



The fight against the regulation of prostitution

A comparative analysis of two organisations that were part of the movement against the regulation of prostitution at the end of the nineteenth century in the Netherlands



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Foreword

Policy and law changes on the subject of prostitution will always be relevant for research. Is prostitution something that should be regulated or not? Every time I brought up my thesis topic and discussed this interesting topic with people, they all had their own opinion. Just like people had their different opinion on this topic for ages.

Finding an interesting subject in the long history of prostitution and prostitution regulation was not easy. But when I found this specific topic and a research gap that could be filled, I was very thrilled to conduct research on it. I enjoyed writing my research and everything that came with it. I got the opportunity to visit different archives, which I really liked doing.

In the end, I am grateful that I found this specific topic, and the chance to conduct research in the way that I imagined, by going to archives and by using a lot of books and primary texts from my internship organisation, Atria.

The thesis writing was a process that I enjoyed doing, and I would like to thank everyone that supported me in this process. I would also like to thank my thesis supervisor, for his help and support throughout the writing process.

I hope you will enjoy reading my thesis!

Anne Geertjes,

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Abstract

In the nineteenth century, prostitution was seen as a necessary evil, it was seen as healthy for men to be sexually active. Because it was a necessary evil, prostitution had to be controlled, and it was thus regulated by the State. This regulation entailed that sex workers were supposed to be regularly medically checked for venereal diseases. However, from Christian spheres, State regulation of prostitution was increasingly seen as a way of stimulating this public sin. Prostitution got linked to slavery and needed to be abolished. The movement against the regulation of prostitution was a Christian movement that originated from the orthodox-Christian Réveil movement that came up in Europe around the middle of the nineteenth century. The principles of the Réveil were that good Christians were supposed to help out others. Thus they also wanted to help out sex workers. The British abolitionist Butler inspired the preacher Pierson to fight the regulation of prostitution and to start an organisation called the DAP, the first organisation in the Netherlands against the regulation of prostitution. A few years later, Butler also inspired the aristocratic Klerck-van Hogendorp to start a female organisation against the regulation of prostitution, called the Women's Union. Both these organisations were at the core of the fight against the regulation of prostitution. They both originated from an orthodox-Christian principle, and they both used political tactics in a way of changing the State regulation of prostitution. However, their differences influence the way they operated and can thus explain why they were two different organisations within the same movement. They both used their own ways of influencing public opinion, gaining more members and trying to achieve their common goal of fighting the State regulation of prostitution. But they also collaborated, for example by organising a congress or by handing in a petition to the government with requirements that set the basis for the eventual Law change. In 1911, they got what they campaigned for: the Dutch Bill of Morality got implemented in the Netherlands. Brothels and female trafficking were implemented in Dutch Criminal law. The work of the movement against the regulation of prostitution had paid off.

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1. Introduction

The regulation of prostitution is interesting for research because it is always subject to change. An example is the Bill on Morality that got implemented in 1911, which consisted of the abolition of brothels in the Netherlands. This abolition would be in effect for almost a hundred years, until the year 2000, when the law *Opheffing algemeen bordeelverbod* got enacted. This law ended the abolition of brothels,¹ a requirement that the movement against the regulation of prostitution fought for, around the end of the nineteenth century.²

Between 1877 and 1911 the *prostitutie-quaestie* took place in the Netherlands. A political issue that was brought up by organised religious groups that were against the regulation of prostitution. Since there was a need to control the spread of sexually transmitted infections like syphilis during that time, there were particular regulations in effect for sex workers, such as that sex workers had to be regularly medically checked regularly. However, religious interest groups organized resistance against any regulation on prostitution, because they were against the regulations. Prostitution had to be destroyed in general, not regulated. This makes the prostitution matter an interesting matter to study, because why did this movement suddenly come up? The very first principles of these interest groups originated from the influences of the Réveil movement. This orthodox-Christian movement was based on the principle that good Christians were supposed to help out others, thus also helping out sex workers.³ Furthermore, the interest groups were organisations that were against the regulations because they argued that prostitution had to be destroyed in general, not regulated. The movement against prostitution regulation was in a broader sense against immorality because they were against fornication, which consisted of all sexual acts outside of marriage.⁴ Regulating this immorality would damage society and the Christian ideals that were supposed to be dominant in society.⁵

In 1911, after a long period of negotiations and political battles by the religious interest groups, the *Wet tot bestrijding van zedeloosheid*, was implemented. This national Bill on Morality

¹ Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal, “Opheffing algemeen bordeelverbod,” accessed June 10, 2023 https://www.eerstekamer.nl/wetsvoorstel/25437_opheffing_algemeen; Overheid.nl, “Beleidsregels Prostitutiebeleid 2000,” accessed June 10, 2023, <https://lokaleregelgeving.overheid.nl/CVDR330864/1>.

² Martin Bossenbroek and Jan Hendrik Kompagnie, “De stille trom der vrouwenzusters. De Vrouwenbond en de strijd tegen de bordeelprostitutie,” *Leidschrift* 14, no. 1 (December 1998): 23-25, <https://scholarlypublications.universiteitleiden.nl/access/item%3A2716002/view>.

³ Petra de Vries, *Kuisheid voor mannen, vrijheid voor vrouwen* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 1997), 64; Annemieke van Drenth and Francisca de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power: Elizabeth Fry and Josephine Butler in Britain and the Netherlands* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999), 15-16, 135-136.

⁴ Diet Sijmons, “Een noodzakelijk kwaad, maar voor wie? Prostitutie in Nederland in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw,” in *Jaarboek voor vrouwengeschiedenis 1980*, ed. Josine Blok et al. (Nijmegen: Socialistische Uitgeverij Nijmegen, 1980), 70.

⁵ Bas Holtzer, “‘De vrouw alleen kan dit werk ter harte nemen, want de vrouw alleen kan het begrijpen.’ De Nederlandsche Vrouwenbond tot Verhooging van het zedelijk Bewustzijn en de ontwikkeling van het Nederlandse feminisme,” *Comenius* 44 (Winter 1991): 363-364.

included the prohibition of brothels and the trafficking of women.⁶ Protestant and abolitionist interest groups that were against prostitution had been campaigning against prostitution for many years before the law. Eventually, their campaigning stimulated politicians to implement the law against immorality.⁷

In line with these changes in regulations, it is interesting to find out how these religious interest groups influenced Dutch politics. And why did these religious interest groups against prostitution emerge at the end of the nineteenth century? What was their motivation to fight the regulation of prostitution? Besides that, why were there different organisations, even though they plead for the same goal? And while being different organisations, on what aspects were they actually quite similar?

There were three organisations at the core of the prostitution opposition in the Netherlands around the end of the nineteenth century and after, all based on orthodox-Protestant principles.⁸ To briefly introduce, one of them was the *Dutch Association against Prostitution*, the *Nederlandse Vereeniging tegen de Prostitutie* (DAP), established in 1879 to combat prostitution in the Netherlands.⁹ Another organization with the same goal was the *Nederlandschen Vrouwenbond tot Verhooging van het Zedelijk Bewustzijn*, established in 1884 and translated as the *Dutch Women's Union for the Advancement of Moral Consciousness*,¹⁰ in this thesis referred to as the *Women's Union*.¹¹ A third one, the *Middernachtzendingvereeniging*, the *Midnight Mission*,¹² established in 1888, was more practically oriented.¹³ However, the Midnight Mission is excluded from the scope of this thesis. The Midnight Mission was more of an auxiliary to the movement against prostitution, they kept watch beside brothels to retain men from sinning.¹⁴ It is less interesting for this thesis because their approach was not as politically oriented as the other two.

Based on the research by Martin Bossenbroek and Jan Hendrik Kompagnie on the anti-prostitution movement around the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century,¹⁵ the DAP was known for its political pressure towards the government to stop regulating

⁶ De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 260, 261.

⁷ Chelsea Schields, “‘Combating the Sensuality of the Youth’: Youthful Sexuality and the Reformulation of Desire in the 1911 Dutch Vice Laws,” *Gender & History* 31, no. 1 (March 2019): 124, <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/doi/pdf/10.1111/1468-0424.12414>.

⁸ Bossenbroek and Kompagnie, “De stille trom der vrouwenzusters,” 24.

⁹ Petra de Vries, “Josephine Butler and the Making of Feminism: international abolitionism in the Netherlands (1870–1914),” *Women's History Review* 17, no. 2 (February 2008): 261, <https://www-tandfonline-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/doi/epdf/10.1080/09612020701707274?needAccess=true&role=button>; Van Drenth and de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power*, 147.

¹⁰ De Vries, “International abolitionism in the Netherlands,” 264.

¹¹ Van Drenth and de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power*, 149.

¹² *Ibid.*, 147.

¹³ Bossenbroek and Kompagnie, “De stille trom der vrouwenzusters,” 24.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Bossenbroek and Kompagnie, “De stille trom der vrouwenzusters,” 23-33; Martin Bossenbroek and Jan Hendrik Kompagnie, *Het mysterie van de verdwenen bordelen* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, 1998).

prostitution. The Women's Union was less known for having political influence.¹⁶ Petra de Vries also conducted research on the subject of the fight against the regulation of prostitution in the Netherlands. She argues more strongly than Bossenbroek and Kompagnie, that the DAP and the Women's Union both used political tactics. But there were differences in their political tactics according to de Vries. The DAP was mainly constructed to influence the regulation and decision-making of public administration. One of their main strategies was to put pressure on urban, municipal, and national authorities. Their leader, Hendrik Pierson, had the right connections within the governmental system to be successful in this strategy. Besides that, the DAP also wanted to influence public opinion. They did this by creating propaganda via brochures, lectures, studying legislation and being in contact with influential people who could promote their case.¹⁷ The Women's Union had a tactic of uniting women of the whole society and gained many members. At the beginning of 1900, it had about 5500 members. They aimed to promote moral consciousness and to awaken society's conscience. These aims got politicized and concretized throughout the years.¹⁸ Bas Holtzer, who conducted research on the connection between the Women's Union and feminism, even argues that the Women's Union used propaganda.¹⁹ Besides that, the aim of the women from the Women's Union was also to emphasize the importance of morality and the dignity of women.²⁰ The trafficking of women was high on their agenda, as well as their fight against the prohibition of research on fatherhood. Another matter that the Women's Union was prioritizing was protecting girls. The Women's Union for instance established shelters where girls could have a safe stay. They also organised *stationswerk*, traveller's aid work, where they helped girls at train stations who arrived in cities for the first time.²¹ Pieter Koenders also conducted research on the fight against the regulation of prostitution in the last half of the nineteenth century. He argues that although the Women's Union was important for the movement against the regulation of prostitution, they had limited lobby activities and mostly focused on Christian philanthropy.²² All in all, several types of research have been conducted on the prostitution matter. However, there is still disagreement or not enough clarity on whether the Women's Union had a political influence on the regulation of prostitution. In this thesis, I will investigate if the Women's Union was politically influential, and if so, how they might have had political influence on the same scale as the DAP.

¹⁶ Bossenbroek and Kompagnie, "De stille trom der vrouwenzusters," 24, 37, 41.

¹⁷ De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 83-85.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 110-111.

¹⁹ Holtzer, "De vrouw alleen kan dit werk ter harte nemen," 368.

²⁰ Van Drenth and de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power*, 150-151.

²¹ De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 110-111; Van Drenth and de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power*, 152.

²² Pieter Koenders, *Tussen christelijk réveil en seksuele revolutie: bestrijding van zedeloosheid in Nederland, met nadruk op de repressie van homoseksualiteit* (Amsterdam: Stichting beheer IISG, 1996), 28-29.

Another aspect that will play a role in this thesis is the fact that the Women's Union consisted only of women, while the DAP was mainly organized by men. According to Bossenbroek and Kompagnie, the chair of the DAP, Pierson, had a very gendered vision, based on traditional gender roles. It was men's work, according to him, to gather governmental support and to convince public opinion for their cause. This was also established in the articles of incorporation of the DAP. Men would be publishing brochures, supporting their monthly magazine, and promoting scientific research. Women were welcome, but they had to focus on work for committees aimed at rescue work. Women were not seen as plenary members of the DAP.²³ In the research of de Vries, it is also stated that Pierson indeed made a gendered distinction between female and male work for the DAP.²⁴ In his research, Koenders also put more focus on the caring work of the women of the Women's Union and gives less attention to their political power.²⁵ However, the 'caring power' of women made way for women to become more involved on a political level as well.²⁶ Organizing themselves in the Women's Union made women become empowered to fight against the regulation of prostitution. Thus it was needed for women to have their organisation in order to approach the prostitution matter in their way. Moreover, de Vries also adds to this that the vision between men and women in the fight against the regulation of prostitution differed.²⁷ But in reality, there were also quite some similarities between them. More on this will be investigated in this thesis by comparing the DAP and the Women's Union. This comparison will for instance explain how both organisations were created similarly and used similar strategies. Consequently, this comparison will tell more about the way organisations were successful in influencing politics around the end of the nineteenth century.

This is in line with the academic relevance of this thesis, which is that a research gap will be filled with a historical comparison between the DAP and the Women's Union. There is a lack of comparative research on these two organizations, let alone about their influence on the 1911 Bill on Morality. However, despite their similar main goal, they are very interesting to compare because of their relevant differences.²⁸ Comparing these two organizations can give more insight into the effectiveness of their approach in relation to each other. Also, comparing them gives insights into that the two organisations did not differ as much as appears to be believed among scholars who conducted research on the movement against the regulation of prostitution. Their story of establishment is very much alike for example. This will be further elaborated in this thesis.

²³ Bossenbroek and Kompagnie, "De stille trom der vrouwenzusters," 24-25.

²⁴ De Vries, "International abolitionism in the Netherlands," 263.

²⁵ Koenders, *Bestrijding van zedeloosheid in Nederland*, 80-83.

²⁶ De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 64.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 63.

²⁸ Bossenbroek and Kompagnie, "De stille trom der vrouwenzusters," 25, 27.

However, if they were quite similar, what would be the reason for them to have their own organisation? This will be discussed by their differences. Moreover, a comparison between the DAP and the Women's Union will give insight into how organizations or interest groups can influence regulations and laws in the Netherlands. This specific topic on the DAP and Women's Union will show how both organizations can be similar, while using different approaches to abolish the regulation of prostitution. This is the general historical relevance of the research, to find out how at the end of the nineteenth century, different interest groups who were against prostitution could influence the implementation of a law.

The research question that will be answered in this research is: 'How does a comparison between the DAP and the Women's Union help in understanding their influence on the political situation in the Netherlands around the end of the nineteenth century?' An answer to this question will explain how a comparison between the DAP and the Women's Union could add to the research on the movement against the regulation of prostitution. Besides that, the question will also help to understand the influence that both organizations had on the Dutch law that was established in 1911. For the Bill on Morality marks the end of the era of the movement against the regulation of prostitution.²⁹ The law change can thus be seen as a turning point in history, with an interesting historical context. In this thesis, I explain how a change in the law was influenced by a political movement.³⁰

The research question will be answered in three parts, divided over the three main chapters of the thesis. Each subquestion will be answered in a chapter. The first subquestion is: 'How and why were the DAP and the Women's Union established and what influenced this?' This question is of significance to answer because it gives historical context to why the movement against the regulation of prostitution originated in the first place. The question will also help to understand what created the opportunity for the movement, and thus for the organisations within the movement, to emerge within society.

The second question is: 'What are the similarities and differences in the approaches of the DAP and the Women's Union?' By answering this question, a comparison can be made between the DAP and the Women's Union. A comparison will give new insights into the movement against the regulation of prostitution. It will help to understand why there were two different organisations and in what way they worked towards the same goal in their own way. Besides that, it will help to add to the debate that the two organisations did not differ as much as was thought.

²⁹ De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 260-261.

³⁰ William Sewell, *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 8-11, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uunl/reader.action?docID=547713>.

The last question is the following: ‘Were the DAP and the Women’s Union successful in reaching their goals?’ The answer to this question will link the movement and the organisations within the movement back to the broader context of the political situation in the Netherlands. The meaning of the movement will be connected to society and State politics. The question will help to understand whether the DAP and the Women’s Union achieved what they aimed for according to the principles of their organisation.³¹

In a way of assessing the research question using the subquestions, a historical comparison will be made between the DAP and the Women’s Union to understand how they both operated and whether they influenced the Dutch law of 1911 that prohibited brothels and trafficking in women. This will be done by primary sources published by both organizations, and publications by the two main leaders of the organisations, Hendrik Pierson and Marianne Klerck-van Hogendorp, between the years 1878 and 1912. These sources will help to understand how and why the DAP and Women’s Union were established and what their approaches were. Besides that, there are also other primary sources used. These are among the most relevant sources for understanding the broader context of the movement against the regulation of prostitution. These sources are dated between the years 1860 and 1937. Those sources are for example brochures, speeches and dissertations by relevant figures who were also involved in the prostitution matter at the end of the nineteenth century. The sources are collected via online archives such as Proquest, Delpher or the library of Utrecht University. Besides that, many sources are only to be found physically in archives, such as Atria, the International Institute of Social History (IISG), and the Special Collections Department of Utrecht University.

³¹ Sewell, *Logics of History*, 8-11.

2. The first features of a movement against the regulation of prostitution

2.1 Historical context of the regulations against prostitution

Firstly, I will expound on the very first jurisdiction of prostitution in the nineteenth century in the Netherlands to give a background on what the regulation entailed. In the first place, the fight against regulating prostitution was aimed at the French influence on prostitution regulation. This started with French legislation and was continued by the influence of French medicine.

In 1811, a law was implemented in the Napoleonic time that entailed that sex workers working in brothels were required to be registered by the police and to be regularly medically checked. In practice, this meant that sex workers had to visit the ‘police doctor’ twice a week, at their own costs. If the sex worker refused, she would be at risk of imprisonment. The law was implemented to keep the military safe from sexually transmitted diseases. Because the Netherlands was then part of France, these regulations were also in effect in the Netherlands.³²

When French rule was over, the need to keep a sanitary view on prostitution remained. This most probably had to do with the fear of venereal diseases. Gonorrhoea and syphilis were widely spread in Dutch society. Around twelve percent of men in the Dutch armed forces got infected on a yearly basis. At the same time, a medical movement dominated the ideas of public health in the Netherlands for decades. Backed by medical evidence and inspired by French influences on medicine, the movement was based on the idea that sexual abstinence was unhealthy for men. The movement was initiated by Dutch hygienists, who were the medical experts at the time. In line with this medical movement, prostitution was seen as a ‘necessary evil’ in society. If prostitution were to be controlled or regulated, men would be less inclined to sodomy and masturbation, both were seen as unhealthy according to hygienists at the time. In the first place, the sexual needs of men were only to be gratified within the boundaries of marriage. However, some men never married. For these men, it had to be prevented that they would take advantage of ‘decent women’. With the sacrifice of a few women for prostitution in society, the other ladies would be protected and the public order would be maintained. Thus, for satisfying the healthy sexual needs of all men in society, prostitution was needed. But it would also be necessary for these men to not be affected

³² Van Drenth and de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power*, 135; Koenders, *Bestrijding van zedeloosheid in Nederland*, 56; Sijmons, “Prostitutie in Nederland in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw,” 77; De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 23-24; Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de prostitutie, *Het Maandblad: Getuigen en Redden*, June 1, 1889, 42, https://www.delpher.nl/nl/tijdschriften/view?identificatie=MMKB10:000947018:00001&coll=dts&query=%28maandblad+getuigen+en+redde%29&cql%5B%5D=%28volumeYear+_gte_+%221889%22%29&cql%5B%5D=%28volumeYear+_lte_+%221889%22%29&page=2&rowid=2.

with venereal diseases. Thus, to have more control over the spread of venereal diseases, it would be more convenient to regulate prostitution and to have sex workers be medically checked regularly. Consequently, the medical movement influenced policies on a national and a municipal level. It differed per municipality how sex workers were supposed to be registered by the police and how often they were supposed to be medically checked. According to the hygienists, decentralized governments were supposed to control prostitution.³³

Thanks to the Dutch medical movement, a municipal law was implemented in 1851 that made Dutch municipalities, and more specifically, the mayors, responsible for control over prostitution in their city.³⁴ Article 188 of the law included the following: “De politie over de schouwburgen, herbergen, tapperijen en alle voor het publiek openstaande gebouwen en zamenkomsten, openbare vermakelijkheden en *openlijke huizen van ontucht*, behoort aan den Burgemeester.”³⁵ In reality, this meant that police could take any woman from the street at any time, to let them perform a medical check for venereal diseases.³⁶ Besides that, the woman in question did not have to give permission to be checked, she just needed to undergo it.³⁷ The article in the 1851 Dutch law was the first one that acknowledged prostitution in Dutch legislation.³⁸

The legislation on prostitution thus stems from French influences, firstly the French implemented the regulations, and later they influenced the dominant ideas on public health in the Netherlands. The Dutch medical movement saw prostitution as a necessary evil and as something that had to be controlled. The regulation entailed that women could be taken from the streets anytime to undergo a medical check for venereal diseases.

³³ Van Drenth and de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power*, 135; Martin Bossenbroek and Jan H. Kompagnie, *De verdwenen bordelen*, 24, 51, 52, 56.

³⁴ Bossenbroek and Kompagnie, *De verdwenen bordelen*, 8-10; Koenders, *Bestrijding van zedeloosheid in Nederland*, 56; *Handelingen van het Nationaal Congres tegen de Prostitutie te Amsterdam in het gebouw 'Frascati', dinsdag 30 April 1889 en drie volgende dagen*, The Hague: W. A. Beschoor, 1889, 155-156, https://books.google.nl/books?id=1dOsssiJR2UC&printsec=frontcover&hl=nl&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false; J.F. van Slobbe, *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis en de bestrijding der prostitutie te Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Scheltema & Holkema's Boekhandel en Uitgevers Maatschappij N.V., 1937), 64, <https://www.delpher.nl/nl/boeken/view?objectsearch=1851&coll=boeken&identificer=MMKB06:000004576:00001>.

³⁵ Van Slobbe, *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis en de bestrijding der prostitutie te Amsterdam*, 64.

³⁶ Bossenbroek and Kompagnie, *De verdwenen bordelen*, 8-10; Koenders, *Bestrijding van zedeloosheid in Nederland*, 56; *Handelingen van het Nationaal Congres tegen de Prostitutie*, 155-156; Van Slobbe, *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis en de bestrijding der prostitutie te Amsterdam*, 64.

³⁷ De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 11.

³⁸ Van Slobbe, *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis en de bestrijding der prostitutie te Amsterdam*, 64.

2.2 The Réveil as basis for Christian philanthropy

However, not everyone agreed on the regulation of prostitution that came into being at the beginning of the nineteenth century in the Netherlands. From orthodox Christian spheres, a movement originated that fought against the Dutch regulation of prostitution. To understand how the movement against the regulation of prostitution came into being, it is important to understand what influenced this movement to originate. The very first influences came from an orthodox-Christian movement called the Réveil, which came up in Europe around the middle of the nineteenth century.³⁹

The Réveil was an evangelical renewal of Protestant Christianity. The movement came up as a renewal in religiosity based on God's word. One of the core principles of the Réveil was that people were born as sinners and could be redeemed from that by converting to God. Thus, people could be saved from their sins. The idea that people could be saved was also the principle of missionary work, to spread the word of God for people in need.⁴⁰

Christians who were inspired by the Réveil felt called upon to be philanthropical. Not in terms of giving money, but in terms of promoting other people's welfare by helping out others, and to engage in social reform. As part of their religious beliefs, they felt that they should make the world a better place and to help people in need. This stemmed from the Réveil idea called the 'inner mission', to indicate missionary work that happens within a country, instead of the missionary work in another country.⁴¹ This inner missionary work became a movement among socially engaged Christians, who started to help out all kinds of people in need. Additionally, the one that was helped had to become acquainted with the redeeming power of the Gospel. This was how these socially engaged Christians started to look at sex workers, as 'fallen women' who needed saving.⁴²

One of the first most prominent figures in the Netherlands who was helping out sex workers at the time was Ottho Gerhard Heldring. Heldring was a Christian pastor and founder of the *Asyl Steenbeek*, an asylum for sex workers, established in 1848.⁴³ Heldring saw the government as the guilty one for creating the 'necessary evil' that was prostitution. Regulating and sanctioning prostitution stimulated and tolerated it, according to him. As a reaction to the municipal law of 1851, Heldring published a brochure in the form of a letter, where he asks a lawyer if prostitution can be prohibited by law. Heldring saw the consequences that prostitution induced for the women in his asylum. He argued that if public houses were already present as a necessary evil, then the

³⁹ Koenders, *Bestrijding van zedeloosheid in Nederland*, 47, 50.

⁴⁰ De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 64; van Drenth and de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power*, 135.

⁴¹ Van Drenth and de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power*, 15-16, 135-136.

⁴² De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 65.

⁴³ Bossenbroek and Kompagnie, *De verdwenen bordelen*, 9-10; Koenders, *Bestrijding van zedeloosheid in Nederland*, 52, 53, 56, 57, 79; Marita Mathijssen, *De gemaskerde eeuw* (Amsterdam: Querido, 2002), 66-69.

government did not have to stimulate this by regulating it. Public sin should not be approved by the government.⁴⁴ The church was to be the institute that was supposed to fight the sin of prostitution.⁴⁵

Although Heldring's brochure did not get a lot of reactions, his arguments against the regulation of prostitution made prostitution a topic for discussion. There was more openness about prostitution. It also opened up the viewpoint of prostitution as a form of slavery. Consequently, the term abolitionism would be used for the fight against the regulation of prostitution that Heldring instigated, a term that defines the fight against slavery.⁴⁶ However, abolitionism was a term that was mostly used for fighting slavery, it was not as much associated with prostitution at the time. Abolitionism got more associated with prostitution at a later moment in time, which will be explained in paragraph 2.3.

Willem van den Bergh, a researcher at Leiden University who was already actively pleading against prostitution as a student, worked together with Heldring on several written documents.⁴⁷ In his dissertation from 1878, van den Bergh wrote about the fight against prostitution in the Netherlands.⁴⁸ In his dissertation, he argues that the law that gives policemen the opportunity to urge women to do a medical check, is objectionable in the word of God. He adds that the Dutch State is committing a sin by regulating prostitution.⁴⁹

Thus the Réveil created the philanthropical ideal for socially engaged Christians to feel called upon to help people in need and thus also 'fallen women'. But this did not immediately provoke the movement against the regulation of prostitution. Heldring was seen as the base for this movement, even though he passed away before the movement against prostitution arose.⁵⁰ According to van den Bergh, Heldring even was of greater significance for inspiring the movement, than he was for helping fallen women.⁵¹ Besides that, it was also Heldring who compared prostitution to slavery.⁵² In his article 'Is er nog slavernij in Nederland?' Heldring argues that he is surprised that in the Netherlands, where he believed that slavery was no longer in question, he still observed a form of slavery. In the Dutch State, established to maintain the personal freedom of its citizens, a kind of slavery still exists. Girls who lose their home can fall into the wrong hands and end up working in brothels, where they are treated like a commodity. The personal freedom of these

⁴⁴ Koenders, *Bestrijding van zedeloosheid in Nederland*, 57; Mathijsen, *De gemaskerde eeuw*, 69-70.

⁴⁵ Van Drenth and de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power*, 141.

⁴⁶ Koenders, *Bestrijding van zedeloosheid in Nederland*, 58; Mathijsen, *De gemaskerde eeuw*, 69-73.

⁴⁷ Lambregt Abraham van Langeraad and Hugo Visscher, *Het Protestantsche Vaderland: Biographisch woordenboek van Protestantsche Godgeleerden in Nederland: eerste deel* (Utrecht: Kemink & zoon, 1907), 427-428, https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/bie_005biog01_01/bie_005biog01_01.pdf.

⁴⁸ Willem van den Bergh, "De strijd tegen de prostitutie in Nederland," (dissertation, Leiden University, 1878), https://www.dbnl.org/arch/berg191stri01_01/pag/berg191stri01_01.pdf.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁵⁰ De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 62.

⁵¹ Bergh van den, "De strijd tegen de prostitutie in Nederland," 51.

⁵² Van Drenth and de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power*, 141.

girls is thus taken away from them.⁵³ Heldring states: “Ik kon niet gelooven dat in een land als het onze, waar alles zoo veel mogelijk ingerigt is tot handhaving en bescherming der persoonlijke vrijheid van den mensch, dat in zulk een land dergelijke toestanden mogelijk waren.”⁵⁴ The girls are imprisoned in their brothels, for the fear exists that they might run away. If they run, the profitability of the brothel is in danger. The prettiest girls working in the bigger brothels are rare, and thus valuable. In the smaller brothels, elder women work voluntarily as sex workers, and these women are more free. If they run, someone else can simply take their place, thus they are less ‘valuable.’⁵⁵

Thus, the fight against the regulation of prostitution was influenced by the orthodox-Christian movement called the Réveil. Inspired by the Réveil, Christians started to feel the need to help out others, especially people in need, such as fallen women. The Christian pastor Heldring was the first in the Netherlands to help out sex workers and the first to link prostitution to slavery. He also observed that the State regulation of prostitution enabled prostitution to exist. The researcher van den Bergh agreed with him and saw Heldring of great significance for the eventual movement against the regulation of prostitution.

2.3 The ignition of the fight against the regulation of prostitution

In the zeitgeist of the second half of the nineteenth century it became more common for ordinary people to be part of the ‘public opinion’ in the Netherlands. The political domain was no longer supposed to be a secret, and it became more usual for the public to talk about politics. The ideal was that everyone in the entire society could participate in the public debate, regardless of their identity, religion or social-economic background. In line with this, single-issue organisations started to originate within society, aimed at influencing the political process.⁵⁶

Inspired by the principles of the orthodox-Christian Réveil, Christians started to help fallen women and to start seeing the regulation of prostitution as something that should be abolished. Subsequently, these principles were translated into a movement against the regulation of prostitution. The preacher Hendrik Pierson and the aristocratic widow Marianne Klerck-van Hogendorp were inspired to start their own single-issue organisation that was aimed at fighting the regulation of prostitution.

⁵³ Heldring, Ottho Gerhard, *Is er nog slavernij in Nederland?* [1860?], 1-3, <https://www.delpher.nl/nl/boeken/view?coll=boeken&identificer=MMUBVU02:000005213:00006>.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁶ Janse, Maartje, *De afschaffers: Publieke opinie, organisatie en politiek in Nederland 1840-1880* (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 2007), 18-20, 293-296.

2.3.1 The influence of Pierson

The movement against prostitution in the Netherlands was first initiated by Pierson, a preacher in Zetten, and the successor of Heldring as manager of the *Heldringgestichten* for saving fallen women. In his ideology, Pierson was, besides inspired by Heldring, also influenced by the British abolitionist Josephine Butler.⁵⁷ Butler was an advocate for equality between men and women,⁵⁸ and respected and cared for sex workers. In her eyes, it was blasphemy against God and human nature to not treat sex workers as human beings.⁵⁹

Pierson met Butler in 1877, at the first congress of the *International Abolitionist Federation* (IAF) in Geneva. The IAF was founded by Butler in Liverpool in 1875, aimed at ending the state regulation of prostitution globally.⁶⁰ Pierson went to this conference because van den Bergh, who was working on his dissertation on prostitution, persuaded Pierson to join him. Although Pierson was sceptical about the abolitionist approach on prostitution at first, Butler made a great impression on him and convinced him of the importance of abolitionism.⁶¹ By the influences of Butler, Pierson realised that only saving fallen women was not enough. The entire society had to be familiarized with the injustice and societal abuses that sex workers experienced.⁶²

In the year after the congress, in 1878, Pierson published a brochure called ‘Gewettigde Ontucht’ wherein he first reported on the congress he attended. In his brochure, Pierson mentioned that the congress did not get a lot of attention in society. This was unrightful according to him, because the matter of fighting prostitution deserved the attention of everyone who had good intentions.⁶³ Consequently, after the congress, Pierson provoked the already existing Christian feelings of displeasure against the regulation of prostitution. Under his vision, these feelings were translated into a movement against the regulation of prostitution in the Netherlands.⁶⁴ More on this process will be discussed in subparagraph 2.4.1.

Thus, thanks to Pierson who was inspired by Butler and Heldring, the movement against the regulation of prostitution got off the ground. Pierson realised that saving sex workers was not enough. The regulation needed to be abolished in order to end the injustice that sex workers experienced.

⁵⁷ Bossenbroek and Kompagnie, *De verdwenen bordelen*, 10; De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 62-63; Koenders, *Bestrijding van zedeloosheid in Nederland*, 60; Mathijssen, *De gemaskerde eeuw*, 74.

⁵⁸ Van Drenth and de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power*, 167.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 101-103.

⁶⁰ Anne Summers, “Which Women? What Europe? Josephine Butler and the International Abolitionist Federation,” *History Workshop Journal* 62 (Autumn 2006): 216, <https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy.library.uu.nl/pub/8/article/205511/pdf>.

⁶¹ Van Drenth and de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power*, 146-147; De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 82-83.

⁶² Sijmons, “Prostitutie in Nederland in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw,” 67.

⁶³ Hendrik Pierson, *Gewettigde Ontucht* (Arnhem: J.W. & C.F. Swaan, 1878), 3-4, https://books.google.nl/books?id=wcVmAAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=nl&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=butler&f=false.

⁶⁴ Van Drenth and de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power*, 146-147; De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 82-83.

2.3.2 Klerck-van Hogendorp joins the movement

A few years after the movement against the regulation of prostitution was ignited in the Netherlands by the ideas of Heldring, Butler and Pierson, Klerck-van Hogendorp entered the stage. Her work for the movement against the regulation of prostitution was going to be very relevant, because she was the figurehead of the female side of the movement against the regulation of prostitution in the Netherlands.

In 1876, the British Christian feminist Sheldon Amos was sent by Butler to visit women of the Christian Réveil in Utrecht, the Netherlands, thus also Klerck-van Hogendorp.⁶⁵ This was very likely the first step that made the aristocratic Klerck-van Hogendorp willing to visit the third congress of the IAF in the Hague in 1883. Marianne Klerck-van Hogendorp and her sister Anna van Hogendorp came from a prominent aristocratic family.⁶⁶ And one of the Christian ideals that were dominant in society at the time was that women of the bourgeoisie were expected to show Christian compassion aside from their tasks as housewives. Christian compassion could be shown by helping out the poor or by helping out fallen women. Marianne and Anna's mother showed her daughters at an early age about this Christian philanthropy.⁶⁷

In September 1883, Klerck-van Hogendorp visited the international congress of the IAF, where Butler spoke. Meeting Butler made a deep impression on Klerck-van Hogendorp.⁶⁸ Before that, Klerck-van Hogendorp was already known to sympathize with the fight against prostitution, and her mother was a well-known supporter of the work of Heldring and his care for sex workers in Zetten. But thanks to the words of Butler, Klerck-van Hogendorp was inspired even more. Butler realized that Klerck-van Hogendorp was the right woman to fulfil her goal of convincing Dutch women to organise themselves against prostitution.⁶⁹ Klerck-van Hogendorp admits that thanks to Butler the fight against immorality became more public. She gave Butler a lot of credit, speaking of Butler as the first one to see that the police regulations on immorality were derogatory for women. According to Klerck-van Hogendorp, Butler saw that women were being despised by society, whereas men, guilty of the same sin, were being protected.⁷⁰ More on this double standard will be explained in chapter 3.2.

The aristocratic Klerck-van Hogendorp was going to be the most prominent woman who was part of the movement against the regulation of prostitution. At an early age, she was taught to show

⁶⁵ Koenders, *Bestrijding van zedeloosheid in Nederland*, 80.

⁶⁶ De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 93.

⁶⁷ Koenders, *Bestrijding van zedeloosheid in Nederland*, 79.

⁶⁸ De Vries, "International abolitionism in the Netherlands," 257, 263.

⁶⁹ van Drenth and de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power*, 148-149; Koenders, *Bestrijding van zedeloosheid in Nederland*, 82.

⁷⁰ Marianne Klerck-van Hogendorp, *Mevrouw Josephine Butler aan de Nederlandsche Jongelingschap* (The Hague: Nederlandschen Vrouwenbond tot Verhooging van het Zedelijk Bewustzijn, 1910), 3, <https://www.delpher.nl/nl/boeken/view?coll=boeken&identificer=MMATRO3:028229000:00001>.

Christian compassion and to help out others. Klerck-van Hogendorp became deeply inspired by Butler and her ideas when visiting a congress of the IAF. In line with Christian principles, Klerck-van Hogendorp called out to the women of the Netherlands that they should not be the only ones to be punished for their deeds when they have sinned, but that there should be equal judgement.

2.4 The establishment of the DAP and the Women's Union

Influenced by the Christian ideology of their zeitgeist, Pierson and Klerck-van Hogendorp both initiated an organisation against the regulation of prostitution in the Netherlands. These organisations were the DAP and the Women's Union. The DAP and the Women's Union were the two most important organisations that were part of the movement against the regulation of prostitution that will be focused on in this thesis.⁷¹

2.4.1 The establishment and ideology of the DAP

The establishment of the DAP was an important part of the movement against the regulation of prostitution in the Netherlands. It was the first organisation aimed at fighting the regulation of prostitution. The build-up of the organisation and their approaches towards reaching their goal are relevant for the comparison with the Women's Union, and for understanding the influence that the DAP had on political change.

According to De Vries, the establishment of the DAP lay in the ideas of Pierson, who initiated a meeting in Utrecht in 1877, where 200 men met each other.⁷² However, it is not clearly mentioned how this exactly resulted in the actual establishment of the DAP. Probably the meeting was well attended because the brochure 'Gewettigde Ontucht' was published before the meeting, which caught the attention of these men.⁷³ The first principles that Pierson wanted to state at the meeting were based on the congress and ideas of the IAF.⁷⁴ The goal of the meeting was also to discuss the mandate of the IAF, not to already establish an organisation. It would be too 'premature' according to Pierson, to draw conclusions at the end of this first meeting. Thanks to the well-attended meeting, the ideas for a movement against the regulation of prostitution got attention in newspapers.⁷⁵ A year later, when the ideas behind a Dutch organisation against the regulation of

⁷¹ De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 82, 83, 261, 264; De Vries, "International abolitionism in the Netherlands," 264.

⁷² De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 83.

⁷³ Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de prostitutie, *Het Maandblad: Getuigen en Redden*, October 1, 1878, 1, https://www.delpher.nl/nl/tijdschriften/view?identificatie=MMKB10:000793001:00005&query=maandblad+getuigen+en+redden&coll=dts&page=1&facets%5Bperiode%5D%5B%5D=1%7C19e_eeuw%7C1870-1879%7C&rowid=3.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

prostitution were more widely known, the DAP got established,⁷⁶. The DAP derived as a branch of the IAF.⁷⁷

In a publication of the DAP that is directed to the *Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal*, the Dutch House of Representatives, the DAP stated that their goal was to change the interference of the government on prostitution. On the first page of this source, the DAP backs its argument against the regulation on prostitution by including the standpoint of the British government concerning prostitution. The DAP stated that the British government sees the regulation of prostitution as detrimental to public health. Besides that, the DAP also stated that their argument is backed by honourable men and women and scientific literature.⁷⁸

The main goal of the organisation is expounded in their statutes, in article 3. The DAP is established to fight prostitution, especially where prostitution is legalized by law. For this goal, they focus on the following three fields: “Daartoe beweegt zij zich op geen ander gebied dan op dat des rechts, der moraal en der hygiene.”⁷⁹ In an explanatory note that came with the statutes, it is added to article 3 that the DAP is trying to achieve their main goal by fighting the regulation of prostitution, by law criminalizing the act of holding a brothel, by enhancing the legislation on matchmaking and seduction, by maintaining public order, and by combatting venereal diseases. Besides that, they also focus on the recovery of investigating fatherhood -to find out who someone’s father is- and the protection of minors against abuse and negligence which can both lead to prostitution.⁸⁰ In the method of operation that is following the explanatory note, it is added to article 3 of the statutes how the DAP worked on reaching their main goal. More on their ways of operating will be expounded in subparagraph 3.2.1.

In short, the DAP was the first Dutch organisation that was established aimed at fighting the regulation of prostitution.⁸¹ Their approach was to do this by changing the governmental interference on prostitution. To do so, they wanted to criminalize the act of holding a brothel, to combat venereal diseases, to enhance legislation on seduction and matchmaking and to maintain public order.

⁷⁶ De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 83.

⁷⁷ Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de Prostitutie, *Statuten van de Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de Prostitutie*, [1895?], 1, Box 9, Archief Nationaal Comité van Instellingen voor Zedelijke Volksgezondheid, Nationaal comité tot bestrijding van den handel in vrouwen en kinderen (1900-1948) (vanaf 1948 nationaal comité van instellingen voor zedelijke volksgezondheid), Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

⁷⁸ Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de prostitutie, *Een adres aan de Tweede Kamer* (The Hague: W. A. Beschoor, 1881), 1-2. <https://www.delpher.nl/nl/boeken/view?coll=boeken&identificer=MMUBVU02:000009553>.

⁷⁹ Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de Prostitutie, *Statuten 1895*, 1-2, Archief Nationaal Comité van Instellingen voor Zedelijke Volksgezondheid.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁸¹ De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 82-83.

2.4.2 The additional value of establishing the Women's Union

In addition to the DAP, another prominent organisation got established within the movement of fighting the regulation of prostitution at the end of the nineteenth century in the Netherlands. But since there already was an organisation against the regulation of prostitution, what was the additional value of this 'Women's Union'? This will be elaborated on in this subparagraph.

Even though it was allowed to join the DAP as a woman, the DAP considered the fight against the regulation of prostitution as men's business, according to Koenders.⁸² This could be the reason that there was only a small number of women who joined the organisation. In 1882 for instance, the DAP only had five female members. By the year 1900, this percentage had risen to forty percent of the total number of members. But then the Women's Union was already established.⁸³ This is not further elaborated by Koenders, but it could be that thanks to the existence of the Women's Union, it got normalised for women to join the movement, enabling the DAP to gain more female members. Besides that, according to de Vries, the Women's Union was the first female-led organisation in the Netherlands that had the characteristics of a political movement. All while the moment that the Women's Union was established, was at a time that political collectivity for women was still to be legitimised, especially concerning prostitution.⁸⁴

However, in November 1883, Marianne Klerck-van Hogendorp published a brochure for the women of the Netherlands.⁸⁵ She writes that she visited the congress of the IAF. At first, she hesitated to go to the congress, because a subject would be discussed not decent for a mixed gathering of men and women. However, she felt that she had to listen to what would be discussed, because of the presence of noble women who made her realise that what was to be discussed at that congress would be of importance for women of the Netherlands too.⁸⁶ She also spoke of the DAP, a department of the IAF, with Pierson as its chair. However, as long as only men are taking the word, women would not be eager enough to mingle in the discussion.⁸⁷ She states: "Doch zoolang in dezen de man alléén het woord voert, zijn wij vrouwen te schuchter om te vragen naar hetgeen wij niet verstaan. De kwestie is voor ons zoo pijnlijk, zoo teeder. Eerst wanneer de vrouw optreedt, durven wij er ons in mengen."⁸⁸ The core reason of Klerck-van Hogendorp to unite women was because it was time for women to also mingle in the prostitution matter. The debate had been dominated by men for too long.

⁸² Koenders, *Bestrijding van zedeloosheid in Nederland*, 44.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁸⁴ De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 41, 93, 272.

⁸⁵ Marianne Klerck-van Hogendorp, *Een woord aan de vrouwen van Nederland I* (The Hague: W. A. Beschoor, 1883), 3-4, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2633856448/fulltextPDF/5414172AB0C344DCPQ/3?accountid=7392>.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

A month later, in December of that same year, Klerck-van Hogendorp published another brochure addressed to Dutch women. In her brochure, the righteousness of the existence of asylums for women is explained. Those asylums are there to take the fallen women in and help them to get back on the right path, according to Klerck-van Hogendorp. In the name of God, they can be freed of their sins. However, she also plays in on the fact that where one woman is rescued from the path of sin, another woman takes her place.⁸⁹ She argues: “Daarom moet het kwaad aangetast worden in zijn wortel,”⁹⁰ according to Klerck-van Hogendorp. Klerck-van Hogendorp refers to how Butler opposes the false belief that is dominant in society that prostitution is seen as a necessary evil. A so-called ‘necessary evil’ should not have a place in a Christian society, according to both women. In the right Christian society, there is only marriage, and outside of marriage, there is no place for sins of a sexual nature. In this way, women would come into their own more fully, because there would be no place for sinning and using women for a certain necessary evil.⁹¹

Unfortunately for Klerck-van Hogendorp, ‘the sin’, prostitution, was not prohibited in the Netherlands, but only regulated by police and medical supervision. However, by regulating prostitution, the local government takes prostitution under protection. According to Klerck-van Hogendorp, the State regulation of prostitution has the following consequence: “Het kwaad krijgt daardoor den schijn van zoo heel kwaad niet te zijn, en de verleiding wordt voor het jeugdige gemoed er door vergroot. Menig jong mensch zet alzoo den eersten stap op den weg der zonde, onbewust hoe sterk deze weg naar beneden afdaaft.”⁹² Thus, Klerck-van Hogendorp is convinced that prostitution should not be regulated by the government. It would make the sin only more interesting for people because it would feel as if it is not actually as evil.

In February 1884, Klerck-van Hogendorp published a third brochure for the women in the Netherlands. In this brochure, the establishment of the Women’s Union is announced.⁹³ The Women’s Union was established in connection with the DAP and also as a branch of the IAF.⁹⁴ In their statutes, it is stated that their main goal is to raise moral consciousness, as their name says. They state that they want to achieve this goal by publishing a monthly magazine, organizing meetings for members, submitting petitions to the established order, taking part in congresses,

⁸⁹ Marianne Klerck-van Hogendorp, *Een woord aan de vrouwen van Nederland II* (The Hague: W. A. Beschoor, 1883), 3-4, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2633856448/fulltextPDF/5414172AB0C344DCPQ/3?accountid=7392>.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 4-6.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 7.

⁹³ Marianne Klerck-van Hogendorp, *Een woord aan de vrouwen van Nederland III* (The Hague: W. A. Beschoor, 1883), 3, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2633856448/fulltextPDF/5414172AB0C344DCPQ/3?accountid=7392>.

⁹⁴ Nederlandschen Vrouwenbond tot Verhooging van het Zedelijk Bewustzijn, *Statuten en huishoudelijk reglement* (The Hague: Drukkerij Trio, 1912), 3, <https://www.delpher.nl/nl/boeken/view?coll=boeken&identificer=MMUBL07:000002970>.

organizing traveller's aid work, and working together with other organizations that attempt to reach the same goal as them.⁹⁵

The additional value of the Women's Union was thus because the prostitution issue was firstly dominated by men. Another reason was that prostitution was seen as a subject that was not to be discussed among decent women. But as long as only men took the word, women would not interfere. It was because of this reason that Klerck-van Hogendorp initiated the establishment of a female organisation called the Women's Union. Their principles were that in a Christian society, there was not supposed to be a place for necessary evil.

⁹⁵ Nederlandschen Vrouwenbond, *Statuten*, 3.

3. Comparing the DAP and the Women's Union

3.2 Similarities in operating

To better understand how the DAP and the Women's Union were similar, I will focus on their principles and ways of operating. These tell how they both worked towards reaching their similar main goal, which was to fight the regulation of prostitution.⁹⁶ Consequently, their similarities can tell more about the movement against the regulation of prostitution in general. Likewise, looking at similarities can give insight into to what extent it mattered that there were two different organisations. Despite being different organisations, looking at their strategies and ways of operating can tell that they were not so different after all. Besides that, looking at similarities can also tell more about how organisations with the same goal operated around the end of the nineteenth century in general.

Besides their biggest similarity of having the same main goal, another big resemblance between the DAP and the Women's Union is that their members and sympathizers mainly consisted of people with an orthodox-Protestant background.⁹⁷ A clarification for this is that their movement originated from the orthodox-Christian Réveil movement, as already expounded in paragraph 2.2. According to the article of Holtzer, the Réveil inspired the women of the Women's Union to have a feeling of responsibility for the humiliation of their gender as a whole, in a way to help them. Holtzer adds to this that the women of the Women's Union felt that they were responsible for this in the first place, before the men who were part of the movement against the regulation of prostitution.⁹⁸ However, this contradicts their standpoint of women being the victim of the double standard. With the double standard, the Women's Union meant that men who visit sex workers are free to do so, while women carry all the humiliating consequences. By only punishing women and not men, the State is measuring with two standards.⁹⁹ It is contradicting the argument of Holtzer, because Holtzer argues that women were responsible for the humiliation of their own gender, while the double standard would imply that the fact that the government measures with two standards, makes the government the responsible one.

However, Holtzer adds that this feeling of responsibility for the women of the Women's Union also connects to a propaganda strategy that they used. He argues that the Women's Union interacted with the feeling of responsibility for women, to gain more members and to influence

⁹⁶ Sijmons, "Prostitutie in Nederland in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw," 68.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Holtzer, "De vrouw alleen kan dit werk ter harte nemen," 368.

⁹⁹ J.M. Beelaerts van Blokland-Kneppelhout and A. van Hogendorp, *Gedenkboek: Vijf-en-twintig jaren arbeids van den Nederlandschen vrouwenbond tot verhooging van het zedelijk bewustzijn* (Groningen: G. Römelingh & co, 1909), 21, <https://www.delpher.nl/nl/boeken/view?coll=boeken&identifiser=MMATR03:028188000:00012>.

public opinion. Creating a feeling of responsibility made the Women's Union interesting for other orthodox-Christian women to join, because their principles to join them lay in the orthodox-Christian principle of helping out falling women.¹⁰⁰ However, not only the Women's Union was propagandizing their principles. The DAP stated that they propagate their *raison d'état* at city councils, the bench of mayors and aldermen, police officials, influential associations, and persons in politics. Besides that, the DAP propagated their ideas when they posed candidates for national, provincial and municipal elections.¹⁰¹ Thus, propaganda was a political strategy for both male and female politically characterized organisations aimed at changing the State regulation of prostitution at the end of the nineteenth century. Perhaps it was inevitable to propagandize their ideas in order to reach their goal. It also shows that in the first place, the Women's Union did not seem so politically oriented, but looking closely, it was not that different from the male-led DAP.

In a way of spreading their propaganda, the DAP and the Women's Union could both do so via their monthly magazine. The DAP published a magazine called *Maandblad: Getuigen en Redden*,¹⁰² while the Women's Union published a magazine called *Het Orgaan*.¹⁰³ The magazines were both aimed at changing the societal view on prostitution. However, the DAP and the Women's Union do not admit that their magazines might have a political aspect.¹⁰⁴ In reality, both the *Maandblad* and the *Orgaan* were quite politically coloured, for they both clearly gave away how they felt about the jurisdiction concerning prostitution. Likewise, both magazines were quite similar in the way of giving information. They both describe their views on the prostitution issue, give their opinion on the regulation of prostitution, and describe meetings, statutes and congresses.¹⁰⁵ Thus the magazines were important gateways through which the DAP and the Women's Union both spread their political views into society.

¹⁰⁰ Holtzer, "De vrouw alleen kan dit werk ter harte nemen," 368.

¹⁰¹ Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de Prostitutie, *Statuten 1895*, 4, Archief Nationaal Comité van Instellingen voor Zedelijke Volksgezondheid.

¹⁰² Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de Prostitutie, *Statuten 1895*, 4, Archief Nationaal Comité van Instellingen voor Zedelijke Volksgezondheid; Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de prostitutie, *Het Maandblad October 1 1878*.

¹⁰³ Nederlandschen Vrouwenbond tot Verhooging van het Zedelijk Bewustzijn, *Orgaan*, May 15, 1884, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2631450674/610BD6D7A15D473EPQ/4?accountid=7392&imgSeq=1>.

¹⁰⁴ Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de prostitutie, *Het Maandblad October 1 1878*, 1; Nederlandschen Vrouwenbond tot Verhooging van het Zedelijk Bewustzijn, *Statuten*, 3.

¹⁰⁵ Nederlandschen Vrouwenbond tot Verhooging van het Zedelijk Bewustzijn, *Orgaan*, May 15, 1884; Nederlandschen Vrouwenbond tot Verhooging van het Zedelijk Bewustzijn, *Orgaan*. September 15, 1884,

<https://www.proquest.com/docview/2631450671/C9A9C2266F487BPQ/4?accountid=7392&imgSeq=1>; De Nederlandschen Vrouwenbond tot Verhooging van het Zedelijk Bewustzijn, "Huishoudelijk Reglement," *Orgaan*, December 15, 1886,

<https://www.proquest.com/docview/2631451495/fulltextPDF/FCF8990A05C04CCEPQ/5?accountid=7392&tocViewMode=tocViewModeSearchOther>; Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de prostitutie, *Het Maandblad October 1 1878*; De Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de prostitutie, *Het Maandblad: Getuigen en Redden*, May 1, 1889,

https://www.delpher.nl/nl/tijdschriften/view?identificer=MMKB10:000947017:00001&coll=dts&query=%28maandblad+getuigen+en+redde%29&cql%5B%5D=%28volumeYear+_gte_+%221889%22%29&cql%5B%5D=%28volumeYear+_lte_+%221889%22%29&rowid=3; Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de prostitutie. *Het Maandblad June 1 1889*.

In short, in many ways, the DAP and the Women's Union thus seemed to have a similar way of operating and spreading their ideas into society. This means that the ways of operating can be typical for their time period, and in particular in achieving their goal of changing the State regulation of prostitution.

3.3 Differences between the DAP and the Women's Union

As mentioned in the paragraph before, there were some similarities between the DAP and the Women's Union. However, they still were two different organisations. What was the reason for that? To understand why they still operated in their own organisation, it is important to highlight their differences. This is interesting for the debate, because it adds how they each also had their own tactics and approaches in order to be successful in reaching their goal of changing the State regulation of prostitution.

At first, the most important distinction between the organisations is that the DAP consisted mainly of men and the Women's Union of women. A reason for this is expanded in subparagraph 2.4.2 where it is explained that women felt that they had to mingle in the prostitution matter and to start their own organisation.¹⁰⁶ In addition to this, de Vries mentions in her research that the men and women from the movement against the regulation of prostitution also differed in their ideology and political vision.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, I found that they also had a different use of language in their way of writing about the prostitution issue. When comparing publications between the DAP and the Women's Union, there are sometimes small differences that give an interesting distinction. An example of the use of different languages derives from a publication of the Women's Union from 1910, written by Klerck-van Hogendorp. In this text, Klerck-van Hogendorp translated the words that Butler wrote in a British monthly magazine called *The Stormbell*. Butler's endearing and motherly way of writing really impressed Klerck-van Hogendorp. In the translated text, Butler wrote in a certain way how there were many young people present at a congress of the IAF. Butler is delighted by the presence of these young men and women, for they were 'the hope of the future'. The way of writing is humble and personally aimed at these young people, as if they were her children.¹⁰⁸ An example of this is stated in the following quote: "ik gevoelde er behoefte aan een woord van hartelijk vaarwel tot hen te spreken, tot mijne zonen en mijne dochteren, zooals ik meen, dat ik sommigen van hen mag noemen."¹⁰⁹ What is also striking about the way of writing is that Butler was mostly speaking of young men. She did not often mention young women too. Perhaps

¹⁰⁶ Marianne Klerck-van Hogendorp, *Een woord aan de vrouwen van Nederland III*, 1.

¹⁰⁷ De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 63.

¹⁰⁸ Klerck-van Hogendorp, *Mevrouw Josephine Butler*, 3-4.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

this is because men had more political power and thus more potential. In her tone of writing is hope, the hope that young people want to stand up for her mission to fight the regulation of prostitution worldwide. Klerck-van Hogendorp ends the translated text of Butler with a call to the young people of the Netherlands, that they should also take the word of Butler as if they were also personally aimed at them.¹¹⁰ The personal use of language made the Women's Union more accessible to a broader audience.

In contrast with this, the DAP did not usually write in such a friendly and personal way, but they do write for the general public. The DAP writes for everyone who is on their side of the prostitution matter. Furthermore, the DAP and the Women's Union also differ in their use of language on a level of prudery. The DAP wrote in their first *Maandblad* that they will call everything by its name, just like in a medical magazine.¹¹¹ They add to this: "Men wete dus, dat het alleen gelezen kan worden door hen, die alles mogen en moeten weten."¹¹² It is unclear whom they mean by this, but in reality, it meant that women often felt uncomfortable reading their publications. This is in line with the research conducted by Koenders, who states that the women of the Women's Union addressed that the first volumes of the monthly magazine of the DAP consisted of certain crude language, making it difficult for women to join the organisation.¹¹³

In addition to this, in their memorial book, the Women's Union argue that it would have been a wish to be fulfilled if both organisations were one from the start. However, it appeared in their writing that they reproach the DAP for this. The DAP did not change to enable more women to join them. It would have been kind to change their name into something more female-friendly, according to the Women's Union.¹¹⁴ Thus there were too many disagreements between the men from the DAP and the women from the Women's Union to be one organisation. The Women's Union seems to have wished that that was different, while this did not appear very strongly from the DAP.

Furthermore, Koenders argues that between the years 1905 and 1907, the Women's Union urged the DAP to hold two seats on the board vacant for women. But the tensions were added up and Pierson was threatening to resign as chair.¹¹⁵ Thus, the DAP was not as female-friendly after all, according to Koenders. However, when looking closely at the differences between the statutes, it is visible that an extra sub-article is added to article 4 in a new concept of their statutes that most probably dates back to the year 1909. In the sub-article the DAP states that they strive for the

¹¹⁰ Klerck-van Hogendorp, *Mevrouw Josephine Butler*, 3-4.

¹¹¹ Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de prostitutie. *Het Maandblad October 1 1878*, 1.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Koenders, *Bestrijding van zedeloosheid in Nederland*, 78.

¹¹⁴ Beelaerts van Blokland-Kneppelhout and van Hogendorp, *Gedenkboek*, 52.

¹¹⁵ Koenders, *Bestrijding van zedeloosheid in Nederland*, 77-78.

following: “bevordering in de wetgeving van de juiste verhouding tusschen man en vrouw.”¹¹⁶ This is a very interesting addition to the statutes, added after the dispute between the DAP and the Women’s Union. Probably the Women’s Union advocated the DAP to focus more on gender equality, or the DAP itself was open to become more focused on looking at the female side of the prostitution issue. Strikingly, in the real statutes that were published a few months later, the article was not included,¹¹⁷ indicating that the DAP eventually was not ready to have a more gender-equal focus. This emphasized the still relevant existence of the Women’s Union as representative of the female perspective of the movement against the regulation of prostitution.

Another big difference between the two organisations was their difference in religious terms. The DAP profited themselves as neutral in religious terms,¹¹⁸ while the Women’s Union was operating from an orthodox-Christian belief.¹¹⁹ Incidentally, the principles of the DAP originated from a Christian moral. A moral that is supposed to control sexual acts, as is explained by Pierson in the following way: “De moraal moet het sexueele leven beheerschen en niet omgekeerd het sexueele levende wet stellen aan de moraal.”¹²⁰ The sacredness of marriage is supposed to be inviolable, and the government shall not legitimate any kind of prostitution, according to the Christian principles of the DAP.¹²¹ Likewise, the entire work of the Women’s Union had a Christian meaning. This is clearly visible in the memorial book of their first twenty-five years of existence, where God is taking a central position in the work of the Women’s Union throughout the years.¹²² An example of this is stated in the following, where the purpose of the Women’s Union is explained: “Onze bond stelt zich ten doel de verhooging van het zedelijk bewustzijn. Hij aanvaardt den strijd tegen de onzedelijkheid in welken vorm ook; hij beoogt het verhoogen van het peil der zedelijkheid en wenscht dien arbeid te verrichten in de kracht Gods, die sprak: Zijt rein, want Ik ben rein.”¹²³ Furthermore, as already mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, Bossenbroek and Kompagnie argued that because of their orthodox-Protestant background, the Women’s Union did

¹¹⁶ De Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de Prostitutie, *Concept-Herziene Statuten Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de Prostitutie*, [1909?], 1, Box 9, Archief Nationaal Comité van Instellingen voor Zedelijke Volksgezondheid, Nationaal comité tot bestrijding van den handel in vrouwen en kinderen (1900-1948) (vanaf 1948 nationaal comité van instellingen voor zedelijke volksgezondheid), Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

¹¹⁷ Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de Prostitutie, *Statuten 1909*, 1-3, Archief Nationaal Comité van Instellingen voor Zedelijke Volksgezondheid.

¹¹⁸ Guillaume Jacques Daniel Mounier, “De Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de prostitutie in haar werkzaamheid geschetst,” 14, Speech held in Utrecht, April 6, 1899, <https://linker2.worldcat.org/?jHome=http%3A%2F%2Fbooks.google.com%2Fbooks%3Fvid%3DKBNL%3AKBNL03000298792&linktype=best&jHomeSig=dfc11d80e51b326366f53d1a2856a97f71b18367c1f8f55c9358bd2eab56f905>.

¹¹⁹ Koenders, *Bestrijding van zedeloosheid in Nederland*, 83.

¹²⁰ Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de prostitutie. *Het Maandblad October 1 1878*, 2.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Beelaerts van Blokland-Kneppelhout and van Hogendorp, *Gedenkboek*.

¹²³ Ibid., 7.

not tolerate people from other religions.¹²⁴ However, the Women's Union welcomed women from all layers of society, as is mentioned in their memorial book.¹²⁵ It was even thanks to the principle of welcoming women from all classes of society, that they were successful in gaining many members. More on this will be expounded in paragraph 4.1.

In short, there were differences between the two organisations, with the biggest one being the fact that the DAP consisted of men and the Women's Union of women. This coloured their use of language for example. The women wrote in a more friendly way, while the men of the DAP were accused of using crude language. This influenced the female friendliness of the DAP, and made the Women's Union more accessible to a broader audience. Another big difference was that the Women's Union was more based on orthodox-Christian principles while the DAP considered themselves as neutral in religious terms. This could mean that the DAP would be a more interesting organisation for all kinds of people, regardless of religion, but the Women's Union was more successful at gaining members from all layers of society. This will further be elaborated in the next chapter.

¹²⁴ Bossenbroek and Kompagnie, "De stille trom der vrouwenzusters," 26-27.

¹²⁵ Beelaerts van Blokland-Kneppelhout and van Hogendorp, *Gedenkboek*, 7.

4. Working towards ending the regulation of prostitution

4.1 Influencing public opinion

To understand how the DAP and the Women's Union were successful in their fight against the regulation of prostitution, I will examine to what extent they influenced public opinion. In the first place, this analysis will show how the movement against the regulation of prostitution was successful in actually fighting the regulation of prostitution. In this paragraph, I will therefore explore whether the DAP and the Women's Union were successful in achieving their goal. One approach for this is petitioning, a new phenomenon that came into being in the nineteenth century. But besides that, the DAP and the Women's Union also had to gain publicity to influence public opinion. They needed people behind their movement before they could work towards their goal.

4.1.1 Petitioning

In a way of challenging the political system, a new phenomenon came into being in the nineteenth century. Petitioning, a way of expressing legitimacy towards the government through the voices of the people, in a nonelectoral way. In the nineteenth century, petitioning was an occurrence that was mostly initiated by orthodox-Protestant people.¹²⁶

The Women's Union was an important factor in the morality issue, but had limited political lobby activities, according to Koenders. The Women's Union was mostly focused on Christian philanthropy.¹²⁷ However, according to the memorial book of the Women's Union's first twenty-five years of existence, the Women's Union was definitely involved in politics. In 1885, after the Women's Union gained a bit of public awareness, they organized a petition for the *Tweede Kamer*. The petition was aimed at abolishing the trade in girls.¹²⁸ An important reason for the women to organise a petition at the time was because women were excluded from politics. They were not electable and did not have the right to vote. Handing in a petition was their political instrument and the only way in which they could influence politics. Moreover, according to the article of the researchers Houkes and Janse, this petition by the Women's Union was the very first direct political action for the abolishment of prostitution in the Netherlands.¹²⁹ -Although it would be more likely

¹²⁶ Maartje Janse, "“What Value Should We Attach to All These Petitions?”: Petition Campaigns and the Problem of Legitimacy in the Nineteenth-Century Netherlands," *Social Science History* 43 (Fall 2019): 509, <https://doi.org/10.1017/ssh.2019.18>.

¹²⁷ De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 64; Koenders, *Bestrijding van zedeloosheid in Nederland*, 28-29.

¹²⁸ Beelaerts van Blokland-Kneppelhout and van Hogendorp, *Gedenkboek*, 37-38.

¹²⁹ Annemarie Houkes and Maartje Janse, "Foreign Examples as Eye Openers and Justification: The Transfer of the Anti-Corn Law League and the Anti-Prostitution Movement to the Netherlands," *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 12, no. 2 (July 2005): 333, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13507480500269142>; Janse, *De afschaffers*, 115.

that it would be the first political action to abolish the regulation of prostitution in the Netherlands, instead of the very first political action against prostitution in general in the Netherlands.- But it did mean that the first political action came from the Women's Union, and not from the DAP. The petition was supported by the committee of reporters of the *Tweede Kamer*, who have the power to ask the attention for certain subjects from government officials. However, the national law did not change by the requirements of the petition.¹³⁰

Moreover, the Women's Union also carried out the arrangement of a petition against regulating prostitution and brothels, as decided at the 1889 congress. More on this congress will be explained in the next subparagraph. However, it was harder to gain societal support for this petition in comparison to the one they organised in 1885, according to their memorial book. People gave it more thought this time and the idea emerged that it might not be wise to change already existing regulations. Perhaps the sin would only become worse if the government would stop regulating it. But above all, in general, people thought fighting prostitution was not a matter to be discussed by decent women.¹³¹ The Women's Union described this as: "Zij verstaan de kwestie niet en zij loopen, zoo was bijna algemeen het gevoelen, gevaar in de aanraking van zoo onreine dingen, het beminnelijke, het vrouwelijke van haar aard te verliezen."¹³² Thus, according to the dominant views in society at the time, women who would interfere in the prostitution matter were at risk of losing their feminine delicacy. Moreover, in the article of the memorial book, it is added that there was more sympathy within society for the rescuing work than for changing the laws that regulated prostitution. However, the petition was eventually signed by 38.000 people. It was, however, still quite a big number of people who signed. Another orthodox-Protestant female initiative initiated a petition against an abolitionist subject, antislavery, which gathered only 56 signatures.¹³³ And even at the height of the antislavery activism in the Netherlands in 1855, a petition initiated by women only had 750 signatures.¹³⁴ But this was about 30 years before the petition initiated by the Women's Union, and according to Janse, there were not enough women, socialists and radicals to influence Dutch politics fundamentally before 1870. Thus in that sense, the Women's Union's first years of existence were in a politically advantageous period.¹³⁵ The Women's Union achieved this by

¹³⁰ Beelaerts van Blokland-Kneppelhout and van Hogendorp, *Gedenkboek*, 38.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ Janse, "What Value Should We Attach to All These Petitions?," 522-523.

¹³⁴ Maartje Janse, "Holland as a little England? British anti-slavery missionaries and continental abolitionist movements in the mid nineteenth century," *Past and Present*, no. 229 (November 2015): 147, <https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtv037>.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 154.

promoting their petition in their magazine, the *Orgaan*, expanding their message via the periodical press, and by organising gatherings, distributing flyers, and having personal conversations.¹³⁶

Petitioning also happened in collaboration with all the three organisations active in the movement against the regulation of prostitution. The Midnight Mission, the DAP and the Women's Union planned to organise a meeting in November 1902 where they called out to other associations to come together. The goal of the meeting was to support the petition that the Midnight Mission, the DAP and the Women's Union initiated. This petition stated the following two things: "Het Strafwetboek in dien geest te wijzigen, dat het houden van huizen van ontucht, in welken vorm ook, worde strafbaar gesteld; Voort te gaan met het vernietigen van gemeentelijke verordeningen op de prostitutie betrekking hebbende, bij welke de inschrijving en het geregeld geneeskundig onderzoek van vrouwen is voorgeschreven."¹³⁷ The requirement to abolish brothels, as the first requirement of the petition entails, is a law requirement of both the DAP and the Women's Union. But the second requirement seems to be clearly influenced by the Women's Union. This can be seen from their point of view as addressed by widow Engelberts who spoke on behalf of the Women's Union during *The National Congress against Prostitution* in 1889, where it is seen as derogatory for women and girls to be at risk of being randomly medically checked.¹³⁸ More on the effect of the petition will be expounded in paragraph 4.2.

Thus it appears that the Women's Union was quite involved in petitioning for the movement against the regulation of prostitution. At least three petitions initiated by them show how they were very involved in political actions. The petitions got many signatures, but the actual influence on the political situation did not live up to that. However, the last petition had an effect, which will be further explained in paragraph 4.2.

4.1.2 Gaining publicity

Before being able to influence public opinion, the DAP and the Women's Union needed to gain publicity for their organisations. To be successful in reaching their goal of abolishing the regulation of prostitution they needed to have as many people behind their movement as possible. There are different ways in which the DAP and the Women's Union tried to gain members and sympathizers. These will be expounded in this subparagraph.

¹³⁶ Beelaerts van Blokland-Kneppelhout and van Hogendorp, *Gedenkboek*, 39.

¹³⁷ Correspondence from Hovy, W., A. G. Verster, L. Heldring, J. Müller, P. J. Barnouw, E. H. Hartsalt-Zeehandelaar, and J. G. Schölvink et al. to the boards of several associations, October 1902, Box 9, Archief Nationaal Comité van Instellingen voor Zedelijke Volksgezondheid, Nationaal comité tot bestrijding van den handel in vrouwen en kinderen (1900-1948) (vanaf 1948 nationaal comité van instellingen voor zedelijke volksgezondheid), Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

¹³⁸ *Handelingen van het Nationaal Congres tegen de Prostitutie*, 155-156.

On April 30th 1889, the DAP organised a national congress against prostitution in Amsterdam, in collaboration with the Women's Union. The inducement for organising this event was the establishment of the first confessional coalition government in the Netherlands in 1888. A confessional government entails that the ruling political parties are parties that are based on religious beliefs. With this religious coalition in power, Pierson saw an opportunity to abolish the regulation of prostitution. For it was based on Christian principles.¹³⁹ Another political reason for organising the congress was to align all Dutch municipalities with abolishing their regulations against prostitution. The DAP thought that the fact that not all municipalities had aligned with their beliefs was a consequence of ignorance by everyone unfamiliar with the battle that the DAP was fighting.¹⁴⁰ The DAP stated this is following: "Want dat onze beginselen in Nederland nog zoo weinig veld gewonnen hebben, is minder een gevolg van den tegenstand, dan wel van de onverschilligheid, die wij ontmoet hebben. En onbekendheid met onze beginselen is oorzaak van die onverschilligheid."¹⁴¹ By organising a congress, they spread out their goals to people whom they could not reach by only their monthly magazine and their brochures.¹⁴² The main argument central to the congress was the following: "De eischen der zedelijkheid zijn dezelfde voor den man als voor de vrouw."¹⁴³ This argument is clearly influenced by one of the main principles of the Women's Union about the double standard between men and women in the regulation of prostitution, as explained in paragraph 3.2.¹⁴⁴ An argument that was also brought up at the congress in the speech of widow Engelberts.¹⁴⁵ Favouring men in the criminal justice system would exacerbate the evil of prostitution. Thus, regulating prostitution would worsen the position of women. By law, women are allowed to work as sex workers, which equals them being deprived of their honour.¹⁴⁶ Thus the Women's Union clearly left their mark on the congress. Furthermore, the DAP also admits that the whole regulation of prostitution had previously not been attacked that thoroughly until women mingled in the discussion. Since women stood up and said that they no longer wanted these regulations, the regulations would almost inevitably had to be abolished, according to the DAP.¹⁴⁷ Thus, the DAP gave the Women's Union credits for their work and the significance of their existence.

¹³⁹ Koenders, *Bestrijding van zedeloosheid in Nederland*, 75.

¹⁴⁰ *Handelingen van het Nationaal Congres tegen de Prostitutie*, 1.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 1-2.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁴⁴ Beelaerts van Blokland-Kneppelhout and van Hogendorp, *Gedenkboek*, 21.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 155-156.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 155.

¹⁴⁷ *Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de prostitutie, Het Maandblad June 1 1889*, 42.

Another success of the movement against the regulation of prostitution is that the movement eventually got the medicals behind them. During the time that the movement against the regulation of prostitution occurred, the medical debate shifted from being pro-regulation, to starting to question the use of the regulation.¹⁴⁸ This started with a member of the Board of the Utrecht department of the DAP, Doctor Guillaume Jacques Daniel Mounier, who was also a mathematician. He proved that the chance of becoming infected by a venereal disease was bigger in cities with state regulated prostitution.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, in 1889, Professor Jan Leonard Chanfleury van IJsselstein, who was the junior medic in Rotterdam who conducted the inspections on venereal diseases, published a brochure. The brochure had a big impact on Dutch society concerning prostitution. He argued that based on his research, medical monitoring of sex workers was not a guarantee for combating venereal diseases.¹⁵⁰ According to him, banning brothels would be the best way to stop the source of venereal diseases. He stated: “men ga verder en verbiede ten strengste het houden van publieke huizen van ontucht en elke publieke prostitutie. Dat is de zekerste weg om die bronnen van infectie te doen verwijnen.”¹⁵¹ These arguments were a blessing for the people behind the movement against the regulation of prostitution. They were strengthened in their movement in a more scientific way. Consequently, it meant that the DAP and the Women’s Union could gain more sympathizers for their movement.¹⁵²

Thanks to this success, the DAP expanded its goals in 1898. The regulation of prostitution had not been abandoned in every municipality by that time, but the municipalities that still regulated prostitution were becoming a minority, according to the DAP.¹⁵³ The DAP also claimed that they transformed public opinion: “De publieke opinie is om, en het verdwijnen van de reglementeering is een kwestie van tijd.”¹⁵⁴

Thus, the DAP and the Women’s Union were getting successful at influencing public opinion and getting more municipalities to abolish their regulations. They did so by organising a

¹⁴⁸ De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 56; Bossenbroek and Kompagnie, *De verdwenen bordelen*, 9.

¹⁴⁹ Sijmons, “Prostitutie in Nederland in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw,” 82; Klerck-van Hogendorp, *Mevrouw Josephine Butler*, 1-2; Bossenbroek and Kompagnie, *Het mysterie van de verdwenen bordelen*, 9, 52, 56; Mounier, “De Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de prostitutie.”

¹⁵⁰ Jan Leonard Chanfleury van IJsselstein, *Het toezicht op de prostitutie uit een hygiënisch oogpunt beschouwd* (Amsterdam: van Rossen, 1889), 341, <https://www.ntvg.nl/system/files/publications/1889103360001a.pdf>; De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 57-58.

¹⁵¹ Chanfleury van IJsselstein, *Het toezicht op de prostitutie uit een hygiënisch oogpunt beschouwd*, 341.

¹⁵² Chanfleury van IJsselstein, *Het toezicht op de prostitutie uit een hygiënisch oogpunt beschouwd*, 341; De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 57-58.

¹⁵³ H. Pierson and O. Q. van Swinderen, *Uitmoodiging tot bijwoning eener Samenkomst te Utrecht in het Gebouw van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, Dinsdag 1 November 1898, ten twaalf ure, zoo noodig gevolgd door een avondvergadering*, [1898?], 1-2, Box 9, Archief Nationaal Comité van Instellingen voor Zedelijke Volksgezondheid, Nationaal comité tot bestrijding van den handel in vrouwen en kinderen (1900-1948) (vanaf 1948 nationaal comité van instellingen voor zedelijke volksgezondheid), Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

congress, where the Women's Union clearly showed their significance, and they increasingly got a medical movement behind them, thanks to a member of the DAP.

4.2 The 1911 Bill on Morality

The final mark of the era of the movement against the regulation of prostitution was the implementation of the long-awaited Bill on Morality. This Bill marks the most important milestone for the movement against the regulation of prostitution because it shows how the movement eventually got what they campaigned for: a Bill got implemented that abolished brothels as well as the trafficking in women.

On March 16th in 1911, the National Bill on Morality was implemented in the Netherlands. Article 250bis stated the following: “Hij die van het opzettelijk teweegbrengen of bevorderen van ontucht door anderen met derden een beroep of eene gewoonte maakt, wordt gestraft met gevangenisstraf van ten hoogste drie maanden of geldboete van ten hoogste driehonderd gulden.”¹⁵⁵ The law entailed that brothels and female trafficking were no longer allowed in the Netherlands, and thus punishable. The Bill on Morality marked a tipping point in the movement against the regulation of prostitution. The main goal that the movement was trying to accomplish in all their years of existence was accomplished. Their calls had been heard and their work had paid off.¹⁵⁶ In the researches by Koenders and de Vries, the influence of the DAP and the Women's Union in connection to the implementation of the Bill on Morality has not gotten the attention it deserves. This paragraph will focus on how the DAP and the Women's Union had a big impact on the enactment of this Bill.

In the first place, one of the main goals of the DAP was to abolish brothels. This goal was named in the report of a meeting held in 1901. They argued that brothels are to blame for sustaining the traffic of women. The department of the DAP that was settled in Leiden, submitted a proposal for the city council of Leiden in 1901, to abolish brothels and the regulation of prostitution. But after comprehensive debates, the proposal eventually got rejected by the city council. The same happened in Dordrecht, where there was also no change in the law concerning the abolishment of brothels.¹⁵⁷ This did not discourage the DAP from reaching its goal. They were still determined to propose the government to abolish brothels as well as to abolish the regulation of prostitution. This

¹⁵⁵ Bossenbroek and Kompagnie, “De stille trom der vrouwenzusters,” 23.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 23-25.

¹⁵⁷ Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de Prostitutie, *Verslag van de Algemeene Vergadering van de Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de Prostitutie, gehouden te Utrecht, 4 juni 1901*, [1901?], 3-4, Box 9, Archief Nationaal Comité van Instellingen voor Zedelijke Volksgezondheid, Nationaal comité tot bestrijding van den handel in vrouwen en kinderen (1900-1948) (vanaf 1948 nationaal comité van instellingen voor zedelijke volksgezondheid), Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

is clearly stated in the same report, where the DAP shared their concerns on the medical board still being too conservative: “Doch reden om den moed op te geven, bestaat er zeker ook te Leiden allerminst. Al blijkt de medische faculteit er op dit punt nog conservatief, op den duur zal zij zich op haar tegenwoordig standpunt niet kunnen handhaven.”¹⁵⁸ On a positive note, they state that the department of Zwolle was successful in changing the municipal law. Throughout the year 1900, the city council of Zwolle reached a consensus on abolishing the regulation of prostitution as well as consensus on abolishing brothels. It took the Zwolle department twenty years, wherein they submitted proposals, convinced other organisations to also submit petitions, and wherein they influenced public opinion.¹⁵⁹ As also stated in subparagraph 4.1.2, the DAP was determined to keep fighting for convincing all Dutch municipalities to abolish their regulation of prostitution,¹⁶⁰ and this could best be done via a national law.

However, the contribution to the establishment of this law by the Women’s Union is less clear. This is because the strategy of the women from the Women’s Union is not as directly aimed at influencing politics. The Women’s Union was, for example, good at building their movement. Not only did they manage to mobilise a constituency of women behind their movement, they also managed to mobilise women from all layers of society. In that way, their organisation established a bridge between the bourgeoisie and the ‘petty citizens’ concerning the prostitution issue. This also appears from the support they created for their petitions. As described in paragraph 4.2, the petition they initiated in 1885 got signed by over 15.000 people, and the one from 1889 by 38.000 people in all societal layers and geographical areas of Dutch society.¹⁶¹ Thus, the Women’s Union added depth and breadth to the battle against immorality.¹⁶²

Besides that, the DAP and the Women’s Union – and the Midnight Mission- collaborated in 1902 for the petition concerning an abolishment of brothels and medical checks on women, as explained in subparagraph 4.1.1. They argue that a national law is needed in order to take the power away from municipalities to regulate prostitution. It would then all be the same in the whole country.¹⁶³ Their argument is backed with the following statement: “Waarom nu dringen we met zooveel kracht op het afschaffen der reglementeering aan? Omdat we daarmee vooreerst verlost worden van een verkeerd beginsel, daar het niet geoorloofd, ja zelfs onmogelijk is, een of ander

¹⁵⁸ Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de Prostitutie, *Verslag*, 4, Archief Nationaal Comité van Instellingen voor Zedelijke Volksgezondheid.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

¹⁶⁰ *Handelingen van het Nationaal Congres tegen de Prostitutie*, 1.

¹⁶¹ Beelaerts van Blokland-Kneppelhout and van Hogendorp, *Gedenkboek*, 37-38.

¹⁶² Bossenbroek and Kompagnie, “De stille trom der vrouwenzusters,” 24, 29-34.

¹⁶³ De Nederlandse Vereeniging tegen de Prostitutie, de Vrouwenbond tot Verhooging van het Zedelijk Bewustzijn, and de Middernachtzendingvereeniging, *Waarom een Rijkswet in zake het verbod van bordeelen* (Arnhem: Het Comité tot regeling der beweging tot verkrijging van een Rijkswet tegen openlijke huizen van ontucht, 1902), 1-7.

kwaad te bestrijden door er mee te onderhandelen. Kwaad is kwaad, en goed is goed. De overheid gaat in geen enkel opzicht, met welk kwaad ook, een contract aan.”¹⁶⁴ A clear statement that came with the petition, where all three organisations showed that with collaboration they got the farthest. This is shown by the fact that the government started negotiating on a serious note in 1904. Unfortunately, thanks to delays as a consequence of the fast changing of cabinets, the Bill did not get implemented until the year 1911.¹⁶⁵

The Bill on Morality was what the movement against the regulation of prostitution campaigned for. The law entailed that brothels and female trafficking were no longer allowed in the Netherlands. The DAP was successful in changing some municipal laws to abolish their prostitution regulation, but they still were determined to change a national law. The Women’s Union initiated petitions and gained a lot of members, adding more depth and breadth to the movement. But their most successful attempt at fighting the State regulation of prostitution was when they collaborated on a petition in 1902, where they asked for the national abolishment of brothels and female trafficking. The demands on this petition formed the base for the implementation of the eventual Bill on Morality in 1911.

¹⁶⁴ De Nederlandse Vereeniging tegen de Prostitutie, de Vrouwenbond tot Verhooging van het Zedelijk Bewustzijn, and de Middernachtzendingvereeniging, *Waarom een Rijkswet in zake het verbod van bordeelen*, 7.

¹⁶⁵ De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 260.

5. Conclusion and discussion

In the next paragraph, the following research question will be answered: ‘How does a comparison between the DAP and the Women’s Union help in understanding their influence on the political situation in the Netherlands around the end of the nineteenth century?’ This question will be answered using three subquestions, with the first one being: ‘How and why were the DAP and the Women’s Union established and what influenced this?’ The second subquestion is: ‘What are the similarities and differences in the approaches of the DAP and the Women’s Union?’ And the third subquestion is: ‘Were the DAP and the Women’s Union successful in reaching their goals?’

After answering the research question through the subquestions, the further meaning of the thesis and the ideas for further research will be explained in the discussion.

5.1 Conclusion

In the first place, the purpose of this thesis is to add to the debate on the political influence of the movement against the regulation of prostitution in the Netherlands, that the Women’s Union did have a significant political impact, just like the DAP. This conclusion could be made by comparing the DAP and the Women’s Union, to find out what their political impact was. Furthermore, I used a comparison to show how effective their approaches were in influencing the State regulation of prostitution. By making use of a comparison, the significance of the existence of each organisation could be shown. And although being different, the similarities that came out using the comparative research, show that in some aspects the organisations were not as different as is often thought. This gives meaning to the debate on a broader scale because it explains how organisations with a political character have particular approaches in being successful in changing State politics.

To understand what influenced the idea to fight the regulation of prostitution, it is important to understand the history of the legislation in the Netherlands. Starting with the beginning of the nineteenth century, when France ruled over the Netherlands. To protect the military from venereal diseases which were widely spread in Dutch society at the time, a law got implemented. The law entailed that women who were suspected of working in prostitution, could get taken from the streets at random to do a medical check for venereal diseases. Even though French rule eventually ended in the Netherlands, Dutch medics and hygienists remained influenced by French medicine. Moreover, prostitution was seen as a necessary evil at the time. The male sexual needs were seen as healthy, and if a few women sacrificed themselves for prostitution, the other women would be safe and the public order would be maintained.

However, at the end of the nineteenth century, an orthodox-Christian movement arose that was aimed at fighting the regulation of prostitution. This movement was influenced by the

orthodox-Christian movement called the Réveil. The Réveil movement emerged around the middle of the nineteenth century, and called upon Christians to be philanthropical and to help out people in need. This included fallen women, as sex workers were also called at the time. Heldring, a Christian pastor, was the first prominent figure that made a connection between saving fallen women, and the regulation of prostitution. He stated that regulating prostitution tolerated prostitution and thus enabled it to exist. Consequently, his arguments opened up the debate of seeing prostitution as a form of slavery.

It was not until the preacher Pierson and the aristocratic widow Klerck-van Hogendorp became influenced by the ideas of the British abolitionist Butler, that the abolitionist ideas of Heldring were translated into a movement. Butler was a feminist who spoke at congresses of the IAF, a federation aimed at fighting the regulation of prostitution. Butler made both Pierson and Klerck-van Hogendorp realise that helping out fallen women was not enough. The regulations on prostitution had to be abolished. There had to be a movement against the regulation of prostitution in the Netherlands too.

Consequently, Pierson established the DAP in 1879, as the first organisation aimed at fighting the regulation of prostitution. The other organisation that joined the movement against the regulation of prostitution was the Women's Union, established in 1884, by Klerck-van Hogendorp. The Women's Union was established because Klerck-van Hogendorp realised that women had to be part of the movement too, and to do so, they had to have their organisation. The Women's Union was also established because the women believed that there was no part for the necessary evil of prostitution in a Christian society.

However, despite the DAP and the Women's Union being two different organisations, they had quite some similarities. Their similarities were already visible in the way they were established. For instance, the DAP and the Women's Union were both established by a Christian charismatic leader, Pierson and Klerck-van Hogendorp. Both leaders were influenced by Butler, and both leaders started by publishing a brochure. Then there are similarities in the organisations themselves. The first one is the fact that they were both based on orthodox-Christian principles. And in the basis, they established their organisation based on the principle that Christians are supposed to show Christian compassion and help others, such as fallen women. Besides that, both organisations used similar approaches to achieve their joint goal, for example by publishing propaganda and a monthly magazine wherein they could state their political principles. These similar ways of operating also show how organisations at their time operated in general, to be successful at reaching their goals.

However, comparative research between the two organisations also shows why there were two different organisations at the core of the movement against the regulation of prostitution.

Deriving from their differences, it is visible that the biggest gap between the organisations lies in the fact that they both consisted of members and sympathizers of another gender. The DAP consisted of men and the Women's Union of women, which influenced the way they operated. An example is that it coloured their use of language towards their members. Another example is that the DAP was accused of not being as female-friendly, making it harder to join the organisation as a woman. At the same time, this makes the Women's Union relevant to exist, to represent the women who were part of the movement against the regulation of prostitution. Besides their gender differences, there were also differences between the DAP and the Women's Union regarding their religiosity. The DAP considered themselves religiously neutral, while the Women's Union acted based on an orthodox-Christian principle.

Furthermore, the comparison between the DAP and the Women's Union can help to explain their influence on Dutch public opinion. A way of doing so was via petitioning, a political tool that the Women's Union used multiple times, sometimes in collaboration with the DAP. This contradicts that the Women's Union was often seen as unpolitical, or that they were mostly seen as philanthropically oriented. In reality, they were just as political as the DAP, who portrayed themselves as politically focused. Another approach that the organisations both used was to gain more publicity in order to have more power. They did so by collaboratively organising a congress. Another helpful aspect the movement gained, was to eventually have the medical movement behind them which increasingly changed the medical view on the regulation of prostitution in Dutch society.

Eventually, thanks to many years of work, the DAP and the Women's Union achieved what they plead for: the Dutch Bill on Morality got implemented in 1911. A law that included that keeping brothels had become punishable. Female trafficking had also become punishable. The enactment of the law was thanks to the DAP that did not give up on their political campaigning, and the Women's Union that was very successful at gaining members and getting a diversity of people behind their organisation. Thus, both the DAP as well as the Women's Union contributed in their way towards the implementation of the Bill.

All in all, the comparative research between the DAP and the Women's Union gives new insights into why and how both organisations contributed towards the implementation of the Bill on Morality.

5.2 Discussion

In short, a comparison between the organisations thus shows what their individual as well as their collaborative addition was in the prostitution debate around the end of the nineteenth century in the Netherlands. Even though the DAP considered themselves as religiously neutral, the Women's Union appeared to be more successful at gaining members. And both organisations were similar in the way they were established. These insights contribute to the debate by understanding how organisations around the end of the nineteenth century were successful in changing national law.

This shows how two different organisations both left a mark on a historical movement that eventually led to law changes. They each did so in their way, even though they had more similarities than initially thought.

However, I came across some limitations while writing this thesis. In the first place, I had to make choices regarding the topic and focus point of my thesis, which deprived me of focusing on certain other aspects. One example of an initial idea I had was the additional analysis of the societal view on the prostitution matter. How did citizens feel about this matter? How did public opinion discuss the prostitution matter? And how did the societal view on prostitution change during the nineteenth century based on the thoughts of ordinary people? However, this was difficult to act out. In order to add this level of analysis, it would have been necessary to analyse primary sources that include the opinion of Dutch society. This could have been done based on sources such as interviews, surveys, diaries or texts by ordinary people from Dutch society, but these sources were simply not available. However, it is still an interesting idea for further research on how society discussed the prostitution matter.

Another interesting aspect that could deserve more attention is to focus on the medical debate. This is therefore a very interesting idea for further research as well. The hygienists from the medical movement claimed that prostitution was a necessary evil, while medics such as Chanfleury van IJsselstein¹⁶⁶ saw sexual acts outside of marriage as something that had to be avoided. This debate went on until the moment that Doctor Mounier proved that State-regulated prostitution did not decrease the chance of becoming infected by venereal diseases.¹⁶⁷ Consequently, the liberal doctors lost the debate. I mentioned this debate briefly in paragraph 2.1 and subparagraph 4.1.2, but it could deserve more attention. The debate is relevant because it could have had a significant influence on the passing of the 1911 Bill on Morality. Besides that, in many of the secondary sources I consulted, I came across this medical debate. However, in those researches, the debate was not

¹⁶⁶ Chanfleury van IJsselstein, *Het toezicht op de prostitutie uit een hygiënisch oogpunt beschouwd*, 341; De Vries, *Vrijheid voor vrouwen*, 57-58.

¹⁶⁷ Sijmons, "Prostitutie in Nederland in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw," 82; Klerck-van Hogendorp, *Mevrouw Josephine Butler*, 1-2; Bossenbroek and Kompagnie, *Het mysterie van de verdwenen bordelen*, 9, 52, 56; Mounier, "De Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de prostitutie."

discussed in a lot of detail. This makes the medical debate an interesting topic for further, more detailed research.

Another example for further research is to find out more about the pattern of Dutch aristocratic women being inspired by the Réveil principles to start an abolitionist organisation. Where Klerck-van Hogendorp was inspired to establish the Women's Union, Anna Amalia Bergendahl was inspired to start an anti-slavery organisation in 1855, called the *Dames-Comité ter bevordering van de Evangelie-verkondiging en de Afschaffing der Slavernij in Suriname*. Several interesting subjects can be examined in line with this. Why was it women who started such movements in the Netherlands? And why was it particularly aristocratic women? And what is the connection between the abolitionist movements and religion? Because the Women's Union and the above-mentioned Dames-Comité were both religiously oriented.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ Van Drenth and de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power*, 142-150; Janse, *De afschaffers*, 103-114.

6. Abbreviations

DAP	Nederlandse Vereniging tegen de Prostitutie
Women's Union	Nederlandschen Vrouwenbond tot Verhooging van het Zedelijk Bewustzijn
IAF	International Abolitionist Federation
IISG	International Institute of Social History

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