonymity. No information regarding your child will be revealed in the research. Information (questionnaire results, notes, audio-recording) will be stored safely with access only available to me, my supervisor and my examiners and it will all be destroyed after 5 years. The
Appendix I - Sample Information Sheet and Consent Form

anonymised results from the study will be included in a thesis and may be discussed at conferences or published in a book or a journal.

Your child doesn’t have to take part in this study if you/(s)he don’t want to and you/they can withdraw from the study, without saying why. Withdrawing from the study will not have any impact on your child’s participation in the theatre project. His/her data will not be collected in such case. Withdrawing from the study will not be possible after filling out the last questionnaire (by the end of the project) as collected data will be anonymised from this point. This means that after this point it will not be possible to trace back given answers to a particular person. If you have any questions or if anything is unclear just ask me to explain it for you.

Finally, thank you for taking time to read this.

Sincerely yours,

Balint Juhasz
juhaszb@tcd.ie // mobile: +32 483 38 87 24

Supervisor: Dr Susanne Colleary // email: susiecolleary@hotmail.com // mobile : +353 851 30 00 75
Title of the Study Project: Bridge Between City Theatre and Classroom: A Case Study of NTGent Belgian City Theatre’s Public Outreach Programme in a Secondary School

Your child is under no obligation to participate in this study. If (s)he agrees to participate, but at a later stage feel the need to withdraw, (s)he is free to do so. It will not affect them in any way. S(he) will remain a participant of the theatre project.

Please answer all of the following (underline the appropriate answer):

I have read and understood the information sheet. Yes No

I understand what the project is about, and what the results will be used for. Yes No

I am fully aware of all of the procedures involving my child and of any risks and benefits associated with the study. Yes No

I am aware that my child will complete a questionnaire before, one during and one after the project. Yes No

I am aware that the researcher will be present throughout the project as an observer. Yes No

I know that my child’s participation is voluntary and that (s)he can withdraw from the study until filling out the last questionnaire without giving any reason, and (s)he will remain a participant of the theatre project. Yes No

I am aware that my child’s results will be kept anonymous. Yes No

I agree for my child to participate in the above study. Yes No

I agree for my child participate in a group interview as a part of the study. Yes No

Date: Signature of parent / Guardian

Date: 11 January 2019 Signature of Researcher
Appendix J

Ghent Manifesto

One: It’s not just about portraying the world anymore. It’s about changing it. The aim is not to depict the real, but to make the representation itself real.

Two: Theatre is not a product, it is a production process. Research, castings, rehearsals and related debates must be publicly accessible.

Three: The authorship is entirely up to those involved in the rehearsals and the performance, whatever their function may be – and to no one else.

Four: The literal adaptation of classics on stage is forbidden. If a source text – whether book, film or play – is used at the outset of the project, it may only represent up to 20 percent of the final performance time.

Five: At least a quarter of the rehearsal time must take place outside a theatre. A theatre space is any space in which a play has been rehearsed or performed.

Six: At least two different languages must be spoken on stage in each production.

Seven: At least two of the actors on stage must not be professional actors. Animals don’t count, but they are welcome.

Eight: The total volume of the stage set must not exceed 20 cubic metres, i.e. it must be able to be contained in a van that can be driven with a normal driving licence.

Nine: At least one production per season must be rehearsed or performed in a conflict or war zone, without any cultural infrastructure.

Ten: Each production must be shown in at least ten locations in at least three countries. No production can be removed from the NTGent repertoire before this number has been reached.

Ghent, May 1, 2018

(ntgent.be, n.d.)