Configuring the field of philanthropy in the age of social-mission platforms: A story of fragmented structuration and divergent boundary work

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Submitted by
Elodie Dessy

Jury
Virginie XHAUFLAIR (Supervisor), HEC Liège, University of Liège
Benjamin HUYBRECHTS, IESEG School of Management, Lille
Frédéric DUFAYS, HEC Liège, University of Liège
Johanna MAIR, Hertie School of Governance and Stanford University
Danielle LOGUE, University of Technology Sydney

ABSTRACT

At the junction of private and public spheres, philanthropy is a social phenomenon open to controversies. That which constitutes private resources for public purposes evolves alongside societal, political, economic, and technological developments. Thus, philanthropy attracts various societal actors holding their own interpretation of what giving means and how to give. In this sense, philanthropy can be regarded as an issue field – that is, a field forming around a contested issue, rather than market or industry exchanges, and gathering a heterogeneous set of actors. Following recent digital evolutions, technology-enabled intermediaries have emerged at the fringes of philanthropy. These newcomers aim to harness the power of new technologies to serve the general interest. Among these newcomers are social-mission platforms – such as crowdfunding, -timing, and -sourcing platforms – which foster multi-stakeholder interactions around societal issues.

In addition, philanthropy observers argue that European philanthropy has tended toward structuration following the growth of the neoliberal trend. Various European countries modified and refined their legal framework to incite the development of philanthropy. At the same time, incumbent philanthropic organizations (such as philanthropic foundations) gathered to create collective interest organizations to play a role in the field-structuring process. However, while Belgian philanthropy displays the formal elements of structuration – a modified legal framework and a collectively created field-structuring actor – the field remains fragmented. Flexibility of the legal framework and limitations of the field-structuring actor impede field members' action and interaction. As a result, when facing platform-based newcomers, incumbent philanthropic organizations did not offer a united front.

This dissertation examines the configuration of the fragmented issue field of philanthropy in the age of social-mission platforms. To do so, it adopts an institutional theory perspective and a qualitative abductive methodological approach. The topic is explored through three papers, each shedding a particular light on the empirical phenomena of organizational philanthropy and social-mission platforms. The first paper considers the field's institutional infrastructure and documents how certain incumbent field members compensated for the shortcomings of formal infrastructural elements. The findings highlight the

strategies of two actors taking a field-structuring position and building the meaning, operational and relational systems structuring their field. The paper contributes to the emerging literature on institutional infrastructure and enriches the understanding of the unique role of "field-structuring actor".

The second paper focuses on social-mission platforms and their heterogeneity. Due to the newness of the phenomenon, no taken-for-granted template for a platform's organizational configuration exists as of yet. Therefore, this paper intends to sort out the diversity of social-mission platforms and to better understand how they build and manage their network of stakeholders in order to address societal issues. A literature review of platform research highlights five organizing elements significant in a platform's organizing process: orientation, technological reliance, access, stakeholders' management and interactions. These elements are used as anchors to capture social-mission diversity. Building on these five elements and ten cases of social-mission platforms, a typology is developed and outlines three archetypal organizational configurations: the ecosystem-building platform, the meeting-space platform, and the community-designing platform. The findings further ground organizing elements in a social mission setting and, consistent with a configurational approach, emphasize the importance of configurations' internal and external consistency. In this regard, the paper plays a particular role in a programmatic research effort on and around social-mission platforms.

The third paper explores the relationship between incumbent philanthropic organizations and platform-based newcomers. Given the fragmented infrastructure of Belgian philanthropy and the subsequent heterogeneity of incumbent field members, philanthropic organizations developed different strategies regarding their interaction with social-mission platforms. While some incumbents pursued an affiliating strategy and included newcomers into the field, others reacted by pursuing a discriminating strategy and by excluding newcomers from philanthropy. While both strategies first coexisted, the affiliating strategy eventually prevailed over the discriminating strategy. Discriminators softened their reinforcement of the fields' symbolic boundary and partially extended the field's social boundary. The paper contributes to the literature on field configurations and boundary work by showing how given fields yield in-population heterogeneity in boundary work strategies as well as how boundary work strategies interact to shape field boundaries.

Overall, the integrated findings of the three papers bring to light heterogeneity among both incumbents and newcomers. Four groups of actors are distributed along two strategies to configure philanthropy: (1) incumbents and (2) newcomers pursuing an integration strategic pattern; and (3) incumbents and (4) newcomers pursuing a differentiation strategic pattern. The coexistence of these four groups and two strategies has given rise to a pattern of crossed collaboration and opposition. On a theoretical level, the dissertation contributes to institutional theory, and more specifically fields theory, by explaining how divergent boundary work can lead to a process of persistent, purposeful, and productive fragmented structuration. On one hand, this extends the understanding of how fragmented issue fields evolve, highlighting a third path between their disappearance and their conversion into exchange fields. On the other hand, this illustrates the conditions in which divergent types of boundary work interplay and affect different boundaries at the organizational and field levels. In addition, the dissertation contributes to philanthropy studies and social-mission platform research by documenting the heterogeneity of philanthropic organizations, by providing a fine-grained understanding of social-mission platforms, and by further describing philanthropy's cumulative layers of innovations. Finally, the dissertation offers managerial implications and recommendations for philanthropic organizations, social-mission platforms and policy-makers.

RÉSUMÉ

Aux frontières des sphères privée et publique, la philanthropie est un phénomène social controversé. En effet, les évolutions sociétales, politiques, économiques et technologiques donnent une signification particulière au don de ressources privées au service de l'intérêt général. Autour du concept de philanthropie gravitent dès lors de multiples acteurs sociaux, chacun souscrivant à sa propre interprétation de ce que signifie « donner » et de comment pratiquer ce don. En ce sens, la philanthropie peut être considérée comme un *issue field*, c'est-à-dire un champ se formant autour d'un enjeu rassemblant des acteurs hétérogènes plutôt qu'autour d'échanges de marché.

Les récentes évolutions digitales ont encore diversifié les acteurs de la philanthropie. Différents intermédiaires technologiques ont émergé afin de mettre le pouvoir des nouvelles technologies au service de l'intérêt général. Parmi ces nouveaux entrants dans le champ se trouvent les plateformes à mission sociale, telles que les plateformes de *crowdfunding, crowdtiming* et *crowdsourcing*. L'objectif de ces plateformes est de créer des collaborations entre différentes parties prenantes autour d'enjeux sociétaux.

Par ailleurs, nombreux observateurs constatent une tendance à la structuration de la philanthropie européenne. Plusieurs pays européens ont revu et modifié leur cadre légal afin de favoriser le développement des acteurs et pratiques philanthropiques. Suite à ces modifications légales, les principales organisations philanthropiques (telles que les fondations) se sont rassemblées pour créer des organisations d'intérêt collectif (telle qu'une association professionnelle) et contribuer activement à la structuration de leur champ. Dans ce contexte, la Belgique constitue un cas particulier. Alors que la philanthropie belge dispose des éléments formels favorisant sa structuration (un cadre légal récemment modifié et une organisation d'intérêt collectif), elle reste assez fragmentée. Son cadre légal est flexible et son association professionnelle limitée dans sa capacité d'agir. Ces conditions contraignent l'action et l'interaction des organisations philanthropiques belges.

Par conséquent, confrontées à l'arrivée des plateformes à mission sociale, les fondations belges n'ont pas présenté un front uni. Cette thèse de doctorat vise à observer la configuration du champ philanthropique dans ce contexte particulier, et

ce au travers du prisme de la théorie institutionnelle et d'une approche méthodologique qualitative et abductive. La thèse se compose de trois chapitres, chacun apportant un éclairage spécifique sur les phénomènes empiriques de la philanthropie organisationnelle et des plateformes à mission sociale. Le premier chapitre examine l'infrastructure institutionnelle du champ. Pour compenser les limites des éléments formels d'infrastructure, deux acteurs centraux mènent deux stratégies différentes. Créant des mécanismes définitionnels, opérationnels et relationnels, ces acteurs prennent chacun une position structurante dans le champ. Ce chapitre contribue à la littérature émergente sur l'infrastructure institutionnelle et offre une meilleure compréhension du rôle unique joué par les acteurs occupant une position structurante.

Le second chapitre met en avant l'hétérogénéité des plateformes à mission sociale. Compte tenu du caractère nouveau du phénomène, les créateurs de ces plateformes ne disposent à ce jour d'aucun modèle standard sur lequel prendre exemple pour configurer l'organisation de leur plateforme. Ce chapitre a donc pour objectif de mettre de l'ordre dans la diversité des plateformes à mission sociale et de mieux comprendre comment celles-ci construisent et gèrent leur réseau de parties prenantes pour répondre aux enjeux sociétaux.

Faisant l'état des lieux de la recherche sur les plateformes digitales, ce chapitre identifie dans un premier temps cinq éléments dont la configuration joue un rôle clé dans le processus organisationnel d'une plateforme. Ces éléments sont les suivants : orientation de marché ou de mission, degré de dépendance technologique, type d'accès à la plateforme, gestion des parties prenantes et type d'interaction créée entre ces dernières. Dans un second temps, ce chapitre se base sur ces cinq éléments et sur dix cas empiriques de plateformes à mission sociale pour construire une typologie. De cette typologie émergent trois archétypes de configurations organisationnelles : la plateforme créatrice d'écosystème, la plateforme comme espace de rencontre et la plateforme développeuse de communautés. En adéquation avec une approche configurationnelle, ce chapitre souligne d'une part l'importance de la cohérence interne et externe de chaque configuration, et d'autre part ancre les éléments organisationnels dans un contexte de mission sociale. En ce sens, ce chapitre encourage la construction d'un programme de recherche sur et autour des plateformes à mission sociale.

Finalement, le troisième chapitre étudie la relation entre les acteurs centraux de la philanthropie et les nouveaux entrants que sont les plateformes à mission sociale.

Compte tenu du caractère fragmenté et hétérogène de la philanthropie belge, ses acteurs développent des stratégies différentes dans leurs interactions avec les plateformes. Alors que certains optent pour une stratégie d'affiliation et incluent les plateformes au champ de la philanthropie, d'autres préfèrent une stratégie plus discriminante et excluent les plateformes de la philanthropie. Les deux stratégies coexistent au départ, mais la stratégie d'affiliation finira par prendre le pas sur la stratégie plus discriminante. Les partisans de cette dernière modèrent leur renforcement de la frontière symbolique du champ et étendent partiellement la frontière sociale. Ce chapitre contribue à la littérature sur les configurations de champ et sur le travail à la frontière en expliquant comment certains champs favorisent une hétérogénéité de stratégies à l'intérieur d'une même population et comment ces différentes stratégies de travail à la frontière interagissent et façonnent les frontières du champ.

L'intégration des trois chapitres met en lumière l'hétérogénéité à la fois des acteurs centraux et des nouveaux entrants. Quatre groupes d'acteurs sont identifiés et adoptent deux stratégies pour configurer la philanthropie : (1) des acteurs centraux et (2) des nouveaux entrants adoptant une stratégie d'intégration ; et (3) des acteurs centraux et (4) des nouveaux entrants adoptant une stratégie de différenciation. La coexistence de ces quatre groupes et deux stratégies donne lieu à un schéma de collaboration et d'opposition croisées.

En conclusion, cette thèse contribue à la théorie institutionnelle, et plus précisément à la théorie des champs. D'une part, elle explique comment un travail divergent à la frontière du champ peut mener à un processus de structuration fragmenté persistant, intentionnel et productif. D'autre part, elle illustre les conditions dans lesquelles des types divergents de travail à la frontière interagissent et influencent les frontières à plusieurs niveaux, à la fois de l'organisation et du champ. Ainsi, elle offre une nouvelle compréhension de l'évolution des champs fragmentés et formés autour d'enjeux, différente de leur simple disparition ou transformation en champs formés autour d'échanges. Par ailleurs, cette thèse enrichit la recherche sur la philanthropie et les plateformes à mission sociale. Elle documente l'hétérogénéité des organisations philanthropiques, détaille les configurations organisationnelles des plateformes à mission sociale et participe à la caractérisation des différentes couches d'innovation philanthropique. Enfin, cette thèse formule des recommandations managériales à destination des organisations philanthropiques, des plateformes à mission sociale et des pouvoirs publiques.

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INTRODUCTION

"Ten years ago, the word "philanthropy" was outdated. Now, it has become more in fashion. A wave of many elements is pushing the phenomenon in the foreground. All the banks have started to spread and market the word, universities conduct research on the subject, foundations but also law and tax experts organize events on and around philanthropy. The word is out there, and this has prompted a cultural awakening."

(Philanthropy observer, Interview 3, March 2017)

The present dissertation questions this so-called "cultural awakening", as it aims to shed light on a particular episode of Belgian philanthropy. For the last few years, the field has simultaneously experienced a need for structuration and faced the arrival of technology-enabled actors and practices in the form of social-mission platforms. Composed of three main parts, this introduction sets the scene in which this particular episode occurs. A first part describes the empirical context of global philanthropy and Belgian philanthropy. Then, a second part outlines the theoretical lenses adopted to observe Belgian philanthropy – that is, fields theory with a focus on field structuration dynamics, boundaries, and institutional infrastructure. Building on these first two parts, I[1] formulate three research questions:

- *How do organizations make strategic use of an issue field's fragmented infrastructure to take a field-structuring position?* (Chapter I)

- *What different types of social-mission platforms exist, and how does each type build and manage their network of stakeholders in order to address societal issues?* (Chapter II)

- *How do incumbent organizations within a given population diverge in the ways in which they define symbolic and social boundaries of an issue field, and how these definition strategies interact to shape these boundaries?* (Chapter III)

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[1] This introduction and the transversal discussion of the dissertation are written in the first person singular "I", denoting my direct and active involvement in the many choices made during the research process. The three chapters following the introduction are, on the contrary, written in the first person plural "we", as their design was the subject of a collective reflection with co-authors.

A third part finally clarifies my interpretivist epistemological stance and the qualitative and abductive methodological approach adopted to address the three research questions. Each of the three chapters following this introduction addresses one of the three research questions and, in this regard, focuses more specifically on particular points of the empirical and theoretical contexts.

1 Empirical context: A philanthropic context between continuity and change

Age-old social phenomenon, philanthropy has undergone multifaceted evolutions at the crossroad of private and public actions. This section intends to review philanthropy studies in order to provide an overview of the empirical context in which the three core chapters forming this dissertation take place. I start by questioning the fundamental features of philanthropy – private resources and public purposes. I then move on to describe the latest entrepreneurial and digital evolutions of philanthropy as well as their direct link to specific developments in the broader societal environment. I finally zoom in on European and Belgian philanthropy and highlight how the latter simultaneously reflects the tendencies of global and European contemporary philanthropy while displaying its own specificities. Building on these specificities, I ask three questions which empirically motivates this dissertation.

1.1 Philanthropy as the use of private resources for public purposes

Etymologically understood as "the love of mankind", philanthropy is defined in different ways by practitioners and by scholars from varied backgrounds (economics, sociology, anthropology, history…) (Sulek, 2010b, 2010a). Several commonly accepted and long-standing definitions coexist, written by early scholars of philanthropy. For instance, Payton (1988, p. 7) describes philanthropy as "every voluntary action for the public good". Van Til (1990, p. 34) states that philanthropy is "the voluntary giving and receiving of time and money aimed (however imperfectly) toward the needs of charity and the interest of all in a better quality of life". Salamon (1992, p. 10) characterizes philanthropy as "the private giving of time or valuables (money, security, property) for public purposes". And Schervish (1998, p. 600) interprets philanthropy as "a social relation governed by moral obligation that matches a supply of private resources to a demand of unfulfilled needs and desires that are communicated by entreaty".

At the core of these initial attempts to define philanthropy lie two intricate and fundamental debates: a "benevolent" debate and a "political" debate. The former relates to the "why" of philanthropy (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). Scholar discuss the motivation of philanthropic action – whether voluntary (as in Payton's definition) or obligatory (as in Schervish's definition) – and its intent – whether attainment of an aim (as in Van Til's definition) or simply an act of giving (as in Salamon's definition) (Daly, 2012; Sulek, 2010b). The latter relates to the "what", "who" and "how" of philanthropy – that is, the nature of the relationship between private resources and public purposes, especially in a democratic society. While both debates are worth having, scholars point out that the former has at times eclipsed the latter (Lambelet, 2014). Accordingly, contemporary scholars build on initial definitions and delineate philanthropy as basically "the use of private resources – treasure, time and talent – for public purposes" (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016b, p. 7) or as "private, mainly voluntary contributions to public causes" (von Schnurbein, Rey-Garcia, & Neumayr, 2021, p. 188). Doing so, these authors put a stronger emphasis on the political debate and on the two fundamental features of philanthropy: "private resources" and "public purposes". Within the present dissertation, I follow these authors' lead, as my goal is not to discuss the benevolent aspects of philanthropy but rather to understand its latest evolutions and their implications on philanthropy as a field of activity, on its actors and on their relationships.

Discussing the political dimension of philanthropy, scholars strive to distinguish philanthropy from, on one hand, the public sector and the market, and on the other hand, its related concept of charity, in order to assess philanthropy's public value (Barman, 2017; Lambelet, 2014). Philanthropy's fundamentals – "private resources" and "public purposes" – position the concept between governments' social policy – public resources for public purposes – and market exchanges – private resources for private purposes (Sulek, 2010b). In other words, philanthropic action is not coerced by elections or contracts, and is intended to be in the interest of collective entities, of a whole population or group. Whether philanthropy's purpose is referred to as public good, public interest or general interest, the idea is that the benefit of philanthropic action exceeds the sole donor or its immediate family and friends (Barman, 2017). This last element is relevant in differentiating philanthropy from charity. While charity involves giving to individuals in need, philanthropy is disconnected from this interpersonal dimension. Rather than alleviating symptoms, philanthropy aims to address root causes of social and

environmental problems and tends to be directed to organized and systemic solutions for social change (Lambelet, 2014; S. Phillips & Jung, 2016b).

The relationship between private resources and public purposes is embodied in the presence of a philanthropist, a donor, or a giver on one side, and on the other side, a recipient, or a beneficiary. Scholars distinguish between "individual philanthropy" and "institutional", "institutionalized", "structured", "organized", or "organizational philanthropy" (Mair & Hehenberger, 2014; von Schnurbein et al., 2021; Wiepking & Handy, 2015). Individual philanthropy refers to philanthropic actions by individuals either High Net Worth Individuals (Gordon, 2014) and elite (Ostrower, 1995) or ordinary citizens such as in what Zunz (2011) terms "mass philanthropy". On the contrary, organizational philanthropy channels philanthropic actions through an intermediary organizational conduit between donors and recipients. Building on Salamon & Anheier (1992), Wiepking and colleagues (2021, p. 26) define philanthropic organizations as "private (nongovernmental), self-governing organizations, which on a voluntary basis distribute goods and services to benefit a public purpose, without a primary goal of making profits for their owners".

The present dissertation focuses on "organizational philanthropy", as I choose to restrict my research interest to the discourses and actions of philanthropic organizations rather than individual philanthropists. By philanthropic organizations, I refer to organizations taking part in the philanthropic relationship – that is, organizations providing private resources for public purposes and organizations seeking resources to serve public purposes. Resource-seeking organizations commonly include social-purpose, nonprofit organizations or voluntary associations (Barman, 2017). Regarding resource-providing organizations, "the gold standard for institutional philanthropy" (von Schnurbein et al., 2021, p. 187) has always been the (grant-making) foundations (Lambelet, 2014). In this sense, when discussing philanthropic resources scholars have tended to focus more or less explicitly on monetary resources (Carnie, 2017).

Foundations – as the archetype of philanthropic resource-providers – display distinct organizational characteristics (Romero-Merino & Garcia-Rodriguez, 2016). Given the high heterogeneity of legal frameworks across countries, it is difficult to build on a legal perspective to give a precise definition of foundations. Each country has its own definition, fiscal and governance requirements (Jung, Harrow, & Leat, 2018). This is notably reflected by the difficulty of umbrella

associations (such as the European Foundation Center (2017)) to provide a clear definition as well as by the endless discussion around the creation of a European foundation statute (Carnie, 2017; Keidan, 2020). Still, a common denominator across countries is that the foundation is "one of the most unrestricted contemporary organizational forms" (Jung et al., 2018, p. 896).

The internal governance rules of foundations take their roots in the idea that resources accrued by philanthropists are their property – they are private resources (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016b). Therefore, foundations face few external pressures and enjoy important freedom to decide how to use their private resources for public purposes. On one hand, they are neither subject to election's votes (contrary to governments) nor to shareholders' scrutiny (contrary to for-profit businesses). On the other hand, they are not required to have a general assembly and have no members (contrary to nonprofit organizations), their only governance body is usually a board of administration (Reich, 2016). As a result, the spectrum of foundations is quite large as their modus operandi depends on founders' choices. Foundations range from grant-making foundations funding others to implement societal programs to operating foundations implementing their own programs; from endowed foundations to foundations seeking to raise funds; from perpetual foundations to limited-life foundations… (Anheier, 2001; Jung et al., 2018).

Foundations' distinct organizational characteristics and philanthropy's position at the boundaries of government and market action have constantly given rise to conflicting views on philanthropy's public value, on its role in a democratic society and on its legitimacy to serve public purposes (Lambelet, 2014; Reich, 2018; Reich, Cordelli, & Bernholz, 2016). Philanthropy is said to have both merits and failures balancing one another. The first philanthropic merit-failure tension is that of redistribution versus particularism (Salamon, 1987). On one hand, philanthropic organizations would have a redistributing role as they have the potential to supplement or substitute governmental action by providing public goods and services that are undersupplied or not supplied anymore (Mosley, 2020). By channeling resources to nonprofit organizations which lack these very resources, foundations can strengthen governments and their social policy (Schuyt, 2013).

On the other hand, foundations' governance questions electoral democracy. Governments – using public resources for public purposes – are elected. Through their votes, citizens take part in political life. Political outcomes – that is, the decisions regarding the public good – thus reflect the median voter (Gui, 1991).

Elected governments' decision-making process is supposed to rest upon direct information obtained on a democratic basis to determine what will serve best society at large. Decisions are thus expected to be universalist, fair and objective (Lambelet, 2014). Conversely, for-profit businesses – using private resources for private purposes – are not expected to rely on a democratic process to assess how to allocate their resources as they decide for themselves (Reich et al., 2016). Using private resources for public purposes, foundations are in capacity to define "what constitutes the 'good' for the 'public'" (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016b, p. 9). In this sense, they would be expected to rely on a democratic decision-making process.

Yet, decisions on what public purposes toward which direct private resources are usually taken by the sole philanthropists, depending on their desire to act and their own interpretation of societal needs. This refers to what Frumkin (2010) terms the "expressive dimension" of philanthropy. Foundations' stakeholders (including their direct recipients) are rarely represented in foundations' boards or governance practices and are thus rarely involved in their decision-making process (Weisblatt, 2017). Boards' composition is not subject to public recruitment campaigns and founders can appoint their friends and colleagues (Grant, 2016). This situation leads to a certain endogamy, with foundation's managers and staff lacking diversity and reflecting the economic, political, and intellectual elite already in power (Lambelet, 2014). This lack of representation and involvement of stakeholders leads to a lack of internal knowledge and expertise on the part of foundations which then decide on what societal needs to address and how. Consequently, philanthropy is accused of particularism as private resources may be allocated in greater proportions toward public purposes preferred by the wealthiest rather than toward what the underprivileged needs (Lechterman & Reich, 2020). This can be troubling knowing that many countries' regulations grant tax benefits to foundations (Reich, 2018; Wiepking et al., 2021).

The second philanthropic merit-failure tension is that of pluralism versus paternalism (Salamon, 1987). On one hand, foundations' freedom allows them to support a diversity of recipients and to step out of the traditional solution framework offered by governments to address social and environmental issues from multiple perspectives (Reich, 2016). In this line, Lambelet (2014, p. 16) explains that "doing philanthropy is first and foremost doing (public) policy differently" *(my translation)*. As such, foundations have the potential to stimulate a plurality of thoughts and actions, to diversify society's values and representations and make it more dynamic, open, and inclusive. In turn, pluralism strengthens civil society for

it to act as a true counterforce to governments and their possible drift toward authoritarianism (Lechterman & Reich, 2020).

On the other hand, foundations' non-democratic decision-making process creates – beyond a lack of internal knowledge – a "dangerous imbalance" (Grant, 2016, p. 412) in the power relationship that unites them to their recipients. Recipients in need of resources are in a situation of dependence vis-à-vis foundations. This dependency has recently been further worsen by the recent multiple crises and the subsequent neoliberal turn, which led to a scarcity of public and private resources (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004). Scarcer resources have created a competitive environment for nonprofit organizations seeking support, hampering them to collectively organize. In turn, this prevents organizations to raise a strong advocacy voice and act as a true democratic counterforce. Their ability to maintain a strong civil society, redress inequalities and promote long-term social change can be questioned, when one of their main concerns becomes to secure funding for their survival (Mosley, 2020).

Within this competitive environment, foundations tend to support organized, professional, service-oriented recipients, that share a scientific and technical vision of societal problems, and to overlook social movement and collective action that are deemed to be less organized and to make less good use of resources (Mosley, 2020; Wiepking & Handy, 2015). Doing so, they risk generating a monoculture of civil society organizations, rather than stimulate pluralism. In addition, given their financial influence, foundations are said to depoliticize their recipients, to direct them away from their radical activities and goals (Barman, 2017; Hwang & Powell, 2009). Foundations' influence might thus not only have consequences on individual organizations, but also on whole fields of activity (as described by DiMaggio (1991) in his study of US Art Museums and by Bartley (2007) in his study of foundations within the social movement of forest certification). Philanthropy has thus the capacity to minimize social change and to be a legitimizing and strengthening force of the existing social order. As such, philanthropy is regularly accused of paternalism and even plutocracy (Lambelet, 2014; Saunders-Hastings, 2018). In the end, philanthropic foundations owe their very existence to the unequal economic system which enables philanthropists to accrue their wealth in the first place. Through their philanthropic action, they would perpetuate this system (Barman, 2017).

This last point leads to the third philanthropic merit-failure tension which relates to innovation versus insufficiency (Salamon, 1987). On one hand, as foundations' room for maneuver is little constrained by governance requirements and is only restricted to their financial capacity, they would have a greater latitude and time-horizon to more efficiently spot, explore, test and diffuse new solutions for social and environmental issues (Carnie, 2017; Reich, 2016). They can be niche players and "learning laboratory" (Dees, 2008, p. 125), provide flexible support, develop thorough knowledge on specific subjects and precede public action. Philanthropy is said to have a role to innovate, experiment and take risks.

On the other hand, foundations' innovation potential might be limited by their very lack of governance requirements. First, due to their tendency to endogamy, foundations may lack internal expertise. Second, their imbalanced power relationship does not facilitate open dialogue. For fear of losing their support, recipients are not incited to report information on programs that are not as successful as expected. Eventually, by hiding their failures, nonprofit organizations prevent themselves and others from learning and making social change progress (Mosley, 2020). Third, while foundations evaluate the work of their recipients and can have a dominant influence on how they operate, the reverse is rarely true. Recipients are not incited to provide their funders with a reliable and objective feedback on their philanthropic actions (Grant, 2016).

Within philanthropy, accountability is rather upward than downward (von Schnurbein et al., 2021). Downward and external accountability of foundations has proven rather complicated to ensure. Depending on countries' legal framework, foundations are not always constrained to diffuse their information (Wiepking & Handy, 2015). Foundations' practices are black boxes. For the public (and for researchers (Mernier, 2017)), it is not easy to know about the origin of their endowments, their investment practices, the allocation of their funds (application and selection processes) and the achievement of their mission (reporting and performance measurement) (Lambelet, 2014). Therefore, it is complicated to determine whether the accumulation of their initial endowment or their investment practices (usually intended to maximize their pool of funds) do not lack consistency and are not detriment to the societal causes they support, or whether any public benefit is achieved (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016b).

While this lack of transparency and accountability may increase public mistrust toward foundations and further challenge their legitimacy, it also leads to philanthropic insufficiency. Lack of transparency and accountability makes collaborations challenging with nonprofit organizations and other foundations, but also with other societal stakeholders (e.g., public bodies, for-profit businesses). Philanthropic organizations are usually said to work in silos (Eikenberry & Bearman, 2014; S. Phillips & Jung, 2016a). Yet, one organization alone cannot have the sufficient resources to fully address a social or environmental issue. Resource-providers need access to proper information to appreciate whether they should endorse and support an organization's activities, whereas resource-seekers would equally benefit from more visibility on foundations and their decision-making process to find support more easily, to apply for funding more efficiently as well as to be able to disclose their funding's origin and generate trust when forming partnerships (Becker, 2018; Reich et al., 2016).

It is regularly argued that, as many countries grant tax benefits to foundations, their resources should not be considered private but (quasi-)public. Through these tax benefits, taxpayers subsidize philanthropic contributions. By opting for an organizational conduit such as the foundation to channel their philanthropic action, philanthropists would take on a public face. Putting their private resources at the service of public purposes, they lose the right to manage these as their own (Grant, 2016). As philanthropists' resources become seen as (quasi-)public, they should be used wisely, efficiently, and transparently; and thus foundations should be held accountable to society (Bernholz, Skloot, & Barry, 2010). Still, this sense of public ownership appears lacking. Philanthropy is said to be rather fragmented, displaying competitive interactions rather than collaboration among its organizations (Gautier, Pache, & Mossel, 2015; S. Phillips & Jung, 2016a; Rey-Garcia, 2017).

Originating in the fundamental features of philanthropy (that is, the nature of the relationship between private resources and public purposes), these three failures – and their counterpart merits – are at the core of the political debate around philanthropy's public value. They constitute the enduring, solid basis of this ancient and globally ubiquitous social phenomenon.

1.2   Philanthropy as a product of its time

Facing philanthropy's failures, practitioners have regularly made attempts to overcome them. Since the early 2000s, it is argued that contemporary philanthropy is experiencing significant and rapid changes (Carnie, 2017). The "what", "who" and "how" of using private resources for public purposes are said to be "recast" (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016b) "disrupted" (Bernholz et al., 2010), and "revolutionized" (Salamon, 2014). In its 2014 book, Salamon (2014, p. 4) goes as far as comparing these changes to "a Big Bang similar in kind if not in exact form to the one thought to have produced the planets and stars of our solar system". Scholars observe the arrival of a wide and heterogeneous set of new resources, actors, tools, and models at the fringes of philanthropy and making their way to its core (Bernholz, 2016; Defourny, Nyssens, & Thys, 2016; Gordon, Harvey, Shaw, & Maclean, 2016). From a simple landscape, philanthropy would have evolved into a burgeoning ecosystem. Among others, these changes include the followings:

- While the type of private monetary resources ("what") once limited to donations, grants or bequests, they now encompass debts, equity, and other more micro-giving in the form, for instance, of payroll deduction. Alongside monetary resources, a whole range of nonmonetary contributions (beyond volunteering time and expertise) are also increasingly considered as entering philanthropy: securities and properties, data, networks, talent and creativity (Barman, 2017; J. J. George, Yan, & Leidner, 2020; von Schnurbein et al., 2021).

- Similarly, resource-providers and -seekers ("who") of these private resources extend beyond wealthy individuals and citizens, on one side, and nonprofits and associations, on the other side (Gordon, 2014; Ostrower, 1995). Actors engaging in philanthropic giving now comprise communities and more or less formalized groups of citizens as well as corporations (Eikenberry & Breeze, 2018; Gautier & Pache, 2015). And recipients may be social enterprises and new kind of social businesses (Defourny & Nyssens, 2017). Beyond the binary relationship providers-seekers, a large spectrum of intermediaries has also emerged to assist, support, and facilitate the allocation of private resources along the philanthropic chain. These intermediaries include professionals such as wealth advisors and managers, financial and gift planners (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016b; Wiepking & Handy, 2015), and "online philanthropic marketplaces" building information repositories (Bernholz et al., 2010).

- Vehicles ("how") by which philanthropic action occurs have diversified. Besides the already diverse scope of foundations (grantmaking, financing, operating, mixed, community, corporate (Jung et al., 2018; Mernier, 2017)), philanthropy has increasingly taken other organizational forms: giving circles, cooperatives, corporate social responsibility, mission-related investments, investment funds, online platforms (crowdfunding, -timing, and -sourcing) and other virtual actions relying on social media and the Internet (André, Bureau, Gautier, & Rubel, 2017; Bernholz, 2016; Maclean, Harvey, & Gordon, 2013; Moody, 2008).

Given this diversification of philanthropy, scholars tend to add prefixes to differentiate between dimensions of philanthropy and precise their conceptualization and use of the term (von Schnurbein et al., 2021). This tendency has given rise to a mushrooming of subtypes of philanthropy: "elite philanthropy" (Ostrower, 1995), "strategic philanthropy" (Frumkin, 2010), "corporate philanthropy" (Gautier & Pache, 2015), "effective philanthropy" (Katz, 2005), "entrepreneurial philanthropy" (Gordon et al., 2016), "venture philanthropy" (Grossman, Appleby, & Reimers, 2013), "online philanthropy", (Bernholz et al., 2010) "data philanthropy" (J. J. George et al., 2020)…

While most scholars recognize these philanthropic evolutions, some question the transformative, disruptive, and sometimes revolutionizing, character given to contemporary philanthropy (Daly, 2012). They point out that philanthropy is and has always been "a product of its time" and has subsequently "appeared 'new' at many points in its history" (Breeze, 2011; Moody & Breeze, 2016, p. 459). Philanthropy's fundamentals relying on the use of private resources for public purposes, the specific shapes taken by philanthropic meanings and practices are always linked, reflect, and adapt to the contemporary conceptualization of "private resources" and "public purposes" and of the nature of the relationship between the two (Daly, 2012). In other words, philanthropy's role in society evolves in accordance with societal needs, successes and shortcomings of the public sector to address these needs and provide adequate public services and goods, available wealth, legal rules and social norms constraining how to appropriately allocate this wealth, the scope of civil society and its organizations, and technological developments (Breeze, 2011). The historic and geographic context of philanthropy hence either fosters or hinders its developments (Wiepking & Handy, 2015; Wiepking et al., 2021).

As philanthropy's shapes mirror the social, economic, political, and cultural context in which its actions take place, its role has continually been reinvented and its significant features – "what", "who" and "how" – have always been open and multidimensional, flirting with confusion and ambiguity. This openness makes philanthropy subject to misconceptions, controversies, and criticisms (von Schnurbein et al., 2021). In this sense, philanthropy is an "essentially contested concept" (Daly (2012) building on Gallie (1956)), generating different questions and answers at different times. How philanthropy emphasizes its merits of redistribution, pluralism and innovation and how it avoids its failures of particularism, paternalism and insufficiency is regularly disputed (McGoldrick, 2020). For instance, while figures like Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller strongly believed at the onset of the 20th century that the foundation – "a centralized, vertically integrated institution" (Bernholz et al., 2010, p. 5) – was the best model to operationalize philanthropy, a century later others argue that entrepreneurial and technology-enabled approaches are better suited to allocate private resources to public purposes (Bernholz, 2016; Mair & Hehenberger, 2014).

As such, changes in philanthropy, rather than being viewed as radical shifts solely resulting from the decisions of individual philanthropists and philanthropic organizations, are also to be conceptualized as externally-driven and cumulative layers (Breeze, 2011). According to Cunningham (2016, p. 42), "the present adds a topsoil of the latest projects, but the lower layers continue to exercise their influence, sometimes in the form of outcrops from earlier ages of giving". Therefore, the "disruptive" and "revolutionizing" changes said to currently transform contemporary philanthropy fall within a particular context and are to be considered in the light of four specific developments which put philanthropy under the spotlight. A first development is related to the increased depiction of social and environmental issues facing our society as grand challenges, taking on a complex, systemic, globalized, and interconnected aspect (G. George, Howard-Grenville, Joshi, & Tihanyi, 2016). The 17th UN Sustainable Development Goal emphasizes that grand challenges exceed the sole financial and operational capacities of governments to address them and require concerted efforts from multiple societal stakeholders, including philanthropic organizations (Delanoë, Gautier, & Pache, 2021; Ferraro, Etzion, & Gehman, 2015; van Hille, de Bakker, Ferguson, & Groenewegen, 2020).

Second, and alongside these grand challenges, the numerous crises of the last decades (economic, financial, environmental, health) have pushed the election of neoliberal governments in many countries (Jung & Harrow, 2015). Their involvement in the provision of public services and goods has been reduced and these services and goods have been privatized (Barman, 2017). Organizations depending on subsidies are therefore noting or foreseeing a contraction of their budget and face uncertainty (Maier, Meyer, & Steinbereithner, 2016). This turn to neoliberalism has been, among others, supported by numerous accusations of underperformance, under-professionalization, and inefficiency on the part of governments and subsidized nonprofit organizations (Mosley, 2020). Beyond advocating for the reduction of the public sector, the neoliberal logic has sought to marketize the public good (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004). For the sake of performance, professionalization and efficiency, social issues have tended to be stripped of their political meanings and framed as market opportunities. As a consequence, social policy management has become imbued with business-like methods and reliance on private funding from philanthropy for social change has grown (Eikenberry & Mirabella, 2018; Math, 2017). While philanthropy could once be considered "dirty money" (Carnie, 2017, p. 65), governments are now passed this political debate. They have taken a strong and renewed interest in philanthropy and called upon philanthropic resources to fill their voids in social Welfare (Hoolwerf, 2018).

The third development is a generational one. With the "boomer" generation passing away, many predict the advent of "a golden age" of philanthropy (Havens & Schervish, 2014, p. 27) with an intergenerational transfer of considerable financial assets (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016b). As of today, it is already said that money given to societal causes, number of foundations created and of people working in philanthropic organizations have never reached such higher levels (von Schnurbein et al., 2021). This has come with an increase in the organization of events on and around philanthropy, in the formation of networks to involve key philanthropic stakeholders and in the creation of various philanthropic services (Wiepking & Handy, 2015). Further the Millennial generation is said to be involved in social changes and to rely on tools and models different than those of their parents and grandparents. As digital natives, they appear to promote new technologies and to adopt entrepreneurial approaches to propose systemic solutions and measure impact (Bernholz, 2016; Carnie, 2017; S. Phillips & Jung, 2016a).

This relates to the fourth and final development: the rapid evolution of new technologies (including connected databases, online platforms, social media, mobile phones, payments systems and so on) and with them the storage, generation, accessibility and mobilization of a substantial amount of data, metrics and information of all types (Bernholz et al., 2010). New technologies have conquered all aspects of our lives and "opened unknown territories" (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016a, p. 515). As reflected by the development of the sharing economy, ordinary citizens are now empowered as they have the tools of both production and consumption in their pocket (Acquier, Daudigeos, & Pinkse, 2017; Maurer, Mair, & Oberg, 2020). New technologies make us more aware of what happens around the world, we are better equipped to make clearer choices and subsequently we can more easily, quickly, and even instantly engage in and mobilize collective action around social and environmental issues for which we care (Bernholz, 2016; McGoldrick, 2020). These four developments have given rise to two philanthropic layers: an entrepreneurial layer and a digital layer.

1.2.1 The entrepreneurial evolution

The first layer – the entrepreneurial evolution – forms in the early 2000s first in the U.S. and then in Europe with the arrival of High-Net-Worth entrepreneurs who made a fortune thanks to the dot-com boom and venture capitalism practices and who entered philanthropy with the idea that their fruitful professional experience, their entrepreneurial skills and community could make philanthropic actions and organizations more effective and efficient (Defourny et al., 2016; Moody, 2008). Much as Carnegie and Rockefeller who made a fortune in steel and oil in the 19th century, these entrepreneurs promote a "scientific" and "rationalized" approach of philanthropy based on the market principles at the origin of their entrepreneurial success (Harvey, Maclean, Gordon, & Shaw, 2011). In other words, the practices which allow the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few – and (sometimes) to the detriment of others – are to solve social inequalities (Barman, 2017; Lambelet, 2014). While these entrepreneurs initially claimed a paradigm change, this comparison to 19th-century philanthropists further confirms the cumulative-layered character of philanthropic changes. Rather than a new phenomenon, entrepreneurial philanthropy is the firmer entwining of philanthropy and entrepreneurship (Gordon et al., 2016). Additionally, in an environment where both public and private resources are scarcer, the neoliberal trend have also pushed philanthropy down to the market path, similarly to governments (Jung & Harrow, 2015).

This layer has brought its share of burgeoning prefixes and several terms are used to refer to "entrepreneurial philanthropy" – "venture philanthropy" (Mair & Hehenberger, 2014), "philanthrocapitalism" (Bishop & Green, 2008), "outcome-oriented philanthropy" (Brest, 2020), "impact investing" (Hehenberger, Mair, & Metz, 2019). While proponents of each of these terms often express slight differences between them, it is difficult to draw firm boundaries (Katz, 2005). Entrepreneurial approaches to philanthropy are best defined by their common characteristics which explicitly and radically emerged in opposition to philanthropy's failures and what entrepreneurs-turned-philanthropists call "traditional philanthropy" (Defourny et al., 2016). Three characteristics can be highlighted and are better conceived as a continuum, depending on the higher or lesser degree to which philanthropists wish to adopt the entrepreneurial approach.

The first characteristic is the diversity of resources provided by entrepreneurial philanthropists, ranging from financial resources (in the form of grants, loans, debts, equity) to non-financial resources (in the form of knowledge, business know-how, skills, managerial expertise, time, and access to networks) (Gordon, 2014). In this sense, entrepreneurial philanthropists are said to have turned philanthropy's logic of free gift into a logic of investment. Impact investing – the higher end of the continuum – is defined as "various forms of investments aimed at generating a positive and measurable social and environmental impact alongside a financial return" (Hehenberger et al., 2019, p. 1677). Scholars also highlight the intended collaborative aspect of entrepreneurial philanthropy as support often comes from several funders and third parties and as it is tailored to and co-created with recipients to best suit their needs (Defourny et al., 2016).

The second characteristic pertains to the type of organizations supported by entrepreneurial philanthropists. While they can support a vast scope of organizations ranging from nonprofits to social enterprises, entrepreneurial philanthropists tend to favor the latter and to only support a small number of organizations at a time (Gordon et al., 2016). Rather than passively responding to requests, they proactively identify social entrepreneurs and enterprises that they consider offering innovative solutions to social and environmental issues (Defourny et al., 2016). They aim to develop a strong, hands-on, and long-term relationship with their recipients to build their organizational capacity (Mair & Hehenberger, 2014). Their goal is the professionalization of organizations addressing societal challenges to reduce their dependence on charitable giving (which encourages the charity industry) and to promote sustainable solutions (Dees,

2012). In this sense, because their innovative economic model allows them to simultaneously conduct a social and economic mission, social enterprises are entrepreneurial philanthropy's ideal-type recipients (Defourny & Nyssens, 2017).

The third characteristic is entrepreneurial philanthropy's focus on measurement of both social impact and financial return. Building on their business practices, they tend to develop methods and metrics to assess their recipients' performance and put a great emphasis on transparency and accountability (Maclean et al., 2013). Before allocating resources, they conduct a due diligence to assess risk, evaluate the utility of their support and the expected results. They (collectively) specify clear goals, milestones, and key performance indicators. During support, they ask for regular reporting. And once their support comes to an end, they measure outcome and impact based on previously defined indicators (Gordon, 2014; Mair & Hehenberger, 2014).

While at first entrepreneurial philanthropy and traditional philanthropy opposed themselves as "two institutional models of organized giving" (Mair & Hehenberger, 2014, p. 1181) relying on "two different clusters of values" (Dees, 2012, p. 321), and while entrepreneurial approaches to philanthropy were depicted as "the future of philanthropy" (Mair & Hehenberger, 2014, p. 1194), the initial opposition has nowadays worn down. Many philanthropic organizations have recognized the added value and relevance of entrepreneurial practices – such as the contribution of non-financial support, the capacity-building approach, and the explicit search for impact – and endorse them as complementary to their more traditional practices (Mair & Hehenberger, 2014; S. Phillips & Jung, 2016b). As entrepreneurial philanthropy becomes normalized, its core ideas continue to be discussed as its proponents interact. Recently, impact investing has thus been shown to begin to form a field on its own, closely related to that of philanthropy (Hehenberger et al., 2019).

However, despite this normalization, entrepreneurial practices in philanthropy have not eluded criticisms. As shown by Hehenberger and colleagues (2019), as the field of impact investing becomes increasingly structured, initial ideas (such as customized support or co-creation of innovative solutions) have been abandoned to the advantage of others, tending towards the more rationalized and investment-oriented end of the continuum (such as top-down, structured approach, quantifiable impact, and focus on successful, innovative organizations). As a result, while these entrepreneurial principles intend to overcome philanthropy's failures – and do so

to a certain extent – they also bring their own shortcomings, sometimes reinforcing the initial philanthropic failures (Horvath & Powell, 2020).

On one hand, entrepreneurial philanthropy appears rather a top-down, donor-driven approach than a co-creative process with recipients (Grant, 2016). As philanthropists design their theory of change, they sometimes impose demanding managerial requirements on their nonprofits and social enterprises recipients (Eikenberry & Mirabella, 2018; Gordon et al., 2016). However, impact measurement has proven to be a highly complex enterprise. Putting aside the debate around what to measure and according to which metrics, the whole process of due diligence, performance management and reporting requirement is energy-, time-, and money consuming for both resources-providers and -seekers. This has tended to increase bureaucratization of philanthropic support, which conflicts with the focus on efficiency and effectiveness of entrepreneurial philanthropy. The energy, time and money philanthropic organizations spend on reporting are resources philanthropic organizations do not spend on their genuine social missions and cross-sector collaborations. The risk of mission drift increases, and so is the risk of losing the support of other, more traditional philanthropic resources-providers (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004). While entrepreneurial approaches to philanthropy intend to address societal challenges more efficiently, they would increase the managerial burden on philanthropic organizations, which struggle to respond to multiple and conflicting demands (Mosley, 2020).

On the other hand, as performance management and reporting requirements demand managerial skills and increased professionalization, there is a risk for smaller and less professionalized organizations to be excluded from philanthropic support (Mosley, 2020). Indeed, it has been shown that resource-providers tend to focus on innovative social enterprises which build on market principles to solve societal problems, have the capacity to scale up and become sustainable (Eikenberry & Mirabella, 2018). Doing so, they tend to disregard less entrepreneurial models, which can still offer crucial responses to unmet societal needs. There is a risk for philanthropic organizations to focus more on the outcomes of their actions rather than on their overall social purposes; and hence to neglect projects more complex to measure or early experimental efforts (Barman, 2017). This contradicts with the innovative role of philanthropy. In addition, looking for their ideal-type of social enterprises, entrepreneurial philanthropists risk hierarchizing social and environmental issues according to their possibility to be solved with market-based solutions (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004). In turn, this

would further create a monoculture rather than a plurality of civil society organizations and would heighten competition among these organizations which are increasingly required to prove their performance. Eventually, this could hamper long sought-after transparency and accountably, as resource-seekers may be tempted to decouple their performance metrics from their day-to-day practices (Heimstädt, 2017).

1.2.2   The digital evolution

The second layer – the digital evolution – builds on the tremendous technological development of the last decade (2010s) and aims to use new technologies to overcome lasting philanthropy's failures as well as shortcomings stemming from the entrepreneurial evolution. This evolution is characterized by the development of a host of technology-enabled tools – such as large connected databases, online platforms, social media, smartphones, payments systems (Bernholz, 2016). These tools can be used by established philanthropic organizations (e.g., resource-providers and -seekers, such as various foundations and more investment-oriented funds, nonprofits, social enterprises…), but also bring with them new philanthropic intermediaries at the fringes of philanthropy (such as online philanthropy marketplaces (e.g., GiveWell or GuideStar) (Bernholz et al., 2010) and social-mission platforms (e.g., UK Spacehive or German Betterplace) (Logue & Grimes, 2020; Presenza, Abbate, Cesaroni, & Appio, 2019)).

Within philanthropy studies, technology-enabled tools are said to have the potential to reinvent, and even disrupt, philanthropy (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016a). First, technology-enabled tools assemble large information repositories and provide giving patterns to connect those seeking resources and those willing to provide resources. The availability, visibility and accessibility of these data is meant to increase the transparency and accountability of philanthropy. Individuals and organizations are now able to gather useful, precise, and comparable information to conduct due diligences, assess the budget-allocation practices of organizations from which they seek support, valuate the financial health of organizations to which they would like to contribute or access evidence-based reporting when trying to measure social impact. As such, individual philanthropists and philanthropic organizations are better equipped to make informed giving choices (Bernholz et al., 2010). In this sense, the digital evolution extends the entrepreneurial evolution, as it enables to consider philanthropy along a more strategic and outcome-oriented path (Brest, 2020).

Second, as technology-enabled tools can be accessed everywhere and at any time, they also allow any citizen to find philanthropic opportunities easily, quickly, and instantly. Citizens can tailor their involvement to their needs, wishes, capacities, and everyday life. Anybody can be a philanthropist where -, when- and however they want and address the social and environmental issues that matter the most to them. Along with technology-enabled tools come new forms of philanthropic actions: episodic volunteering where citizens volunteer for a few hours in the organization of their choice (Y. Lee, 2020); skills-based volunteering where employees help nonprofits on matters such as accountability, performance management, reporting, law issues; micro-giving or payroll giving where citizens or for-profit businesses contribute through the accretion of small amounts (Barman, 2017); data philanthropy where organizations give their aggregate data to help response to humanitarian disasters (J. J. George et al., 2020); or even simply sharing stories on social media in order to mobilize collective action (Bernholz et al., 2010). As new technologies break complex social and environmental issues into very small actions, giving and volunteering can be apprehended at the micro level of everyday life. More and more citizens, but also other actors such as for-profit businesses can contribute. In a sense, these tools would develop citizens' sense of agency and power (Bernholz, 2016) and lead to a greater diversity of actors and resources involved in philanthropy (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016a).

Third, beyond involving a diversity of participants to philanthropy, new technologies would also facilitate cross-sector collaborations (philanthropic foundations, nonprofit organizations, and public bodies, but also for-profit businesses). Thanks to the increased availability, visibility and accessibility of information, societal stakeholders are expected to find more easily and form more quickly adequate and successful partnerships (Logue & Grimes, 2020; Messeni Petruzzelli, Natalicchio, Panniello, & Roma, 2019). Through the involvement and collaboration of a diversity of stakeholders (including ordinary citizens), new technologies could respond to some of the limitations of traditional philanthropy such as paternalism and insufficiency. And through the development of open, participatory, and community-driven approaches, they could rebalance philanthropy's power relationship and compensate for its tendency to particularism (Bernholz et al., 2010).

However, despite these potential positive effects of technology-enabled tools on philanthropy and their evident complementarity with entrepreneurial approaches to philanthropy, we still know little on new technologies for philanthropic organizations and actions. While online giving is gaining in visibility, it still reflects only a small amount of overall philanthropic giving (7.5% according to Waters (2016))[2]. Moreover, there is little evidence that established philanthropic organizations are radically changing their practices, for example in terms of embracing digital tools and web-based communications (Grant, 2016). Therefore, the announced revolution in transparency, accountability, and collaboration practices might mainly remain at the level of discourses. Finally, possible negative consequences of technology-enabled tools have barely been addressed. On one hand, researchers question the capacity of tiny bits of philanthropic actions to aggregate into a big change and ask whether such individual actions would not rather promote slacktivism (Bernholz, 2016). On the other hand, and building on the entrepreneurial experiences, they further reflect on the risk of relying on increased available data to direct philanthropic resources toward public purposes that are more easily measured at the expense of less quantifiable but as important societal causes. (Becker, 2018; Heimstädt, 2017)

Among these technology-enabled tools for philanthropy, one has attracted scholar attention in particular: "social-mission platforms" (Logue & Grimes, 2020). Social-mission platforms would combine both entrepreneurial and digital layers. The entrepreneurial philanthropy trend that emerged at the beginning of the 2000s further takes roots and keeps developing alongside technological evolutions (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016a). It is already known that such platforms can adopt either a mission-driven orientation (with a nonprofit legal form and philanthropic resources) or a market-driven orientation (with for-profit legal form and business practices) to pursue their social mission (Acquier et al., 2017; Mair & Reischauer, 2017). It is also known that youth usually creating and using these platforms combine a strong affinity for technologies and for entrepreneurship in their philanthropic actions (Y. Lee, 2020; S. Phillips & Jung, 2016b). Finally, it is known that these platforms rely on network building effects and are in an ideal position to foster multi-stakeholder collaborations (including philanthropic organizations, public bodies, for-profit businesses, and citizens) (Messeni Petruzzelli et al., 2019;

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[2] Following the Covid-19 crisis, online giving is said to have known a dramatic increase (up to 21% according to the Blackbaud Institute (2021), a think tank comprising experts from the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy (Indiana University) among others). Whether this increase will remain stable and persist once the crisis is over remains to be seen.

Presenza et al., 2019). As Bernholz (2016, p. 444) puts it, "the old boundaries between markets and social purpose, individual donors and institutional foundations, and nonprofit organizations and informal communities of action are shifting".

Yet, while little is known regarding technology-enabled tools as a whole, this is also true for social-mission platforms. Research on social-mission platforms is still young and relatively scattered, only starting to investigate the potential of digital tools in addressing societal issues (Logue & Grimes, 2020; Messeni Petruzzelli et al., 2019; Presenza et al., 2019). There is a need to conduct rigorous and systematic research in order to unveil how social-mission platforms work and organize in order to link together entrepreneurial and digital models; how their specific organization enables the connection of various societal stakeholders to collectively address social and environmental issues; and how social-mission platforms connect with the established philanthropy field and how established actors react to their development. While some researchers see in them a potential for disruptive and radical change in philanthropy (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016a), others rather depict them as emerging in a disparate and uncoordinated manner, not specifically challenging philanthropic organizations or willing to replace them (contrary to the radical opposition at the onset of entrepreneurial philanthropy) (Bernholz, 2016) In addition, when empirically studied, these social-mission platforms – just like other philanthropic phenomenon – have mostly been so in a Anglo-Saxon, mainly U.S., context, rather than in a European context (Carnie, 2017; de Reuver, Sørensen, & Basole, 2018; Wiepking & Handy, 2015).

1.3   Zoom in on the European and Belgian philanthropic context

As philanthropy's evolutions can be seen as externally-driven and cumulative layers, philanthropy cannot be studied outside of its institutional context (Barman, 2017). This institutional context comprises the formal elements (e.g., countries' legal framework, fiscal incentives, education programs) and the informal elements (e.g., social norms and practices) which influence the specific shapes philanthropy takes. Configurations of these elements either hinder or encourage philanthropic action, influence the form of philanthropic organizations and the path of their evolutions (Lambelet, 2014; Wiepking et al., 2021). Wiepking and colleagues (2021) recently show that countries where philanthropy is strongly supported by its institutional context display a stronger philanthropic culture with a higher dynamism in philanthropic actions and organizations. Reversely, authors point out that philanthropic organizations, their action, and interaction, also influence their institutional context. A high philanthropic activity better enables philanthropic organizations to lobby for legal and fiscal incentives and, similarly, further incites governments to adopt a more comprehensive regulatory framework for philanthropy. Nevertheless, philanthropy studies have so far devoted little attention to the specific context in which individual and organizational philanthropic actions occur and to the relationship between philanthropic organizations and context (Barman, 2017; Wiepking & Handy, 2015).

1.3.1   European philanthropy: an engaging yet understudied fieldwork

Most academic research has been conducted in Anglo-Saxon contexts – mainly on U.S. philanthropy – while scholars have only begun to study European philanthropy (Wiepking & Handy, 2015). Several reasons explain this difference. Since the 20th century and the advent of figures such as Carnegie and Rockefeller, the U.S. has had a steady relationship with philanthropy. This steadiness is reflected in an inciting legal and fiscal framework for philanthropy, in the existence of membership associations, such as the Foundation Center, which collect and diffuse massive data on U.S. philanthropy and raise public awareness, as well as in the presence of contemporary, public, and controversial figures such as Bill Gates or Jeff Bezos (Carnie, 2017).

Conversely, although philanthropy is originally a European concept, the European relationship with philanthropy has always been intermittent (Schuyt, 2013). From the Renaissance until the industrial era, European philanthropy's image fluctuated between trust and mistrust (Cunningham, 2016). And during the 20th century –

whereas U.S. philanthropy was flourishing – European countries faced worker movements leading to increased goods and services being taken care of by the State. This is the development of the European Welfare State model (Gautier, 2019). A Welfare State is a way of governing where solidarity is conceived as societal rather than individual and where public bodies are the legitimate and major actors ensuring, protecting, and promoting the economic and social well-being of their citizens through a tax system redistributing wealth (Olivier, 2014).

European countries differ in the extent to which they rely on a Welfare State model. To reflect this diversity, Salamon & Anheier (1998) developed a typology classifying countries depending on the level of their government social welfare spending and on the size of their nonprofit sector. For instance, France, Germany and Belgium can be characterized as "corporatist", as they have a large nonprofit sector and a high government spending on social welfare (Hustinx, Verschuere, & De Corte, 2014; Mews & Boenigk, 2015; Pauly, Verschuere, De Rynck, & Voets, 2021). Subsidies account for almost half of resource-seeking organizations' financing mix in France (based on data from 2007) (Gautier et al., 2015) and extend 60% in Belgium (based on data from 2019) (Dethier, Meert, & Mertens de Wilmart, 2021). Reversely, Switzerland and the United Kingdom can, for example, be characterized as "liberal", as they have a large nonprofit sector but low government social welfare spending. In both these countries, subsidies account for less than 40% in nonprofits' financing mix (based on data from 2010) (Breeze, Halfpenny, & Wilding, 2015; von Schnurbein & Bethmann, 2015). Accordingly, philanthropy tends to be the primary source of funding for resource-seeking organizations in liberal countries, while government subsidies are the primary source of funding in corporatist countries.

In a corporatist model, organizations providing philanthropic resources – such as foundations – usually face legitimacy issues and thus tend to hide their actions. Therefore, philanthropy is rather discreet and less public in European corporatist countries than in European liberal countries or in the U.S. Membership associations – such as the European Foundation Center – hold less information, which further impairs the conduct of comparative studies as well as the development and visibility of European philanthropy as a whole (Carnie, 2017; Wiepking & Handy, 2015). Given these differences between the U.S. and the European philanthropic contexts, observations made in the U.S. do not always apply to the European empirical reality. The characteristics of Europe, and especially its Welfare State tradition, make European philanthropy an engaging yet understudied fieldwork for

philanthropy studies. Moreover, Europe did not escape the neoliberal trend of the last decades, leading to a questioning of public bodies' effectiveness and efficiency, in an erosion of the Welfare State, and in a reduction of governments' involvement in the service of public purposes (Jung & Harrow, 2015; Math, 2017).

Therefore, since the beginning of 2000s, European governments have taken an increased interest in philanthropy, which translates into the modification of their legal framework to implement stricter and attractive regulations and fiscal regimes on philanthropy. For instance, the UK government funds research centers to encourage academic study on philanthropy (Breeze et al., 2015). In the 2010s, French and Dutch public organizations commissioned studies on the relationship between government and philanthropy (Hoolwerf, 2018). Subsequently, these two countries extensively revised their legal framework on philanthropy (Carnie, 2017). France eased the creation of foundations by providing no less than eight different status with specific fiscal and governance requirements (Milner, 2019) and in 2011 The Dutch government explicitly agreed to collaborate with philanthropic organizations and focused its regulation on the sector's transparency (Wiepking & Bekkers, 2015).

These modifications of legal framework did not occur without generating heated discussions around the increasing or decreasing of income tax and tax deductions for philanthropic donations (the Notre-Dame fire being a recent good example (de Nervaux & Davezac, 2019)). Indeed, the relationship between government and philanthropy has always been a complicated one, not only for policy-makers but also for scholars. Government spending on social welfare has often been said to create a crowd-out effect – that is, to lower philanthropic donations. As resource-seeking organizations receive more subsidies, they conduct fewer fundraising actions. Hence, the level of citizens' awareness of needs diminishes, and so do donations. However, evidence of this crowd-out effect is partial at best, and some studies even show evidence of a crowd-in effect. Government subsidies increase nonprofits' budget as well as enhance their trustworthy reputation. Therefore, they are operationally capable to conduct more fundraising actions, raise the level of citizens' awareness and attract more donations (Bekkers, 2016; Wiepking & Handy, 2015). This is notably the strategy adopted by the United Kingdom: government funding to UK charities is mainly directed to building their capacity and empower them to solicit more philanthropic resources (Breeze et al., 2015)

In any case, discussions around legal changes raised awareness among philanthropic organizations, and particularly foundations. If philanthropy was to be increasingly called upon to address social and environmental issues, its organizations needed to further proactively regulate their practices to avoid these regulations being imposed by the State. Beyond government regulations, European philanthropic organizations implemented self-regulation mechanisms (Wiepking & Handy, 2015). Collective interest organizations started to emerge in many European countries (e.g., SwissFoundation in 2001 and the French Foundation Center in 2002). Overall, the objective of these organizations is to defend and develop philanthropy. They publish reports and guidelines for their members and philanthropic organizations, they organize working groups, trainings, and events (Carnie, 2017).

For instance, The Association of German Foundations (Bunderverband Deutscher Stiftung) organizes one of the largest events gathering foundations in Europe, hosts more than 30 thematic groups for its members as well as an inhouse academy (Keidan, 2017). The UK Institute of Fundraising delivers certified qualifications (Breeze et al., 2015). And the SwissFoundation published for the first time in 2005 and has since regularly updated a code which is considered as a gold standard for foundations' good governance (Specking, 2015). The SwissFoundation is also at the root of the Center for Philanthropy Studies at the University of Basel, which is funded by a group of Swiss foundations and is seen as a model for collaboration among foundations (von Schnurbein & Eckhardt, 2017). Think tank groups and nonprofit and philanthropic education programs have also been created by individual foundations (Lambelet, 2014). The Fondation de France created the Observatoire de la philanthropie and is a founding partner of a university chair in philanthropy at ESSEC as well as of the Ecole de la philanthropie to encourage philanthropic behavior from earliest childhood (Milner, 2019).

All these developments would progressively participate to the structuration of a so far rather fragmented European philanthropy and contribute to the legitimation of philanthropy's public role in a Welfare State context. On one hand, various publications and think tank groups make available and accessible data on European philanthropy, which increases its visibility and transparency. On the other hand, working groups, trainings, education programs and events teach philanthropic organizations appropriate and shared values and practices, formalize them and diffuse them, which convey a common vision of philanthropy, strengthen its identity and portray its outward image (Lambelet, 2014). Yet, although these

developments occur across Europe, they remain unequal, and their extent varies from country to country. While US-Europe differences are substantial, so are differences among European countries (Carnie, 2017).

1.3.2 Belgian philanthropy: reflecting European trends while displaying specific features

The present dissertation focuses on the Belgian philanthropic context. While Belgium mostly reflects the global tendencies mentioned hereabove, it also displays its own features. As elsewhere in Europe, the capacity of Belgian public institutions to financially contribute to serve public purposes has become more fragile in the face of complex societal issues and the neoliberal turn following multiple crises. Resource-seeking organizations depending on subsidies are noting or foreseeing a contraction of their budget and face uncertainty (Fondation Roi Baudouin, 2021; Maier et al., 2016). Although Belgian public subsidies have so far remained stable (Dethier et al., 2021) and constitute the main source of revenues of resource-seekers, they are harder to obtain – which increases competition among resource-seekers – and are increasingly allocated to specific projects rather than to organization's overall capacity (Donorinfo, 2018). In such circumstances, support from various societal stakeholders to address societal issues is welcome, particularly from philanthropic resource-providers.

1.3.2.1 A revised but flexible legal framework on philanthropy

In 2002, Belgium – like its European neighbors – revised its legal framework on philanthropy which initially dated from 1921 (*Loi sur les Associations sans but lucratif, les Associations internationales sans but lucratif et les Fondations*). The 2002 amendment came in force on the 1st July 2003 and aimed, among others, to clarify the legal status of foundation adopted by a great diversity of organizations (Mernier & Xhauflair, 2014). While philanthropy does not only consist of foundations, these are "iconic of the power of institutionalized philanthropy" (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016b, p. 6) and "represent the main part of the sector's capacity" as "they are the privileged legal vehicle of those willing to engage in philanthropy" (Lambelet, 2014, pp. 22–24).

The 2002 amendment introduced the distinction between the public utility foundation and the private foundation. The former replaces and refines the overarching status of public utility establishment. It requires the approval from the Belgian Ministry of Justice and must fulfill one of the seven public purposes

mentioned by the law (i.e., philanthropic, religious, scientific, artistic, cultural, educational, or philosophical). Less constraining, the latter does not require to be approved by a ministerial decree and is not limited to one of the seven purposes. The private foundation can be devoted to the fulfillment of a public goal or of an exclusively private goal – of which the specific nature is not detailed in the law and is left to founders' own interpretation. As such, the creation of a private foundation is a complete individual process (Vandenbulke, 2016). Overall, the law defines the foundation as "a legal structure to which the founder brings money/heritage to realize a predefined disinterested purpose [and which does not give] any material gain to the founders, the administrator, or other person" (Mernier, 2017, p. 67).

Beyond the distinction between these two statuses, the law is quite flexible (Vandenbulke, 2016). Rules that foundations need to respect upon creation are basic. They are created by notarial deed or by will and can only be legally dissolved. When a foundation lacks financial resources, or when its goal becomes obsolete, or when its founders die, it is not automatically dissolved but becomes dormant. As such, it can be assumed that numerous foundations still exist but are not active anymore. Regarding foundations' governance, the only rule is the appointment of an executive board composed by three administrators chosen by the founder itself. The law does not require any other democratic control, such as a general assembly, but founders can add extra governance mechanisms if they deem necessary. Regarding their finances and accounting requirements, three categories of foundations are distinguished (small, big, or very big) and depending on the category to which they belong foundations are either required to disclose their financial information (big and very big) or not (small) (Mernier, 2017; Mernier & Xhauflair, 2014, 2017).

The introduction of these two statuses – and especially of the private foundation – and their inherent flexibility have given a new impulse to philanthropy in Belgium. The number of foundations has rapidly grown. While before 2002, Belgium counted 298 foundations, in 2015, it counted 1751, among which 573 public utility foundations and 1178 private foundations. Among these 1751 foundations, 1334 fulfill a general interest mission – meaning that 417 private foundations solely fulfill a private purpose (Mernier & Xhauflair, 2017). In this sense, Belgium reflects a similar dynamics than in France, where the modification of the legal framework has also boosted the growth of the foundation sector (Milner, 2019).

However, flexibility also further diversified Belgian philanthropic organizations. Little is actually known on Belgian foundations. Several actors with different forms, missions and resources co-exist. Foundations' goals as described in their public legal documents are often so extensive that it has become a challenge for external observers and even for experts to appraise exactly who they are and what they do (Vandenbulke, 2016). While foundations can be created with an endowment by an individual founder or a family, the bulk of Belgian foundations is created with no endowment and carries out projects funded by other endowed foundations or public subsidies (Mernier, 2017). Foundations can also originate from for-profit businesses or banks which provide them with resources and guide their mission. Yet, the legal framework does not explicitly encompass corporate foundations or, more broadly, corporate philanthropy. As such, corporate philanthropy usually takes the form of skills-based volunteering or sponsorship and flies under the radar (Garbarczyk, 2018; Gautier & Pache, 2015; Mernier & Xhauflair, 2017). In this sense, Belgium differs from France, where eight different statuses are available for philanthropists willing to create a foundation and where corporate philanthropy is legally recognized and represents a key pillar of French philanthropy (e.g., Loi Aillagon in 2003 and the dedicated network Admical) (Gautier & Pache, 2015; Milner, 2019).

Furthermore, little is known on foundations' budget and how it is allocated, as rules regarding the disclosure of their financial information only apply to a certain category of foundations (Carnie, 2017). Along the same line, the lack of democratic control raises questions regarding the legitimacy of foundations and of philanthropic organizations in general, and especially in a Welfare State like Belgium. While philanthropic organizations can obtain a fiscal agreement allowing them to offer fiscal deduction to their donors (Vandenbulke, 2016), the Belgian fiscal framework for philanthropy is one of the least favorable in Europe (European Foundation Center, 2014) and fiscal incentives for donations remain low.

Yet, fiscal incentives tend to suggest that philanthropic giving is legitimate, publicly approved and even socially desired (Wiepking et al., 2021). Partly because of Belgian low fiscal incentives, the involvement of Belgian citizens and for-profit businesses in philanthropic actions is low and the Belgian philanthropic culture tends to be rather weak compared to other European countries (Bekkers, 2016; Fondation Roi Baudouin, 2020; Hoolwerf & Schuyt, 2017; Hustinx & Dudal, 2020). In comparison, while Belgian fiscal incentives limit to financial gifts and to a benefit of 45% (before its increase to 60% in 2020 due to the Covid-19 crisis),

UK and Dutch fiscal incentives have been regularly revised and comprise financial gifts as well as gift in kind (Breeze et al., 2015; Wiepking & Bekkers, 2015). And following latest modifications, France would have one of the most favorable tax regime in Europe and individual giving would have subsequently been boosted (Gautier et al., 2015; Milner, 2019).

Although the law focuses on the legal status of foundation and fails to consider, among others, corporate philanthropy, resource-providers can still take other legal statuses and forms in Belgium. Beyond public utility and private foundations, Belgium counts many hosted funds. These funds are no legal entity as such, but in practice they operate as a foundation (Vandenbulke, 2016). The main idea of a hosted fund is for an individual philanthropist, a corporation, or any other organization to delegate the management of their endowment and philanthropic action to an existing foundation instead of creating their own foundation. Foundations hosting funds act as umbrella organizations (Mernier & Xhauflair, 2017). Banks also undertake philanthropic actions on their own through a dedicated "philanthropy department". Some philanthropic organizations are foundations in other countries but have adopted another form in Belgium such as a corporation or a nonprofit organization. Other philanthropic organizations are cooperatives and derive their philanthropic resources and missions from their members.

In short, philanthropic organizations, and especially resource-providers, appear hard to identify. There exists a certain confusion between foundations serving a public purpose and those exclusively centered around a private purpose, between foundations seeking resources to subsequently fund projects and nonprofits also seeking resources to operate similar projects, but also among the various organizations that provide private resources for public purposes but have another legal form than that of the foundation. Furthermore, beyond the heterogeneity due to the flexible legal framework, Belgium is politically and geographically fragmented in three regions (Wallonia, Flanders and Brussels). For instance, each region has its own rules regarding registration fees, which affect foundations' endowment (Vandenbulke, 2016). This political and geographical fragmentation undoubtedly contributes to further increase the heterogeneity of Belgian philanthropy.

Finally, in 2019, Belgium revised its commercial code in order to extend it to philanthropic organizations (Vanwelde, 2020). Philanthropic organizations are now allowed to undertake economic activities to the same extent as for-profit businesses, provided that they do not distribute their profit. Considering philanthropic organizations as enterprises has two implications. On one hand, as philanthropic resource-seekers are further considered as service-providers, competition for government contracts among them and with for-profit businesses becomes even more intense. This further stimulates the marketization of the public good (Maier et al., 2016; Suykens, De Rynck, & Verschuere, 2020). On the other hand, philanthropic organizations' specific features are even less recognized. Therefore, diversity appears nowhere near to decrease.

Given this heterogeneity and the soft governance of the legal framework, visibility and readability of Belgian philanthropic organizations – and especially resource-providers – and their actions appear therefore a challenge (Mernier, 2017). They are relatively inconspicuous: mostly unknown from public at large but also from one another. Considering only foundations, Mernier (2017) explains her difficulty to obtain data and engage participants in her research (out of the 1334 foundations with a general interest mission contacted, 227 were willing to take part in her quantitative study). Overall, Belgian organizational philanthropy can be portrayed as a few major actors highly visible and knowing one another (such as The Big Foundation, The Transformative Foundation or The YouthPower Foundation, described in our methodological approach hereunder) and a multitude of small organizations gravitating around these major actors and acting either at a national level or at more regional levels.

As philanthropic organizations are hard to identify, their interaction is limited. Although they say to co-fund projects and recipients with other resource-providers (philanthropists or public bodies) most of the time, little is known on these collaborative dynamics. Most organizations are not part of any networks and rather work in silos (Mernier & Xhauflair, 2017). Philanthropic resource-providers tend to launch calls for proposals without always consulting others working on similar issues. And resource-seekers devote time and energy in applying to these calls and compete for selection. As a result, philanthropic action is rather scattered.

1.3.2.2 A limited professional association

Following the amendment of the law and the subsequent diversification and lack of transparency, several major and powerful philanthropic organizations – led by The Big Foundation – felt the need as from December 2002 to reflect on Belgian philanthropy's challenges and opportunities. As more and more private foundations addressing private causes were created, foundations addressing public interest causes felt the need to have their common interests represented under a same banner. These organizations gathered, arranged a meeting with the Ministry of Justice and worked towards the creation of a professional association based on similar collective dynamics than those they were observing in surrounding European countries. The Association of Philanthropic Foundations (hereafter, The Association) was created in 2004.

The goal of The Association is threefold: (1) to be a forum for foundations to meet and exchange ideas and best practices; (2) to foster a favorable societal environment for philanthropy to thrive; and (3) to be a major actor of and at the service of philanthropic foundations with a general interest mission (The Association, Document 2). Hence, The Association has the potential to compensate – to a certain extent – for the limits of the legal framework. It has the opportunity to act as public face and give greater visibility to foundations and to philanthropy at large, to make philanthropic organizations interact and to provide them with more specific guidelines on how to operate.

However, since its creation, The Association has struggled to perform its representing and federating goals. On one hand, The Association includes 125 members (The Association, Document 1), which equals to around 10% of the whole Belgian foundations with a general interest mission (1334 as counted in 2015 by (Mernier, 2017) and not including hosted funds (more than 800 solely within The Big Foundation (The Big Foundation, Document 7)). This relatively low number can be ascribed to its membership rules. Membership is not mandatory but voluntary. A philanthropic organization can become a member of The Association if it is a Belgian public utility foundation or private foundation fulfilling a public purpose, if it is a European or international foundation with a head office or activities in Belgium, or if it is part of the European Foundation Center (The Association, Document 2). With such criteria, The Association is mainly focused on the organizational form of foundation and tends to close itself to other philanthropic resource-providers in Belgium. The evidence being that it has already

had to show some flexibility regarding its criteria to include historical Belgian philanthropic organizations.

On the other hand, The Association has limited financial means (membership is subject to an annual fee of 300 euros[3]) and few information on its members and on philanthropic organizations at large. Data on creation, dissolution, missions, activities, and resources are rare. Even Belgian public authorities do not have a complete list of all the foundations in Belgium. The Association tends to remain in its members' shadow which appear more informed. Contrary to the SwissFoundation which initiated the creation of a university center on philanthropy and has ensured to make it sustainable by mixing resources from foundations with resources from the Basel university, The Belgian Association is not at the root of the only Belgian University Chair in Philanthropy and Social Investment. More so, after a nine-year funding from a philanthropic resource-provider (The Oldest Fund), this Chair is now coming to an end and one can wonder whether research on Belgian philanthropy will continue. The Association is not behind the organization of events gathering Belgian and European foundations either, contrary to the Association of German Foundations. In Belgium, such events are mostly organized by individual foundations.

Therefore, The Association does not seem to have the capacity to fulfill its goals, to build knowledge on and around philanthropy, to foster interactions among philanthropic organizations and to interact with public bodies regarding philanthropic matters.

In addition, philanthropy being not limited to resource-providers, several other collective interest organizations coexist, representing other philanthropic organizations, practices, or issues (e.g., fundraising (The Fundraising Center), volunteering (The Volunteering Center) or transparency and accountability (The ClearView Foundation)). Although all these collective interest organizations work on related philanthropic matters, there is little coordination among them. Their members and activities sometimes overlap. This situation adds to the already diversified internal dynamics of Belgium.

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[3] In comparison, the SwissFoundation asks for an annual fee of 2000 CHF (a bit more than 1800 euros) (cf. the SwissFoundation's website).

Given The Association's lack of dynamism, individual philanthropic organizations started to undertake isolated actions to bring structuration into Belgian philanthropy and to further compensate for the limits of the legal framework. In 2005, The ClearView Foundation is created by an individual philanthropist with the aim to increase transparency and interaction (The ClearView Foundation, Document 2). As the legal framework does not subject all philanthropic organizations to the same rules regarding financial disclosure, The ClearView Foundation provides a rigorous framework to give objective, understandable and comparable information (The ClearView Foundation, Document 1). Philanthropic organizations screened by the ClearView Foundation can obtain a seal vouching for their financial health. A similar seal can also be obtained from The Fundraising Center (The Fundraising Center, Document 1), which uses different criteria than the ClearView Foundation. In 2015, despite the existence of The ClearView Foundation and The Fundraising Center, The Big Foundation also created a database-website in order to make philanthropic organizations more visible and transparent for public at large (The Big Foundation, Document 2). Again, these different seals and organizations screening philanthropic organizations for their transparency and accountability tend further to diversify Belgian philanthropy.[4]

In addition, in 2012, the University Chair in Philanthropy and Social Investment is created by The Oldest Fund, in order to develop teaching and research activities on philanthropy and its practices (The Oldest Fund, Document 1). The same year, The Big Foundation established its "Observatory of nonprofits and foundations" in order to produce knowledge on philanthropy (The Big Foundation, Document 8). Around the same time, The Transformative Foundation created a peer-learning group to gather European foundations and incite them to share strategies and best practices on philanthropy (The Transformative Foundation, Document 7). Although these three organizations aim to create knowledge on (Belgian) philanthropy, there appears to be few collaborations between them. Most recently a group of foundations attempted to create a collective research center responsible to create knowledge on philanthropy, similarly to the Center for Philanthropy Studies at the University of Basel, but this attempt failed (Event 8).

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[4] In the Netherlands and Switzerland, there appears to exist only one organization charged to deliver this type of seal to philanthropic organizations (von Schnurbein & Bethmann, 2015; Wiepking & Bekkers, 2015).

Finally, The Big Foundation and The Transformative Foundation respectively organize field-configuring events gathering philanthropic stakeholders in Belgium and abroad (The Big Foundation, Document 8; The Transformative Foundation, Document 8). And The YouthPower Foundation created in 2017 a collective impact project to start breaking philanthropic organizations' silos and gather various stakeholders to address collectively a common issue (The YouthPower Foundation, Document 5).

1.3.2.3 Belgian philanthropy's episode of contention: Need for structuration and arrival of social-mission platforms

From this short description of Belgian philanthropy and a focus on its pivotal moments, it becomes clear that Belgian organizational philanthropy is rather fragmented: its actors are hard to identify, quite heterogeneous and scattered, membership associations are multiple and uncoordinated. While philanthropy studies tend to show a progressive structuration of European philanthropy, it can be argued that Belgium – although it has implemented formal and similar changes than its European neighbors (law modification, collective interest organizations) – struggles to organize its philanthropy.

Yet, Belgian philanthropy did not escape the entrepreneurial and digital evolutions. Along with these evolutions came other types of philanthropic organizations and other forms of philanthropic practices. For instance, foundations exclusively centering on venture philanthropy and impact investing emerged (such as the Family Foundation). Other collective interest organizations were also created to provide professional support to philanthropic organizations and build their capacity to undertake their philanthropic mission more strategically, effectively, and efficiently (such as Funds4Impact). As a result, Belgian organizational philanthropy is still growing increasingly heterogeneous. The necessity to structure the field felt after the amendment of the law is still real and seems to become even more pressing. There is a real necessity to better discern what it means to use private resources for public purposes, how to do so and who allocates these private resources. Belgian organizational philanthropy seems to have reached a climax and experience an episode of contention.

This episode of contention can notably be observed with the arrival in Belgium of social-mission platforms. These platforms emerged against the backdrop described hereabove and framed the need for their tools on a similar diagnosis than philanthropic organizations. They acknowledged the difficulty for resource-

seeking and -providing organizations – but also various other stakeholders of society (e.g., for-profit businesses, public bodies) – to meet and work together, the need to build organizations' operational capacities, as well as the low involvement of citizens in social actions.

Combining entrepreneurial and digital approaches to philanthropy, social-mission platforms position themselves as intermediary mechanisms to provide operational support, to connect various societal stakeholders, and to boost communities (of citizens) around social and environmental issues (Dessein, 2017; Vrielynck & Boulanger, 2018). They span across multiple groups of stakeholders that otherwise do not meet or have more difficulties to meet (such as citizens or for-profit businesses and nonprofit organizations) and bridge available resources and unmet needs. They intend to help philanthropic organizations harness the power of new technologies to make fundraising and volunteers' recruitment simpler, more efficient, and dynamic, so that resource-seeking organizations have more time, money and energy to focus on addressing social and environmental issues (Viviers, Lebrun, & Robin, 2020). Against the Welfare tradition of Belgium, they want to democratize philanthropic action and argue that it is not reserved to a wealthy elite. They aim to give citizens the possibility to get more largely involved in their local community by allowing them to perform micro-acts of social engagement (episodic volunteering, micro-donations) (Xhauflair, Dessy, & Depoorter, 2018).

Interestingly, while social-mission platforms identified Belgian philanthropy's failures, they did not specifically refer to philanthropy or its organizations. Rather than a disruptive force, these platforms emerged in Belgium in a disparate, uncoordinated and isolated manner and were more akin to "free electrons" than to an organized movement (Bernholz, 2016). Social-mission platforms emerging at the fringes of Belgian philanthropy did not directly question philanthropic organizations and their modus operandi nor claimed to revolutionize its practices. On the contrary, they wished to be a complementary support to better tackle social and environmental issues (Xhauflair et al., 2018). Still, some established philanthropic organizations – among them a powerful foundation (The Big Foundation) and a bank (The Nextdoor Bank) – noticed the emergence of these social-mission platforms, took an active interest in them, and sought to better understand them. Conversely, other philanthropic organizations appeared more reluctant regarding social-mission platforms.

1.4   Empirical motivation of dissertation

Reviewing the literature on global contemporary philanthropy and its evolutions and zooming in on Belgium's embodiment of philanthropy's features and evolutions, I identify three aspects which I believe should deserve greater scholarly scrutiny. First, despite the existence of the 2002 law and the creation of The Association and other collective interest organizations, philanthropic organizations have few clear guidelines on how to behave and on how to organize their philanthropic actions. In addition, they are little incentivized to interact with one another and undertake collaborative projects. This incites me to look beyond the formal elements (i.e., regulations and collective interest organizations) structuring Belgian philanthropy and to dig deeper into the various and more "informal" structuring actions undertaken by individual philanthropic organizations. What are the actions undertaken and by whom? What motivates and enables these organizations to undertake these actions? How do these informal structuring elements relate to the formal ones? How do these influence Belgian philanthropy?

Second, while social-mission platforms are portrayed as combining entrepreneurial evolutions with digital evolutions and while they supposedly would give a more collaborative tone to philanthropy, little is known on social-mission platforms in Belgium. There is a need to look closer at these platforms and their particular organizing process to connect various societal stakeholders; and especially since most popular examples of these platforms are embedded in an Anglo-Saxon context. Who are Belgian social-mission platforms? What are their practices? How do they encourage collaborative actions? How does the Belgian philanthropic context influence their emergence and development? In October 2016, The Big Foundation and The Nextdoor Bank started to ask themselves similar questions. In order to get answers, they asked the University Chair in Philanthropy and Social Investment to identify and document social-mission platforms. My PhD journey started in this context, responding to a request from Belgian philanthropy's practitioners. While this request confirmed the need to better understand social-mission platforms as emphasized in philanthropy literature, it also gave a specific direction to my PhD dissertation. I will come back more thoroughly on this point in the transversal discussion part.

Third, divergences in how Belgian philanthropic organizations welcome social-mission platforms – some including them in philanthropy while others adopting a more reluctant stance – incite me to question the type of relationships existing between social-mission platforms and philanthropic organizations. Why would some philanthropic organizations include social-mission platforms and others exclude them? Do inclusive philanthropic organizations interact with social-mission platforms? And with exclusive philanthropic organizations? And if so, to what extent do they interact? And with what influence on Belgian philanthropy? Again, my belonging to the University Chair and my relationship with The Big Foundation and The Nextdoor Bank in the framework of their commissioned study gave me a particular insider-outsider position to study Belgian philanthropy's boundaries. I reflect more deeply on this position and its significance for my findings in the transversal discussion part.

To address these three empirically-grounded questions, we adopt the theoretical lenses of institutional theory, and more specifically fields theory, as outlined in the following section.

2   Theoretical positioning and research questions

To observe the empirical context of Belgian organizational philanthropy, its incumbent organizations, the arrival of platform-based newcomers and its implications, I build on institutional theory and, more specifically, on research on fields. Agreeing with Barman (2016, p. 454) who states that "field theory provides the best conceptual framework for understanding the conditions underlying the origins, diffusion, and likely consequences of new and much championed vehicles of social welfare", I show in this section the particular relevance of fields theory's core constructs to study contemporary philanthropy. Drawing parallels between philanthropy studies and institutional literature, I formulate three research questions addressing understudied issues in both bodies of literature.

2.1   Fields' structuration dynamics: boundaries and institutional infrastructure

At the core of social sciences, the construct of field was first extensively delineated by Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) and later borrowed by social movement and organization theorists, both shedding a particular light on the construct (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012; Martin, 2003; Wooten & Hoffman, 2017). Different terms are more or less interchangeably used: interorganizational field (Leblebici,

Salancik, Copay, & King, 1991), organizational field (DiMaggio, 1991), institutional field (Zietsma, Groenewegen, Logue, & Hinings, 2017) or strategic action field (Fligstein & McAdam, 2011). And different definitions are commonly referred to. Bourdieu defines a field as "a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97). DiMaggio & Powell (1983) state that a field comprises "a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies and other organizations that produce similar services or products". Scott (1995, p. 56) understands a field as "a community of organizations that partakes of a common meaning system and whose participants interact more frequently and fatefully with one another than with actors outside the field". Closer to social movement literature, Fligstein & McAdam (2011, p. 3) outline the field as "a meso-level social order where actors (who can be individual or collective) interact with knowledge of one another under a set of common understandings about the purposes of the field, the relationships in the field (including who has power and why), and the field's rules".

Crossing these various definitions is the tension between macro-level structures ("configuration", "recognized area of institutional life", "common meaning system" or "social order") on one side, and micro-level interactions ("relations", "interact frequently and fatefully", "knowledge of one another") on the other side. In this sense, fields are meso-level domains which existence relies on structuration dynamics (Zietsma et al., 2017). Structuration dynamics can be broadly defined as the "processes of reproduction and stabilization of structures arising from the ongoing engagement of actors in specific interaction patterns" (Alaimo, 2021, p. 4). Field structures – or social, moral and political order in fields – are thus the outcome of actors' negotiations and interactions (Hehenberger et al., 2019). As Bourdieu explicitly states, "to think in terms of field is to think relationally" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 96). While field structures guide field members' behaviors and interactions, interactive processes further "feed into the structuration of institutional field" (N. Phillips, Lawrence, & Hardy, 2000, p. 34). As interactive processes occur among organizational actors, field structuration is an inter-organizational phenomenon. The type of field structure thus directly depends on the type of inter-organizational interactions among its members. (Alaimo, 2021; Scott, Deschenes, Hopkins, Newman, & McLaughlin, 2006).

As such, fields allow to simultaneously observe interactions at two levels: internally – with other field members – and externally – in dialogue with its broader environment (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017). Fields reflect how organizations gather and form relational spaces to involve one another and develop shared understandings and meanings to govern collective matters (Leibel, Hallett, & Bechky, 2018); as well as how these understandings and meanings – eventually forming field institutions – constrain social action, legitimate some types of actions and decisions over others, and pressure organizations to conformity (Scott, 1994). In other words, the field construct provides a unit of analysis and theoretical lenses to understand actors' institutional embeddedness and individual agency, and subsequently to account for homogeneity and heterogeneity as well as for situations of stasis and change (Barman, 2016).

Accordingly, essential to fields' creation and structuration dynamics are the notions of boundaries and infrastructure (Grodal, 2018; Hinings, Logue, & Zietsma, 2017; Kipping & Kirkpatrick, 2013). On one hand, boundaries bound the field and distinguish its inside from its outside. Organizations within boundaries categorize themselves as similar, have mutual awareness of one another and of their involvement in a common endeavor. Conversely, organizations outside boundaries are categorized as different from those inside and interact less with them. Boundaries therefore imply the idea of field membership (Lawrence, 2004). To distinguish field members from non-members, scholars draw on two types of boundary: symbolic and social boundaries (Lamont & Molnár, 2002). The symbolic boundary defines the central and distinctive characteristics specifying what it means to belong to the field – that is, meanings and practices which organizations collectively negotiate, recognize, share and enact through their interactions (Leibel et al., 2018). Out of these shared meanings and practices, the field's collective rationality and identity emerge. Field members know who they are and what they are allowed to do (Glynn, 2008; Wry, Lounsbury, & Glynn, 2011).

Organizations fitting a field's characteristics can claim membership and subsequently a social position within the field. Each organization is structurally located within the field and positioned vis-à-vis other field members (Barman, 2016; Lawrence, 2004). And each position varies according to the amount and type of (non)material resources (monetary social, cultural…) it grants to the organization which occupies it (Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008). Access to resources defines the social boundary. Resources being unequally distributed, fields are hierarchically stratified (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Scholars distinguish between

incumbent organizations which are at the core of their field and enjoy important resources and power. Incumbents identify strongly with the field and thus wield a strong influence on its shared meanings and practices. At the opposite, challengers and newcomers are peripheral organizations which gravitate or emerge at the fringes of the field. Enjoying lesser resources and power, these field members tend to identify weakly or only temporarily with the field and to enter and leave it depending on available opportunities. Challengers in one field can be incumbents in another (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012; Grodal, 2018; Zietsma et al., 2017).

As such, social positions influence and constrain organizations' capacity to advance their interest and their pattern of interaction with others. Domination, competition, and coalition run through fields (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). While collective rationality and identity initially emerge from organizations' interactions, it eventually comes to take a taken-for-granted aspect as interactions grow in intensity and as meanings and practices are reproduced. In turn, collective rationality and identity strengthen and shape interaction patterns, legitimizing or sanctioning organizations' behaviors. It becomes institutionalized (Hehenberger et al., 2019). As a result, organizations have to navigate with a constrained set of possible actions and interactions that are structured by the network of relationships in which they are embedded and by field's rules (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017).

In this sense, boundaries do not only define field membership, they serve to regulate fields' internal dynamics, portray an outward image and manage the entry of potential newcomers (Grodal, 2018; Lamont & Molnár, 2002; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). The more collective rationality and identity strengthen, the less field boundaries are permeable – that is, open to ideas and practices from other fields (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996; Kipping & Kirkpatrick, 2013; van Wijk, Stam, Elfring, Zietsma, & Den Hond, 2013)

On the other hand, the institutional infrastructure forms the architecture of the field (Barman, 2016; Greenwood, Raynard, Kodeih, Micelotta, & Lounsbury, 2011). While the creation and (initial) structuration of fields require boundaries to stimulate and develop collective rationality, the further development of fields build on infrastructural mechanisms which drive and guide organizations' involvement with one another and manage and sustain collective rationality (Hinings et al., 2017). In other words, fields' existence and organizations' action and interaction go beyond shared meanings and practices. Once meanings and practices are

developed, they need to be diffused in order for field values to be collectively enacted, behaviors to be enforced and social coordination to occur effectively and intensively (Compagni, Mele, & Ravasi, 2015).

In this sense, the notion of institutional infrastructure further enriches understanding of fields as relational spaces. While collective rationality emerging out of organizations' interaction increasingly becomes taken-for-granted and evolves into field institutions constraining organizational behaviors, these institutions also provide enabling mechanisms for organizations to keep acting and interacting in an appropriate and predictable manner (Zietsma et al., 2017). This stresses the idea that institutions are not self-reproducing, but are prone to entropic tendencies if not actively maintained (Dacin, Munir, & Tracey, 2010; Dover & Lawrence, 2010).

The idea of institutional infrastructure is first introduced by Greenwood and colleagues (2011) to emphasize the need to go beyond logics and to draw attention to a structural lens on field. It is then further refined by Zietsma and colleagues (2017) and Hinings and colleagues (2017) who build on seminal articles (Compagni et al., 2015; Marquis & Raynard, 2015; O'Sullivan & O'Dwyer, 2015). Defined as the mechanisms "binding a field together" and "underpinning field activity" (Hinings et al., 2017, pp. 163, 165), institutional infrastructure encompasses and extends field governance. While field governance comprises the formal mechanisms (e.g., regulatory frameworks, collective interest organizations) maintaining fields' rules, institutional infrastructure also involves the informal mechanisms (e.g., cultural norms, assumptions, templates, field-configuring events) further supporting and reinforcing these rules (Faulconbridge & Muzio, 2021). Taking this structural lens on field, scholars combine their understanding of actors populating fields from a spatial perspective (core-periphery-outside) with a role-centric approach (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017). Responsibility of building, expanding and maintaining fields' infrastructural mechanisms falls to specific actors, which are variously called: field governance units (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012), field-structuring or -governing organizations, field coordinators, arbiters of taste (Zietsma et al., 2017).

In their study of social and environmental guidelines for project finance, O'Sullivan & O'Dwyer (2015) categorize infrastructural mechanisms in three systems: meaning, operational and relational. The meaning system consists of all mechanisms enabling actors to precisely define the shared meanings of the field,

the specific characteristics depicting field members and their common endeavor (e.g., definitions, reports, discourses). The operational system provides field members with mechanisms to walk the talk, that is to translate meanings into practices (templates, off-the-shelf tools, organizational vehicles). The relational system relates to the connection among actors, embodied in events, meetings, networks. These three systems are linked to one another. For instance, events may foster new connections among actors or bring new actors into the field. This stimulates sensemaking dynamics and revises field meanings. In turn this may lead to the creation of new practices (Hinings et al., 2017). Ultimately, while boundaries initially bound the arena where field infrastructure develops, the further elaboration and extension of institutional infrastructure further (re)draw boundaries, membership, and status ranking.

Boundaries and institutional infrastructure vary depending on the type and condition of fields. Scholars distinguish between two types of fields (exchange field and issue field) and four field conditions (established, contested, aligned, and fragmented).

2.2   Two types of fields: exchange field and issue field

Exchange fields are associated to a first stream of field research led by institutional theorists of the 1970/1980s (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; J. Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Building on the seminal definition of DiMaggio & Powell (1983, p. 148) conceiving fields as "recognized areas of institutional life", exchange fields are bounded spaces forming around an industry, market, profession or technology common to focal populations of organizations. A population is typically defined as "a collection or aggregate of organizations that are alike in some respect" (Zietsma et al., 2017, p. 396) and "that compete for the same resources" (Alaimo, 2021, p. 3). Organizations belonging to the focal population produce and distribute particular goods and services and are involved in market exchanges with one another and with other relevant partners which provide resources, consume goods and services or provide governance (e.g., state, professional and trade associations, consumers) (Barman, 2016; Scott et al., 2006). As these organizations strive to coordinate and stabilize their exchanges, there is a relative homogeneity among them. This is not to say that exchange fields are not hierarchically stratified, as organizations still compete for resources, status, market shares. In addition, meanings and practices are likely to be homogeneously shared by organizations

belonging to the focal population, while partners embedded in other populations may display some heterogeneity (Zietsma et al., 2017).

The fundamental rationale of this first stream is that organizations face an uncertain environment. In order to reduce uncertainty and ensure their survival, organizations shape their behaviors according to what is approved and perceived as legitimate by their peers and partners (Barman, 2016; J. Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Behaviors are thus subject to institutional pressures (cultural-cognitive, normative and regulative) and tending toward mimetic, normative and coercive isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Exchange fields are thus conceived as field of forces (Martin, 2003), "durable structure" (Furnari, 2018, p. 324), "predominantly static in [their] configuration, unitary in [their] makeup" (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017, p. 59).

Boundaries of exchange fields tend to be rather strong, although this may vary. Exchange fields formed around professions tend to comprise professional organizations policing and enforcing their boundaries around professional practices and erecting legal and educational entry barriers (Bucher, Chreim, Langley, & Reay, 2016; Kipping & Kirkpatrick, 2013; Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012). Conversely, exchange fields formed around an industry tend to display rather settled boundaries protecting shared meanings and practices but may demonstrate some permeability in the face of new entrants suggesting innovative practices (Leblebici et al., 1991; Munir, 2005). Innovations' diffusion and adoption may thus be greater in industry exchange fields than in professional exchange fields (Zietsma et al., 2017).

As the focus of this first stream is mainly to understand the mechanisms leading to top-down diffusion and adoption of meanings and practices in existing fields (N. Phillips et al., 2000), the role of organizational actors, their interaction as well as power struggles in field structuration and change is rather neglected (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009; Greenwood & Hinings, 1996). In the face of this depoliticized and top-down view, a second stream of field research develops as from the 1990s with the aim of moving beyond stability and explaining instances of variations (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017). Second stream researchers do not conceptualize fields as centering around market exchanges, but rather as forming "around issues that bring together various field constituents with disparate purposes" (Hoffman, 1999, p. 352).

Issues emerged following, among others, exogenous shocks, increased awareness of collective problems or (technological) opportunities, but also from fields' hierarchical stratification (Zietsma et al., 2017). As such, rather than focusing on the influence of taken-for-granted institutions, this second stream brings back to the fore social positions and the resources unequally conveyed by these positions (Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008; Wild, Lockett, & Currie, 2020). Actors less advantaged by their field's hierarchical structure tend to raise issues and frame them as "unsettled matters of importance" and "in need of future action and discussion" (Furnari, 2018, p. 326). Acting upon the issue, these actors strive to change the field's social order and enhance their position (Battilana, 2006). Therefore, the second stream of research emphasizes struggle within fields rather than sharedness.

Both instances of challengers and incumbents are found acting as institutional entrepreneurs and change agents undertaking institutional work (Battilana et al., 2009; Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006; Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Leblebici et al., 1991). Similarly, while some studies show that in issue fields incumbents are likely to "capture the issue" (O'Sullivan & O'Dwyer, 2015, p. 35) to a greater extant as they "identify strongly with the field" (Grodal, 2018, p. 785), other accounts are more tempered and assume that, as multiple and various populations interact, none of them is likely to entirely dominate the field (Furnari, 2018; Zietsma et al., 2017).

Issues' emergence being periodic, fields are perceived as always "in some flux as the process of contention is ongoing and the threats to an order always in existence" (Fligstein & McAdam, 2011, p. 5). Boundaries are more relaxed, permeable, and even contested, and membership and status ranking are more fluid in issue fields than in exchange fields (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012; W. Powell, Oberg, Korff, Oelberger, & Kloos, 2016). The variety and number of actors interacting with one another as well as power (im)balances among them depend on the issue at stake (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017). With each new issue or reframing of existing issue come new field entrants which increase diversity and blur action and interaction's appropriateness. Characteristics defining field's identity are abundant, ambiguous, and difficult to observe (Grodal, 2018; Lawrence, 2004). What is inside and what is outside the field become less clear. In the case of issue fields, porosity of boundaries appears important. For issue fields to exist and develop, the issue at stake needs to attract a "critical mass" (Furnari, 2018, p. 328) of support, so that enough actors feel concerned and act upon it.

Scholars argue that field evolution would differ depending on whether the field is characterized as an exchange field or an issue field (Zietsma et al., 2017). While exchange fields progressively and increasingly tend toward isomorphism and structuration, issue fields would never completely settle as there is no "truly consensual taken-for-granted reality" (Fligstein & McAdam, 2011, p. 3). Issues affect multiple populations, each embedded in its own exchange field with their own collective rationality and institutional infrastructure. As such, while exchange fields have a well-known and legitimate field-structuring actor, issue fields are said to have multiple and competing ones (Zietsma et al., 2017). As actors from these populations gather around issues in order to negotiate and compete over their meanings and practices, they hold various interpretation of issues at stake. Actors may agree that issues need to be addressed but disagree on how to do so (Furnari, 2018). They have different perceptions of opportunities and constraints. On one hand, this highlights that issues have no objective meaning but are socially constructed (Benford & Snow, 2000; Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Goffman, 1974).

On the other hand, it emphasizes the significance of other related fields. Issue fields are to be conceived as "linked arenas" (Furnari, 2016, p. 553) embedded in a broader environment of overlapping other fields (Barman, 2016; Fligstein & McAdam, 2012). Accordingly, rather than fields of forces, issue fields are "fields of play" (Martin, 2003), "fields of struggle" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), zone of "institutional war" (Hoffman, 1999, p. 352), or "spaces for strategic action" (Fligstein & McAdam, 2011).

Debates and negotiation among differently embedded actors over issue interpretation is consequential for issue fields' structuration dynamics (R. Meyer & Höllerer, 2010). Once actors agree on a settlement, they may start forming alliances and collectively develop new meanings and practices accordingly. Subsequently a new collective rationality emerges, and so are its inherent legitimate options constraining actors' future behaviors (Furnari, 2018). In this sense, the issue being settled, the issue field would disappear, and various actors integrate the new collective rationality to their respective exchange fields. Alternatively, the issue field as a whole may settle and start its own structuring process. A new field infrastructure emerges on the basis of the new collective rationality and boundaries formalize around common grounds found by disparate actors (Furnari, 2014; Mair & Hehenberger, 2014). Hypothetically, settling issue fields may evolve into exchange fields. The relationship between the two types of fields remains a vivid discussion between institutional scholars (Zietsma et al., 2017). When empirically

studying fields, it is important to distinguishing between exchange and issue fields, as their differences in boundaries and institutional infrastructure lead to different pressures and therefore to different effects of field maintenance and change dynamics (Micelotta, Lounsbury, & Greenwood, 2017).

2.3 *Four conditions of fields: established, aligned, contested, and fragmented*

Fields' conditions should not be confused with their lifecycle stages. Fields are sometimes described as "mature" (Delmestri & Greenwood, 2016; Greenwood, Suddaby, & Hinings, 2002; Reay & Hinings, 2005) or "emergent" (Maguire, Hardy, & Lawrence, 2004; Moody, 2008; Patvardhan, Gioia, & Hamilton, 2015). Such description implicitly gives a vision of fields as evolving according to a linear process. An emergent field would automatically be unorganized, poorly structured, while maturing field would necessarily tend toward structuration and become settled (Zietsma et al., 2017). Yet, it has been shown that mature fields can become contested, unsettled, and disrupted, return to an unorganized state and change (Greenwood et al., 2002; Hoffman, 1999; Leblebici et al., 1991). Similar to the emergence of issues prompting the creation of issue fields, contestation and disruption of mature fields can come from exogenous shocks (e.g., political, economic, or technological changes at the societal level), or be endogenously caused by field members acting as agents of change (either incumbents, challengers or newcomers) (Micelotta et al., 2017).

Therefore, beyond defining the type of field (exchange or issue), better specifying field conditions is also essential to better appraise how these affect processes of maintenance and change (Barman, 2016; Micelotta et al., 2017). To do so, scholars distinguish two dimensions of institutional infrastructure – its degree of coherency (unitary or competing set of institutions) and of elaboration (more or less infrastructural mechanisms) (Zietsma et al., 2017) and built a four-fold typology of field conditions – established (high coherency and elaboration), aligned (high coherency and low elaboration), contested (low coherency and high elaboration), and fragmented (low coherency and elaboration) (Hinings et al., 2017).

Established fields display a great amount of formal and informal infrastructural mechanisms which mutually reinforce one another. Meanings are taken-for-granted and coherently encoded into widely accepted practices (Fligstein & McAdam, 2011). Boundaries are strong and characteristics required to claim membership are unambiguous (Lawrence, 1999). As such, relationships between field members are

clearly defined. They have a great sense of collective identity and of their involvement with one another in a common endeavor as well as what legitimate behaviors to adopt in order to act and interact (Scott et al., 2006; Zietsma et al., 2017). Established fields are therefore relatively stable and subject to institutional pressures, as their institutions are highly legitimated. This stability is further enforced, and social order actively reproduced by a strong dominance order. It is clear who is at the core or at the periphery of the field (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012). Incumbents (i.e., core actors and collective interest organizations such as professional or trade associations) enjoy great power and their authority is recognized as legitimate by other field members (Furnari, 2018; Rao, Morrill, & Zald, 2000). Newcomers have more difficulty to enter an established field, to alter its power structure and create or take a social position for themselves (Lawrence, 2004). Being recognized areas of institutional life, with high levels of consensus, enforced standards, and strong inter-organizational relations, established fields embody the latest stage of structuration.

On the contrary, fragmented fields display few and uncoordinated infrastructural elements. They are said to be "incompletely institutionalized" (Leblebici et al., 1991, p. 337) or "weakly institutionalized" (Kipping & Kirkpatrick, 2013, p. 782). Field members have thus a lesser clear idea of what behaviors are legitimate, as multiple meanings and practices coexist and may compete for taken-for-grantedness (Leibel et al., 2018). Dominance order is weaker, as members are "less certain about the value and durability of their own positions" (Lawrence, 2004, p. 135). Institutional pressures being weaker, actors have a larger room for maneuver (Battilana et al., 2009). By virtue of dependent interests, field members are relatively mutually aware of one another, but consensus on goals and standards is low and no definite and regular patterns of interaction exist among them or they have broken apart due to disagreement (Fligstein & McAdam, 2011; Maguire et al., 2004). Boundaries are therefore subject to debate and rather permeable or ambiguous. Incumbents are likely to be disorganized, with less or no legitimate influence over the field (Rao et al., 2000) and more likely to strategically cooperate with challengers and newcomers bringing innovations from field fringes (Lawrence, 2004; Leblebici et al., 1991). Unlike established fields, fragmented fields may have multiple collective interest organizations with overlapping jurisdiction (Furnari, 2018).

Between these two extremes (fragmented vs. established), we find contested and aligned/aligning fields. Within contested fields, conflict is growing and field members framing divergent meanings and practices overtly compete with one another (Zietsma et al., 2017) – contrary to fragmented fields where competition may be more moderate or inexistent as fewer infrastructural elements support actors' interactions. Contested fields may partition and subfields may emerge, as separate groups develop their own coherent infrastructure (Faulconbridge & Muzio, 2021). Within aligning fields, members share meanings and practices but still need to develop infrastructural elements to diffuse them and develop a collective identity (Hinings et al., 2017).

As types and conditions of fields are compared, fragmented fields appear to have a lot in common with issue fields and the distinction between the various concepts is not always clear. Paying attention to fragmented and issue fields and how they are conceptualized highlight issues of fields' emergence, trajectories, and sustainability. These remain ontological and empirical concerns in institutional research (Hinings et al., 2017; Kipping & Kirkpatrick, 2013). Scholars of the first stream argue that in order to exist fields need to display fundamental elements: a mutual awareness of participants, their negotiations and interactions over meanings and practices, which standardize into prescribed and legitimized behaviors, the development of a collective rationality and identity as well as patterns of domination and coalition. In turn, the degree according to which these elements vary indicate the stage of structuration of fields: the higher the level of consensus on meanings and practices is, the more standardized and legitimate behaviors are, the stronger the network of inter-organizational relationships is and the more defined patterns of domination are, the more established a field is (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 2014).

Conceiving fields as "locale in which organizations relate to one another" (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017, p. 64), scholars of the second stream rather lay emphasis on inter-organizational interactions and the relational spaces they form, than on the effect of the field on these organizations. Fields exist primarily because organizational actors refer to one another and not specifically because of hierarchical arrangements or network ties among them. Subsequently, fields are not always in use but only come alive when actors interact. Upon emergence, issue fields are usually more akin to projects. They display very few – if no – indicators of structuration and are thus highly fragmented: diversified meanings and practices,

weak inter-organizational relationships, and uncoordinated patterns of interactions (Furnari, 2014; Hehenberger et al., 2019).

Considering these two conceptualizations of fields, the core question becomes: at what point is a relational space sufficiently structured to be considered as a field or, in other words, how many indicators of structuration should a space display to be viewed as forming a field? Reversely, at what point is a field too fragmented – that is, not displaying enough indicators of structuration – to still be called a field? Furthermore, as fields form and move along their evolution trajectories, at what point can they be considered as developing collective rationality and going through a structuring process? As scholars are still unsure of the definition and empirical mobilization of fragmented fields as well as of the settlement and structuration process of issue fields, the relation between each field type and condition is unclear, as is the existence of established issue fields and their difference with established exchange fields (Zietsma et al., 2017).

In their concluding remarks, Scott and colleagues (2006, p. 710) point out that "highly structured, institutionalized organization fields do not arise because of a clarion call from a god". The authors argue that early signs of structuration should be further considered when theorizing and studying the different stages of structuration through which fields move. They mention, among others, the presence of influential proponents, organization of conferences, development of metrics and release of publications, which highlight the issue, help focus actions and interactions and attract increased support. They encourage researchers to pay attention to "the labors of single, separated individuals and organizations" (Scott et al., 2006, p. 710) This call is more recently repeated by Wooten and Hoffman (2017) who argue that the future of field research lies in the understanding of the roles and activities played by some members in order to advance their field.

In other words, to advance definition and empirical mobilization of the concept of fields – and more so of fragmented and issue fields - there is a need to focus on micro-level interactions underpinning fields' structural perspective. This would allow to witness and appraise power distribution and how field members and field structure mutually influence each other.

2.4 Belgian organizational philanthropy as a fragmented issue field

In the light of this discussion on fields' conceptualization, of the distinction between exchange field and issue field as well as of the review of recent philanthropy studies, I chose to characterize the contemporary field of organizational philanthropy as an issue field. Philanthropy being an essentially contested concept, its specific and distinct characteristics are rather open and evolving with their time and context (Daly, 2012). As such, the use of private resources for public purposes regularly attracts various social groups embedded in different exchange fields (finances, entrepreneurship, international development, nonprofits, public affairs, and more recently tech-based domains (Barman, 2017; Bernholz, 2016)). Following societal-level developments and opportunities, newcomers enter philanthropy and raise the issues of what private resources to give, who can give these resources and how to give them for public purposes. Framing their own interpretation of these issues, issue proponents struggle more or less openly over philanthropy's meanings and practices (e.g., opposition between traditional and venture philanthropy (Mair & Hehenberger, 2014)). In other words, they relate and refer to one another. Following actors' interaction and negotiation, several layers of innovation add up and alter and expand the collective rationality of the field (Breeze, 2011). Currently, (sub)fields would start to develop their own structuring process based on new meanings and practices (e.g., impact investing (Hehenberger et al., 2019)) (Faulconbridge & Muzio, 2021).

Previous studies have shown how field incumbents play an instrumental role in shaping philanthropy, what it means, how it is done and with whom (Hwang & Powell, 2009; MacIndoe & Barman, 2012; Wiepking et al., 2021). The basic assumption of philanthropy resting upon the use of private resources for public purposes (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016b), a first group of incumbent philanthropic organizations are resource-providing organizations. Possessing the private resources, they are essential for this allocation to occur and will, therefore, identify strongly with the field and capture its issue (Grodal, 2018; O'Sullivan & O'Dwyer, 2015). Additionally, a second group of incumbent philanthropic organizations are collective interest organizations (such as membership associations and professional services organizations). Inwardly and outwardly representing the field, they have the capacity to shape how philanthropy, its meanings and practices are understood, adopted and enforced (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012; Mair & Hehenberger, 2014). In other words, these field members have a significant influence on philanthropic infrastructure, its meaning, operational and relational systems. Consequently, our

empirical analysis focuses on these two groups of incumbents in Belgium (see Figure 1 below).

In addition, based on the four-fold typology of field conditions and my understanding of Belgian philanthropy, I further characterize the field of Belgian organizational philanthropy as a fragmented field. Belgian organizational philanthropy comprises few and uncoordinated infrastructural mechanisms. The 2002 amendment of the law gives field members neither a clear idea of what it means to be a philanthropic organization nor specific guidelines on how a philanthropic organization should behave (Vandenbulke, 2016). Further, field members have few established networks to develop interaction patterns and incumbent resource-providers are rather disparate and disorganized (Mernier, 2017). It is argued that The Association created in 2004 should be strengthened, as it does not fully play its role of field-structuring actor (The Big Foundation, Document 8). Its members tend to disagree over philanthropy's meanings and practices. Other collective interest organizations exist (such as The Fundraising Center or The ClearView Foundation). While their members and jurisdiction overlap to some extent, these collective interest organizations conduct relatively few coordinated actions.

As such, Belgian philanthropy's boundaries are subject to debate. One of the most recent and striking examples is the recent arrival of platform-based newcomers who precipitated an episode of contention. Incumbents diverge regarding newcomers' belonging to the field. While some incumbents do not take newcomers into consideration, others frame them as having the potential to bring change into philanthropy and express the willingness to strategically collaborate with them.

As an empirical setting, Belgian organizational philanthropy demonstrates therefore both exogenous and endogenous conditions stimulating its structuration dynamics. Exogenous conditions refer to the arrival of social-mission platforms prompted by the tremendous development of new technologies and their use for social and environmental purposes. Endogenous conditions are those inherent in the issue-based type and fragmented condition of the field leading some incumbents to initiate strategies regarding their field infrastructure and boundaries. As Zietsma and colleagues (2017) put it, field are not merely "backdrops" for analysis.

This directly refers to the opening statement of this section and to the ontological and empirical challenges presented by existing conceptualization of fields: fields being meso-level domains, their structuration dynamics are shaped by both macro-

level structures and micro-level interactions (Barman, 2016; Wooten & Hoffman, 2017). In other words, fields reflect the paradox of embedded agency. Depending on their type and condition, fields provide actors with a scope of (im)possible actions. Then, possibilities are differently enacted by actors depending on their social position within the field and on the specific resources conveyed by this position (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009; Battilana et al., 2009). Therefore, precisely examining the nature of the field of philanthropy studied in this dissertation is essential, on one hand, to thoroughly understand the strategies enacted by incumbent philanthropic organizations regarding their boundaries and infrastructure and the organizational choices made by platform-based newcomers; and on the other hand, to appreciate how these strategies and choices reversely affect the type and condition of the field.

Figure 1 – The issue field of philanthropy and focus of the dissertation
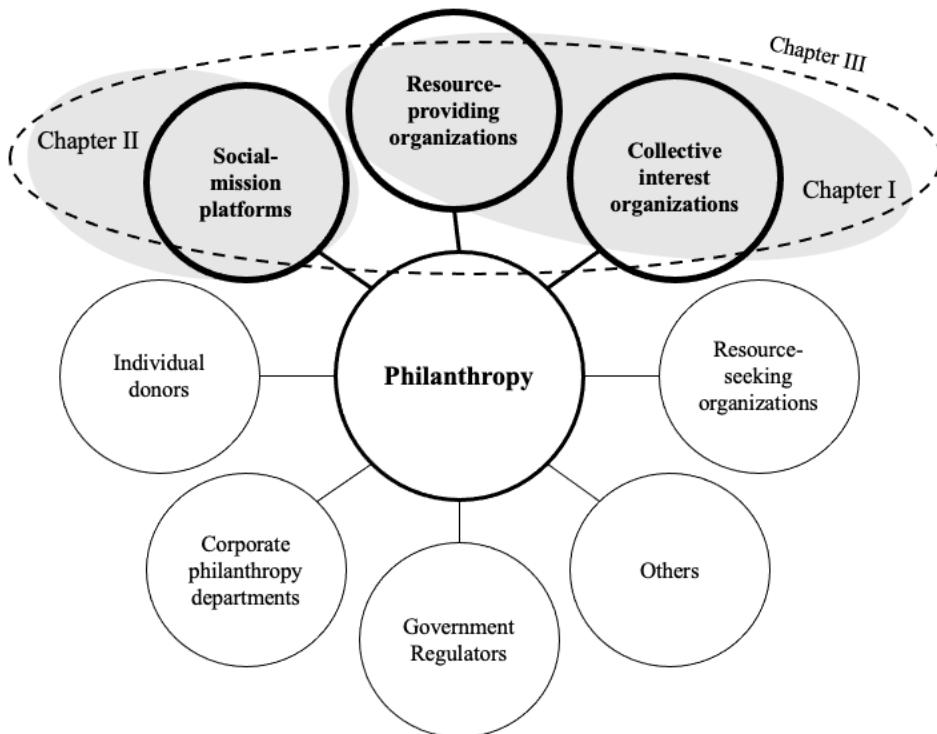
2.5 Research questions: position-taking strategies, organizational configurations, and boundary work

While boundaries and institutional infrastructure are at the core of field structuration dynamics, they do not exist on their own. They are created, maintained and disrupted by organizational actors (Hampel, Lawrence, & Tracey, 2017). Going beyond a spatial perspective of actors' position within fields (core actors, peripheral actors, middle-status actors or outsiders), scholars start to adopt a role-centric approach and to recognize that specific actors are instrumental in structuring their field infrastructure (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017). So far, scholars have mainly observed how collective interest organizations (professional, trade or industry associations and other membership associations) play this field-structuring role, what activities they undertake and how as well as under what conditions they may affect fields (Zietsma et al., 2017). Elaborating and expanding meaning, operational and relational systems (e.g., organizing field-configuring events, developing and enforcing standards, diffusing educational materials, lobbying the state), field-structuring actors have a unique, pivotal and multifaceted role and can be either conservative or progressive, either defending status quo or managing field-level change (Buchanan, 2016; Glynn, 2008; Greenwood et al., 2002; van Wijk et al., 2013).

Yet, although it is acknowledged that organizational actors are both structured by and structuring their institutional infrastructure, little is still known on field-structuring actors and their position in the field (Hinings et al., 2017). These actors have so far mainly been empirically observed in established exchange fields, where dominance order is clear, collective interest organizations and their jurisdiction are clearly defined and their authority legitimate (Greenwood et al., 2002; van Wijk et al., 2013). Therefore, little is known on field-structuring actors within fragmented issue fields, where either none or multiple collective interest organizations may exist and compete with each other (for an exception in fragmented professional fields, see Kipping & Kirkpatrick (2013)).

Little is also known on how field-structuring actors emerge in a field – that is, how some field members take a field-structuring position. Studying established exchange fields, scholars have implicitly portrayed the emergence and existence of these actors as passive and automatic: either collectively created by incumbents or imposed by the state and bearing "the imprint of the most powerful incumbents" (Fligstein & McAdam, 2011, p. 6; Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006). Yet, such passive

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and automatic emergence process is unlikely to reflect the disorganized situation of fragmented issue fields, where several field members may pursue different position-taking strategies and where these strategies may be differently received and endorsed by other field members (Battilana, 2006; Wild et al., 2020). Hence, documenting field-structuring position may constitute an important pathway to further the understanding of field structuration.

Accordingly, I first ask: *how do organizations make strategic use of an issue field's fragmented infrastructure to take a field-structuring position?* (see Chapter I)

While the type and condition of fields influence field's internal dynamics and how field members strategically position themselves, it also influences field's outward relationship and subsequently its membership. Within established exchange fields, the difference is clear between insiders and outsiders. When newcomers succeed to enter such fields, they usually bring along innovative practices directly (and radically) questioning the field's collective rationality and dominance order (Zietsma et al., 2017). Within fragmented issue fields, the boundary between insiders and outsiders is less clear, as various actors taking an interest in the issue at stake may regularly enter the field (Kipping & Kirkpatrick, 2013). As such, newcomers are arguably less perceived as exogenous forces than endogenous ones.

Moreover, the low degree of infrastructural mechanisms' elaboration and coherency of fragmented issue fields have two implications for newcomers' incoming and their relationship with and within the field. On one hand, innovative newcomers may not always clearly know who are the incumbents, what exactly are their meanings and practices and thus how exactly their innovation may influence the field's collective rationality (Furnari, 2018). On the other hand, while few taken-for-granted guidelines, standards or templates exist for field members – including incumbents – to adopt appropriate behaviors and foster their interaction with others, this also holds true for newcomers. Therefore, when configuring their organizations and seeking internal and external consistency, newcomers may combine organizing elements differently and adopt various organizational configurations (Miller, 1986; Mintzberg, 1980). This is reflected by the diversity of platform-based newcomers recently emerging at the fringes of philanthropy (Hinings, Gegenhuber, & Greenwood, 2018; McIntyre, Srinivasan, Afuah, Gawer, & Kretschmer, 2020; Messeni Petruzzelli et al., 2019).

Accordingly, I ask a second research question: *what different types of social-mission platforms exist, and how does each type build and manage their network of stakeholders in order to address societal issues?* (see Chapter II)

Finally, the incoming of newcomers directly relates to field boundaries and how field members – and especially incumbents – manage their boundaries (Lawrence, 2004). Distinguishing between fields' inside and outside and thus including some actors while excluding others, boundaries create systems of privileges where some actors access resources and opportunities and others do not (Grodal, 2018; Lamont & Molnár, 2002). This makes boundaries the object of practical and strategic consideration (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010, p. 192). As such, boundaries are not pre-existing, objectively fixed or immutable but are to be conceived as the product of actors' purposeful action and as continuously shaped (Langley et al., 2019; Lindberg, Walter, & Raviola, 2017) In this regard, Gieryn (1983) originally coined the notion of "boundary work" and research on this subject has burgeoned during the last decade (Cartel, Boxenbaum, & Aggeri, 2019; Comeau-Vallée & Langley, 2020; Glimmerveen, Ybema, & Nies, 2020; Helfen, 2015). Langley and colleagues (2019, p. 704) define boundary work as "the purposeful individual and collective effort to influence the social, symbolic, material or temporal boundaries, demarcations and distinctions affecting groups, occupations and organizations", as well as fields.

Scholars have empirically observed different types of boundary work undertaken by differently positioned actors (Bucher et al., 2016; Soundararajan, Khan, & Tarba, 2018). While incumbents tend to defend their boundaries to differentiate themselves, exclude others, and protect their field status quo (Gieryn, 1983; Helfen, 2015), challengers and newcomers attempt to use boundaries as junctures rather than barriers. They blur, weaken or breach boundaries in order to prompt inclusive and collaborative patterns or create new boundaries and spaces for themselves (Langley et al., 2019; Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005). Scholars have also highlighted that actors use various strategies (e.g., discourses, practices) and target various types of boundaries (e.g., symbolic or social) at different levels (e.g., organizational, field) (Grodal, 2018; Santos & Eisenhardt, 2009). Finally, scholars have recently shown that these different types of boundaries and boundary work interact. This interaction creates at times alignment and misalignment within the field and between the field and its broader environment, which in turn triggers cycles of change and stability (Grodal, 2018; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010).

In this vein, these scholars have started to empirically show the significance of maintaining some degree of permeability into boundaries. While strong boundaries help enforce shared meanings and practices and thus ensure field stability, they risk also to isolate the field from its broader environment, thus preventing it to adapt to society's evolutions. In turn, contradictions may appear between what is accepted within the field and approved in society. As the field becomes outdated, it may either fall into decay and tend toward entropy or become radically disrupted by outsiders increasingly exerting pressure for change (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). Facing innovation, field members have been observed to undertake simultaneously including and excluding boundary work to create temporary bounded spaces for experimentation in order to leave the field's social order intact in case of failure or ready to incrementally integrate innovative practices in case of success (Cartel et al., 2019; Furnari, 2014; Langley et al., 2019).

While these studies bring nuances and depth to the understanding of field boundaries as well as show the importance of boundary work in shaping field structuration dynamics, they have tended to neglect two substantial aspects. On one hand, scholars do not always precisely account for the type and condition of the field in which boundary work is undertaken. Yet, these are much likely to influence why and how actors engage in boundary work (Langley et al., 2019). On the other hand, scholars have tended to consider field populations as homogenous: all incumbents undertake defensive boundary work in the face of challengers breaching field boundaries; or all incumbents undertake at the same time collaborative work vis-à-vis one boundary and competitive work vis-à-vis another (Grodal, 2018; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). However, when considering fragmented issue fields, their porous boundaries and their weak institutional infrastructure, heterogeneity can be expected within field members and more so within a given population.

Accordingly, my third research question is the following: *how do incumbent organizations within a given population diverge in the ways in which they define symbolic and social boundaries of an issue field, and how these definition strategies interact to shape these boundaries?* (see Chapter III)

3   Epistemological stance and methodological approach

This section intends to clarify the epistemological stance and methodological approach adopted to address the three research questions framed in the light of the previous sections outlining the philanthropic context and the theory of fields. I start by explaining my adoption of an interpretivist epistemology and how interpretivism is consistent with my understanding of contemporary philanthropy and organizational fields. Then, I explain how interpretivism led me to adopt a global qualitative and abductive methodological approach to contribute to theory building on philanthropy and field research. Finally, I describe my data collection and analysis process. As data analysis is specific to each research question, detailed accounts are to be found in each individual chapter.

3.1   Epistemological stance

Clarifying the paradigm – "the basic belief system or worldview" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) – guiding the present research is significant to help the reader understand the subsequent methodological approach adopted (how data were collected and analyzed) as well as the knowledge contributions made to fields theory and philanthropy studies. Embracing a research paradigm implies for social science researchers to make ontological (what is the nature of social reality) and epistemological (how the researcher relates to what can be known) choices. These choices are commonly categorized along a continuum between objectivist and subjectivist approaches to social science (Cunliffe, 2011; Morgan & Smircich, 1980).

From the objectivist end, social reality is considered as external to and imposing itself on researchers' perceptions. Reality is thus a real, concrete given, and knowledge of this reality is objectively observable, measurable and predictable through the examination of empirically verifiable facts and the search for universal, generalizable principles. In this sense, objectivist ontology and epistemology are distinct and reflect a single hermeneutic. Researchers are neutral and have no influence on the phenomena they observe (Cunliffe, 2011; Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

At the opposite end of the continuum, subjectivism assumes that "social realities" are plural as their nature is to be found in individuals (researchers included) personal, contextual, and experiential interpretations and sensemaking of their world (Yanow & Ybema, 2009). Reality is thus relative, a "product of the human mind" (Cunliffe, 2011, p. 649). Knowledge of these realities is changeable, socially

constructed and to be apprehended through the exploration of individuals' different and multiple meanings and reasons for acting (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Prasad & Prasad, 2002). In this sense, subjectivist ontology and epistemology are related and reflect a double hermeneutic. Researchers' interpretation of observed phenomena is also contextual and co-created through the interaction between researchers and phenomena (Giddens, 1984).

The present research is located rather to the subjectivist end of the continuum and adopt a relativist ontology and an interpretivist epistemology (Yanow & Ybema, 2009). Interpretive research fits in a broad socio-constructionist philosophy (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Prasad & Prasad, 2002). Positivist researchers adopt an objective ontology and assume that there is one pre-existing and readily available reality, independent from any particular context. On the contrary, interpretivist advocates aim to explore how their research participants understand and interpret their own reality, how they relate to one another in continuously negotiating these realities, and how this interpretation and negotiation process occurs within a specific socio-historic context and time (Cunliffe, 2011; Sandberg, 2005).

As such, adopting an interpretivist paradigm appears relevant when studying philanthropy, its essentially contested and evolving nature. Philanthropy is best understood within its specific context and time and philanthropic action is a product of each philanthropic individual and organization' interpretation of grand societal challenges (Daly, 2012; Frumkin, 2010; von Schnurbein et al., 2021). How philanthropy evolves, how its actors relate to one another and why they act the way they do could therefore only be apprehended by viewing the phenomenon from the subjective perspectives of its participants. Adopting a positivist paradigm in the study of a social phenomenon such as philanthropy could risk imposing externally-constructed, academic conception on individuals and organizations studied and could hide their interpretation and collective negotiation (Chowdhury, 2014; Sulek, 2010b).

In this sense, the aim of interpretivist researchers is twofold. On one hand, interpretivists seek to understand the experienced world of their social participants, their multiple subjective interpretations. On the other hand, they seek, in their turn, to interpret and reconstruct these interpretations to provide a rich storytelling of the phenomenon (Prasad & Prasad, 2002; Yanow & Ybema, 2009). Contrary to socio-constructivist approaches placed further on the (inter)subjectivist end of the continuum (Cunliffe, 2008, 2011), interpretivism acknowledges that "the life-world

is the subjects' experience of reality, at the same time as it is objective in the sense that it is an intersubjective world" (Sandberg, 2005, p. 47). In other words, through their interactions, social participants constantly negotiate the very nature of reality on which they eventually agree and which – although constructed – transcends individual participants, is enacted in a similar way and becomes experienced as objective (Sandberg, 2005). As various participants' interpretations may conflict and as new and more informed interpretations may arise, these shared and agreed meanings of reality are open to change (Cunliffe, 2011; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This is consistent with our understanding of fields as meso-level relational bounded spaces where organizations interact with one another and are in dialogue with their broader environment (Barman, 2016; Wooten & Hoffman, 2017). In the short run, field boundaries and infrastructure are negotiated and built by field members; in the long run, field members are structured and constrained by their boundaries and infrastructure (Fligstein & McAdam, 2011; Hinings et al., 2017; Langley et al., 2019).

As I interpret philanthropic organizations and platform-based newcomers' interpretations of their social reality, I attempt to write accounts including as much as possible my research participants' perspectives. As such, my finding sections contain many quotes and examples of their various discourses and actions (Cunliffe, 2011). However, interpretivism reflecting a double hermeneutic, researcher and participants are interactively linked (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The findings presented in this dissertation are therefore the outcome of multiple voices interplaying (mine, my co-authors and research participants) as the research proceeded. What I observed depended on my own position vis-à-vis Belgian philanthropy, on my philosophical commitments, on the time of my data collection as well as on the individuals involved in the organizations I considered (Cunliffe, 2003). This means that there are other ways to look at philanthropy and social-mission platforms in Belgium and that I could not have a complete picture of the story at play. It is a story with missing chapters and blind spots.

More precisely, as my theorizing relies on my own interpretation, the description of the social phenomenon I provide in this dissertation reflects a process of sensemaking and is ineluctably partial and colored by my own contextualized understanding (Yanow & Ybema, 2009). Interpretive researchers are not neutral inquirers – no matter how hard they try to avoid injecting their personal bias – but are an instrument of their research process. My presence within the research context of Belgian philanthropy was of a particular nature, as I had an insider-outsider

position. The insider perspective notably resulted from my belonging to the University Chair in Philanthropy and Social investment and the conduct of a study commissioned by two philanthropic organizations. Accordingly, as I closely interacted with participants to co-construct data, findings, and theory, my presence in the field inevitably influenced – to a certain extent – participants' perspectives on their social reality (Chowdhury, 2014). The data I was able to collect thus depended on the relationship I was able to build with participants and on how much they were ready to share with me (Sandberg, 2005). A section of this dissertation's transversal discussion is dedicated to reflexive thoughts on my role and insider-outsider position in Belgian philanthropy and my involvement with its organizations.

3.2 *Methodological approach*

Issues of epistemology and methodology are linked, as the former pertains to questions regarding the nature of knowledge and the latter to methods used to generate that knowledge (Cunliffe, 2011). Consistent with my interpretive epistemological stance, this dissertation follows a qualitative and abductive methodological approach (Prasad & Prasad, 2002). This approach is useful to generate and elaborate theory on phenomena that are new and/or that have attracted little research so far, such as Belgian organizational philanthropy and social-mission platforms (Edmondson & McManus, 2007). My dissertation intends thus to be part of a programmatic effort to inspire other institutional and philanthropy researchers to study more thoroughly philanthropy's evolutions and fields' different stages of structuration. In this section, I explain my global methodological approach and provide an overview of how each chapter relates to this approach, clarifying the similarities and differences among the three chapters. This overview is helpful to specify the extent of my abductive process. Detailed methods are described at length within each chapter.

3.2.1 Chronology of a qualitative research

Qualitative research is particularly suited to document phenomenon that lack explanation, as qualitative data – that is, nonquantitative or nonstatistical data collection and analysis (Prasad & Prasad, 2002) – provide rich and detailed insights about research participants' (inter)subjective experiences of their social reality, about their meanings, interpretations, and negotiations of that reality and about the specific social context in which they are embedded (Cunliffe, 2011; Glaser &

Strauss, 2008). Hence, qualitative data collection and analysis allow to shed a clearer light on complex social processes (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007a; Suddaby, 2006).

My fieldwork – collecting and analyzing data – extends throughout my PhD journey, beginning in 2017 and ending in 2021 (see Table 1 below). This reflects my intimate, extensive and enduring commitment within the Belgian philanthropy empirical context. Within theory-building research, data collection usually stops when theoretical saturation is reached – that is, when the researcher does not learn anything new about the phenomenon observed (Glaser & Strauss, 2008). While I followed this principle, I was also constrained by the timing of my PhD journey which was bounded in a timeframe of four-to-five years. Furthermore, as I observe a phenomenon as it currently unfolds (i.e., the arrival of social-mission platforms in Belgian philanthropy), I only account for a part of the phenomenon. The story does not end with the conclusion of this dissertation and further research will be required to keep developing the story I begin to tell.

Throughout my fieldwork I collected data through four types of technique (semi-structured interviews (42), events observations (9), a focus group (1), archival documents (130)) and with three types of social actors (philanthropic resource-providing organizations (11), collective interest organizations (5), and platform-based newcomers (13)). As I focus on incumbent philanthropic organizations and on platform-based newcomers, I do not consider individual philanthropists into my empirical work and restrict my analysis to organizational philanthropy (Mair & Hehenberger, 2014). Tables 2.1., 2.2. and 2.3. below give a detailed description of data collected and organizations selected for interviews. To preserve anonymity of participants all organizations' names have been replaced by code names. In appendices are displayed Table 2.4. listing the archival documents and their code numbers as well as samples of interview guides. Each chapter composing this dissertation and answering one of the three research questions mobilizes a specific part of the data collection.

Table 1 – Duration of fieldwork

2016	2017			2018	2019	2020	2021
October	*February to March*	*March to July*	*October*	*October 2018*	*November 2018 to November 2019*	*July 2020 to April 2021*	
Request from 2 incumbents to document platform-based newcomers	3 interviews with observers	First wave of 7 interviews with platform-based newcomers	Focus Group	1 event observation Event 3	Second wave of 17 interviews with incumbent philanthropic organizations	Fourth wave of 8 interviews with incumbent philanthropic organizations	
		Avril – May			*December 2018* / *February to November 2019*		
		2 events observations Events 1 & 2			1 event observation Event 4	5 events observations Events 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9 + Third wave of 10 interviews with platform-based newcomers	
Consultation of archival documents (130)							

In October 2016 two incumbent philanthropic organizations (The Big Foundation and The Nextdoor Bank) asked the University Chair in Philanthropy and Social Investment to document social-mission platforms in Belgium (social crowdfunding, -timing, and – sourcing platforms). This request is at the start of my research process. Considering its significant influence on the whole process, I elaborate further on it in a dedicated section in the transversal discussion part of this dissertation. My PhD journey taking place within the University Chair in Philanthropy and Social Investment created in 2012 by a field member (The Oldest Fund), I occupied a particular position in the field of Belgian philanthropy – in-between outsider and insider researcher. Therefore, gaining and maintaining access to my fieldwork was not "a linear, neutral and, instrumental task" (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016, p. 536) but rather emphasized politics and power within the field and revealed to be an additional source of information in the light of which to interpret the social phenomenon observed.

The study commissioned by The Big Foundation and The Nextdoor Bank led me first to use a Delphi technique and conduct three exploratory interviews with philanthropy observers between February and March 2017. These observers were experts in philanthropy, venture philanthropy, impact investing and more broadly social investment. They worked in a European collective interest organization, were involved in the implementation of innovative philanthropic mechanisms in Belgium and specialized in consulting for philanthropic organizations. They were asked to explain what philanthropy is, wat its latest evolutions are, and what the specificities of the Belgian environment would be according to them. These interviews helped me broadly grasp the philanthropic phenomenon, contextualize my research setting and orient the subsequent framing of research questions and phases of data collection.

Following these observatory interviews and in order to respond to incumbents' request, I conducted a first wave of 7 interviews with 7 founders or managers of social-mission platforms. Interviewees were chosen based on their inside knowledge of the platform-creation project. Social-mission platforms were selected via several means. Some were pointed out to me by incumbents. Others were found during two public events organized by one incumbent in April and May 2017 and which I attended either as an active or passive participant. Still others were identified through radio podcasts, social networks, and a snowball technique.

Consistent with my theory-building purpose, research participants (both incumbents and newcomers) were selected not through a random sampling but because they fit the phenomenon studied and presented characteristics that made them suited to deepen my understanding of this phenomenon (Eisenhardt, 1989). Six out of the seven interviews of this first wave are used in Chapter II to document platforms' organizational configurations. Following interviews, a focus group was co-organized with one incumbent and gathered six platform founders/managers. This focus group is used in Chapters II and III respectively to further document and contrast the diversity of platforms' organizational configuration and to evidence the interactions between newcomers and incumbents and among newcomers.

Events played a particular role throughout my research process. As Wooten and Hoffman (2017, p. 60) explain, events turn the abstract and scholarly construct of field into "a place where interested parties meet". Observing events was thus instrumental in seeing a field come to life and in observing field members and newcomers' interactions as they occurred (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007a; Garud, 2008). Two first events were observed in April (*Philanthropy works!* (Antwerp), Event 1) and May (*Philanthropy works!* (Namur), Event 2) 2017 and were both organized by The Big Foundation. During the first event, I played an active role as I presented the preliminary insights of the commissioned study. Several newcomers also attended this event as speakers to present their platform on stage. During the second event, I was a visitor attending in the audience as several other incumbent philanthropic organizations. Fieldnotes taken during Event 1 are used in all chapters while fieldnotes taken during Event 2 are used in Chapter I. Overall, events mainly organized and attended by incumbents are used in Chapter I, as this chapter focuses on incumbents and their strategies regarding field infrastructure. Other events organized and attended by platform-based newcomers are mainly used in the two other chapters.

In October 2018, a third event (*Philanthropy & Platforms*, Event 3) was observed. Organized by the two incumbents who commissioned the study in order to present its results, this event took on a particular relevance in the framework of this dissertation. As various incumbent philanthropic organizations and platform-based newcomers attended this event, it explicitly highlighted the different degrees of interest among incumbents regarding newcomers. While some were greatly interested and willing to affiliate them to their organizational practices and more broadly into philanthropy, other were more reluctant and adopted a rather

discriminative and exclusive approach vis-à-vis social-mission platforms. Fieldnotes from Event 3 are used in Chapters II and III.

Differences in incumbents' positioning led me to conduct a second wave of 17 interviews with 14 incumbent philanthropic organizations (11 resource-providers and 3 collective interest organizations) between November 2018 and November 2019. Incumbents were selected through a snowball technique et for their relationship with platform-based newcomers. As I am a French-speaking researcher, I conducted most of my interviews in French. Therefore, my data collection tends to focus more on the French-speaking part of Belgium. This remark is also valid for platform-based newcomers. Although this is an important potential bias to acknowledge, I still believe that as most of incumbents interviewed were active at a national level, my research still gives a representative picture of Belgian philanthropic dynamics. This second wave of interviews is used in Chapters I and III to better understand, on one hand, incumbents' role in the structuration of their field and, on the other hand, their relationship with platform-based newcomers.

Between December 2018 and September 2019, I also attended five events incumbents organized, either as an active or passive participant. Events attended were both public (*Transformative Philanthropy* (Event 4), *Philanthropy & Society* (Event 6) and *YouthProject* (Event 7)) and more private events (e.g., meetings reserved to specific field members such as the *Chair's annual meeting* (Event 5) and the *Expertise center's meeting* (Event 8)). Accessing private events was useful in overcoming organizations' frontstage and public image sometimes largely conveyed during public events and interviews. These private events allowed me to observe the more backstage and real interactions, contestations and negotiations between organizations as they were protected from public scrutiny (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016; Mair & Hehenberger, 2014). Data gathered during these private events served to contrast information obtained during interviews and public events.

Chapter I relies on fieldnotes from Events 4, 5, 6 and 8 as these embodied incumbents' strategies to build their field infrastructure. Chapter II relies on fieldnotes from Event 7 as it provides an example of collaboration between one incumbent (The Citizenship Foundation) and one newcomer (SolyNet). And Chapter III relies on fieldnotes from Event 4, 6 and 7 as the first two were part of the discriminating strategy and the third one was part of the affiliating strategy.

From August to November 2019 and concurrently with the second wave of interviews, I conducted a third wave of 10 interviews with 10 platform founders/managers as well as attended as an active participant one event organized by one platform in October 2019 (*Stakeholders' meeting*, Event 9, used in Chapter II). Among these platforms were platforms which I had already met with in 2017 as well as new platforms which were brought to my knowledge during interviews with incumbents and which – for some of them – were not created yet in 2017. This third wave of interviews allowed me to refine my knowledge of these platforms and their particular organizational configurations. Nine out of ten are therefore used in Chapter II. They also allowed me to reflect on incumbents' affiliating and discriminating strategies and seven out of ten are thus used in Chapter III. Finally, three out of ten are used in Chapter I to offer newcomers' perception on incumbents' infrastructural strategies.

Finally, the last phase of data collection took place between July 2020 and April 2021. I conducted a fourth wave of 8 interviews with 8 incumbent philanthropic organizations (4 resource-providers and 4 collective interest organizations). One interview (The ClearView Foundation) is used in Chapter I to contrast The Big Foundation's infrastructural work. The seven other interviews are used in Chapter III to document the evolution of incumbents' relationship with platform-based newcomers and provide a limited longitudinal perspective on this recent social phenomenon. Throughout the research process, archival documents were consulted to help us triangulate information acquired during interviews and events observations (Rouse & Spencer, 2016).

Overall, Chapter I relies on data collected as from April 2017 until July 2020, comprising six events observations, 21 interviews with 18 organizations and related archival documents. Chapter II relies on data collected as from March 2017 until November 2019, comprising ten cases of social-mission platforms. Each case rests on three types of data: 15 interviews collected during the first (2017) and third (2019) waves of interviews conducted with platform-based newcomers. These interviews are complemented by four events observations during which platform founders/managers were speakers or attended in the audience. Finally, I consulted archival documents to gain background information on each platform. Chapter III reflects the whole research process and relies on data collected from 2017 until 2021. It comprises 31 interviews with 22 organizations, five events observations and related archival documents. Tables 2.3.1., 2.3.2. and 2.3.3. respectively provide details of data mobilized in each chapter.

3.2.2 A global abductive process

The present dissertation follows a global abductive process. Abduction – a cross between deductive and inductive processes – is particularly suited for three interrelated reasons. First, it allows researchers to iterate between empirical observations and extant theory (Cunliffe, 2011). In line with theory generation and elaboration purposes, Saetre and Van de Ven (2021, p. 9) argue that "the starting point of abduction for management scholars is noticing an anomaly in fieldwork, data analysis, reading literature, or teaching when our assumptions or understandings of existing models break down, and call for their revisions or extensions". They further explain that the likelihood of spotting anomalies depends on scholars' "prepared mind" (Sætre & Van de Ven, 2021, p. 10) – that is, their deep understanding of their phenomenon of interest and their theoretical lenses.

As mentioned, within interpretive research, researchers are instrument of their research process. Their findings reflect their philosophical commitments, their observational skills, the research context, the nature of their relationships with research participants (Yanow & Ybema, 2009). As such, while not entering the field of philanthropy with hypotheses to test as in deductive research or with a mind clear of theoretical constructs as in pure induction, I remained fully aware of my assumptions and knowledge of literature as well as opened to novelties (Suddaby, 2006). My research process began with empirically observing the particularities of Belgian organizational philanthropy when facing the arrival of social mission platforms; and by comparing these particularities to what I knew of contemporary philanthropy and fields theory.

Chapter I and III reflects this iteration between empirical observations and extant theory. My motivation and research question for both chapters emerged from noticing an anomaly in my fieldwork. For Chapter I, I wondered how come that in Belgian philanthropy the professional association – the Association – is so limited in its actions vis-à-vis philanthropy and that other philanthropic organizations – and especially The Big Foundation and The Transformative Foundation – have so much influence? This situation appeared quite different than the supposedly unique role of professional associations and other field-structuring actors as explained in fields theory (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012). For Chapter III, I was surprised by the heterogeneity of incumbents' response regarding platform-based newcomers. Some were ready to affiliate them to philanthropy, while others proved more discriminative. This heterogeneity within an incumbent population contrasted with

the homogeneous nature of populations described in institutional literature (Grodal, 2018).

Following these intuitive observations, I followed a variant of grounded theory (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012; Glaser & Strauss, 2008) and collected data (interviews, observations, documents) to document Belgian philanthropy's field infrastructure and boundaries, and the actors involved in their creation and maintenance. Simultaneously to data collection, I proceeded to data analysis and refined my knowledge of extant theory. Given this abductive process, my open coding and axial coding are constantly compared to institutional literature in order to eventually form abstract dimensions. Tables 3.1. and 3.2. in Chapter I and Tables 8.1., 8.2. and 8.3. in Chapter III offer a detailed account of my coding process.

Second, and in line with this first point and with my fieldwork, abduction is particularly suited because it allows researchers to iterate between data collection and analysis. Contrary to a logico-deductive and positivist model of theory-testing research, abductive and interpretive theory-building research makes no clear distinction between data collection and data analysis (Suddaby, 2006). During my research process, I thus collected and analyzed data simultaneously and iteratively. This allowed me to quickly acquire an early analytic understanding of my phenomenon (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007a). Then, it allowed me to make ongoing adjustments in my data collection, as I built on previous analyses to decide on the next collection (adding new types of data and cases, refining and customizing interview guides and fieldnotes focus) (Walsh et al., 2015). These ongoing adjustments were valuable as they allowed to better capture my phenomenon of interest. As little has been said on recent philanthropy's evolution, the flexibility of data collection and analysis allowed me to take advantage of fruitful lines of inquiry, to fine-tune conceptual categories arising from analysis and from comparison with extant theory in order for them to best reflect empirical data, and to further ground the emerging theory in data (Edmondson & McManus, 2007; Eisenhardt, 1989).

Chapter II reflects this iteration between data collection and data analysis. To explore the different types of social-mission platforms and understand how they build and manage their network of stakeholders, I build on a comparative case-study design (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007b). Overall, ten social-mission platforms were selected through a particular sampling strategy. On one hand, for the sake of comparison and control, platform cases needed to fulfill common

features (i.e., philanthropic purposes, transaction platforms, based in Belgium). On the other hand, as I aimed to explore the diversity of platforms, I looked for contrasting patterns. Hence, my sample is quite heterogenous and I do not have the exact same amount of data for each case. As explained by Eisenhardt (1989), this flexibility in the data collection is one of the advantage of a case-study approach and proves to be relevant when studying rapidly and currently evolving phenomenon such as social-mission platforms.

Contrary to Chapters I and III, my data analysis process in Chapter II started by reviewing platform literature. Doing so, I highlighted five organizing elements (orientation, technological reliance, access, stakeholders' management, and interactions) significant in platforms' organizational configurations – and subsequently in social-mission platforms. I used these five organizing elements as anchors to capture social-mission platforms diversity. I then interrogated my data guided by this literature review. This means that I had these organizing elements in mind when selecting cases, collecting and analyzing data. However, these elements did not form a rigid framework. On the contrary, I remained open to identify other elements or refine existing ones, as some were quite poorly developed by extant platform research. In this regard, I continuously added cases or data whenever proved relevant. While theory first served to sort out data, my empirical insights subsequently informed theory. This particular analyzing process helped me develop an appropriate analysis grid (see Table 5 in Chapter II) emerging from the research process as a whole and grounded in the context of social-mission platforms.

Building on this analysis grid, the rest of my data analyzing process followed Eisenhardt's (1989) technique and early configuration researchers' approach (A. Meyer, Tsui, & Hinings, 1993; Miller, 1986; Mintzberg, 1980). This process unfolded in three steps: (1) a within-case analysis, (2) a cross-case analysis to identify similarities and differences between cases' organizing elements and (3) configuring elements to generate archetypes (see Tables 6.1., 6.2, and 6.3. in Chapter II), develop a typology and theoretical insights.

Third and finally, abduction allows researchers to iterate between individual and collective levels of reasoning. Consistent with interpretivism which views researchers as part of their research process and data, findings and theory as mutually constructed with research participants, this dissertation has benefited from the insight of various knowledgeable groups (Sandberg, 2005). Beyond research participants themselves, "anomalies" initially noticed while observing Belgian

philanthropy were first discussed with knowledgeable philanthropy observers, following a Delphi technique, in order to ground these anomalies in evidence and assess their regular occurrence. Initial insights were regularly discussed with my thesis supervisor and committee as well as with co-authors, which provided constructive feedback. Emerging theories were then presented in front of international institutional and philanthropy researchers during seminars, conferences, and summer schools. This dissertation reflects thus this process between my own individual work and these various collective feedbacks and brainstormings which simultaneously guided literature review, data collection and analysis (Sætre & Van de Ven, 2021).

Chapter III precisely reflects this iteration between individual and collective levels of reasoning. Given my position as a PhD researcher within the University Chair in Philanthropy and Social Investment and my conduct of a commissioned study, I occupied a particular insider-outsider position in the Belgian philanthropy context. While this position was significant for my whole research process, it took on a specific relevance for Chapter III as this chapter focuses on field boundaries. My position gave data collection and analysis a specific direction. I was actively involved in events organized by incumbent organizations beyond the role of a simple visitor. I played a part in convening newcomers together, and hence shaping their interorganizational interactions, and my interviews and publication of reports (e.g., Xhauflair, Dessy & Depoorter (2018)) likely served to insert labels in field members' discourses and influenced their opinion. As such, while the insider position had its benefits in terms of access to empirical context, it also had its limitations. To reduce potential insider bias, I partnered with a co-author and we both coded the data. As the second author is not linked to the University Chair in Philanthropy and Social Investment nor to the commissioned study, he can be regarded as a more neutral observer. Contrasting coding from an insider-oriented perspective and from an outsider perspective helped validate and theorize the findings

Table 2.1. – Presentation of incumbent philanthropic organizations

#	Name	Type	Legal form	Year	Funding	Mission	Region
1	*The Big Foundation*	Resource-provider	Public utility foundation	1976	Endowment National Lottery Hosted funds Public authorities' missions	Contributing to a better society in Belgium, Europe and worldwide, by being an actor for change at the service of general interest and social cohesion and by promoting philanthropic action of individuals and for-profit businesses.	National
2	*The Transformative Foundation*	Resource-provider	Public utility foundation	1998	Mission-related investments Hosted funds	Passing on a liveable world to next generations by adopting a systemic vision of change. Actions target youth and philanthropists.	National (+Wallonia)
3	*The Family Foundation*	Resource-provider	Public utility foundation	2014	Endowment	Supporting social entrepreneurs through venture philanthropy and impact investing.	National
4	*Well-Being Coop*	Resource-provider	Cooperative	1998	Cooperative shares	Supporting social-purpose projects in order to invest in society's well-being and prosperity, with a focus on social inclusion, poverty alleviation, cooperative entrepreneurship, culture and health.	National (+ Flanders)
5	*The YouthPower Foundation*	Resource-provider	Public utility foundation	1999	Endowment	Supporting innovative and efficient projects to empower youth and help their societal integration	Brussels
6	*The Job4All Foundation*	Resource-provider	Public utility foundation	2008	Bank funds	Supporting social entrepreneurs and innovators to help them scale up their solutions to create a qualitative employment market.	National

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7	*The Citizenship Foundation*	Resource-provider	Public utility foundation	2000	Insurance group funds	Promoting active participation of citizens, and particularly youth, through projects in order to give form to a certain ideal of democracy.	National
8	*The Oldest Fund*	Resource-provider	Nonprofit organization & For-profit business	1970s	Interest from corporate shares	Promoting, enhancing and stimulating human excellence in Belgium by supporting projects focusing on education, health, culture and sports, adopting a rigorous approach and remaining open to society's evolutions.	National
9	*Holism&Harmony*	Resource-provider	Nonprofit organization	2012	Endowment	Supporting holistic health models, the development of constructive journalism and the evolution of consciousness among leaders and influencers.	National
10	*GlobalizAid*	Resource-provider	For-profit business	1995	Endowment	Creating a just and sustainable future where human dignity flourishes, with a focus on education, society, faith and climate.	National
11	*The Nextdoor Bank*	Resource-provider	Private Bank	Belgium 2010	Bank funds	Promoting philanthropy: from education to philanthropy to philanthropic actions.	National
12	*The Association [of Philanthropic Foundations]*	Collective interest organization	Nonprofit organization	2004	Membership	Being a forum for philanthropic foundations to meet and exchange ideas and best practices; fostering a favorable societal environment for philanthropy to thrive; and being a major actor of and at the service of resource-providing philanthropic organizations.	National

13	*The Volunteering Center*	Collective interest organization	Nonprofit organization	2002	Membership & Services	Promoting and facilitating volunteering.	Brussels Wallonia
14	*The Fundraising Center*	Collective interest organization	Nonprofit organization	1996	Membership	Being at the service of philanthropic organizations undertaking fundraising actions; promoting professionalization of fundraising; and encouraging generosity of citizens at large.	National
15	*Funds4Impact*	Collective interest organization	For-profit business	2015	Services (Professional support organization)	Building the capacities of the sector of philanthropy and impact investing by providing expertise, network and knowledge to philanthropists, impact investors and the organizations they support in order to help them achieve a long-term impact on society.	National
16	*The ClearView Foundation*	Collective interest organization	Public utility foundation	2005	Endowment	Giving donors reliable information on philanthropic organizations in order to encourage and enable them to give in all confidence; and facilitating the interaction among all actors of philanthropy (resource-seeking and providing organizations, for-profit businesses, public bodies, citizens).	National

Table 2.2. – Presentation of platform-based newcomers

#	Name	Type	Resources	Legal form	Year	Initial funding	Side monetized	Stakeholders	Active
1	*People Activator*	Crowdfunding	Money	For-profit business with B-Corp label	2017	Investment funds	Charge supply-side	Citizens, resource-seekers and for-profit businesses	Yes
2	*Colibris Booster*	Crowdsourcing	Skills, ideas	Nonprofit org.	2018	None	None, free platform	Citizens & resource-seekers	Yes
3	*Biz4Good*	Crowdfunding	Money	For-profit business	2016	Investment funds	Charge supply-side	Citizens, resource-seekers and for-profit businesses	No
4	*Money&More*	Crowdfunding	Money	For-profit business	2014	One-time subsidy	Charge demand-side	Citizens, resource-seekers, and public bodies	Yes
5	*SkillUp*	Crowdtiming	Time	Nonprofit org.	2015	None	None, free platform	Citizens and resource-seekers	Yes
6	*AllDonors*	Crowdfunding	Money	Foundation	2015	Philanthropic resources	Charge third parties	Citizens, resource-seekers, -providers	Yes
7	*Time2Give*	Crowdtiming + -sourcing	Time + Skills	Cooperative with a social purpose	2016	Crowdlending Cooperative shares	Free platform + Charge for customized tools	Citizens, resource-seekers, for-profit businesses, municipalities and schools	Yes

8	*SolyNet*	Crowdfunding + -sourcing	Money + Skills, ideas	Nonprofit org.	2014	Subsidies	Charge demand-side (minimum)	Citizens, resource-seekers, -providers, public bodies	Yes
9	*GivingWhizz*	Crowdfunding + - sourcing	Money + Skills, ideas	For-profit business with a social purpose	2014	Investments funds	Charge for customized tools	resource-seekers, for-profit businesses, public bodies	Yes
10	*LinkedUp*	Crowdtiming	Time	Nonprofit org.	2016	None	Free platform	Citizens and resource-seekers	No
11	*Smile&Pick*	Crowdtiming	Time	Association	2016	None	Free	Citizens and public bodies	Yes
12	*HelpPooling*	Crowdfunding + - sourcing	Money + Skills, ideas	Nonprofit org.	2016	None	Charge for hosting projects	Citizens, resource-seekers, -providers, public bodies	Yes
13	*AdvertRaising (see note**)*	Crowdfunding	Money	For-profit business	2019	Investments funds	Charge supply-side	Citizens, resource-seekers and for-profit businesses	Yes

Notes:

* This platform was initially created by employees of the Job4All Foundation and thus represents a particular case in our sampling of platforms. In this regard, it is not used in Chapter III which aims to understand the relationship between incumbents and newcomers. However, it is used in Chapter II in order to compare it organizational configuration to other social-mission platforms.

**I did not get the chance to conduct an interview with this newcomer, as I learnt about its existence at the very end of my last data collection. Still, I mention it in Chapter III's findings section as it is connected to an incumbent philanthropic organization.

Table 2.2. – Presentation of platform-based newcomers

#	Name	Team	Identified	Region
1	*People Activator*	3 founders 11 workers	By incumbent	National
2	*Colibris* *Booster*	Only founders	In press	Brussels Wallonia
3	*Biz4Good*	Only founders	By incumbent	Wallonia
4	*Money&More*	Only founders	On the Internet	Wallonia
5	*SkillUp*	Only founders	On radio	Brussels
6	*AllDonors*	3 workers	Created by incumbent	National
7	*Time2Give*	2 founders 5 workers	At an event	National
8	*SolyNet*	7 workers	At an event	Brussels Flanders
9	*GivingWhizz*	3 founders 10 workers	By incumbent	National
10	*LinkedUp*	Only founders	On radio	Brussels
11	*Smile&Pick*	Only founder	By incumbent	Brussels
12	*HelpPooling*	Only founders	By another newcomer	National
13	*AdvertRaising*	Only founders	By incumbent	Wallonia

Table 2.3. – Global presentation of data collection

INTERVIEWS							
Philanthropy observers (3)							
#	**Function**				**Date**		**Length**
1	Former EVPA's head of policy				17/02/2017		1h05
2	Consultant in social investment and pioneer of social-impact bond in Belgium				10/03/2017		1h02
3	Consultant in philanthropy and impact investing				17/03/2017		1h11
Platform-based newcomers (17)							
#	**Name**	**# Interview**	**Chapters**	**Date**	**Interviewee**	**Length**	**Means**	**Archival documents**
1	*People Activator*	Interview 1	II III	25/09/2019	Co-founder	1h16	Face-to-face	Website; Facebook; LinkedIn; legal documents; Press
2	*Colibris Booster*	Interview 1	II III	05/09/2019	Founder	1h26	Face-to-face	Website; legal documents; Press
3	*Biz4Good*	Interview 1	II	11/04/2017	Co-founder	1h52	Face-to-face	Website; Facebook (do not exist anymore); legal documents; Press
		Interview 2	II III	08/10/2019	Same as Interview 1	1h31	Face-to-face	
4	*Money&More*	Interview 1	II	20/03/2017	Co-founder	1h44	Face-to-face	Website; Facebook; legal documents
		Interview 2	II	11/09/2019	Same as Interview 1	1h28	Face-to-face	
5	*SkillUp*	Interview 1	II	28/03/2017	Co-founder	1h39	Face-to-face	Website; Facebook; legal documents, Podcast, Press
6	*AllDonors*	Interview 1	II	20/08/2019	Manager	1h30	Face-to-face	Website; Facebook; legal documents

7	Time2Give	Interview 1	II	11/07/2017	Founder	1h11	Face-to-face	Website; Facebook, legal documents, Press
		Interview 2	I II III	03/10/2019	Associate Partner	1h46	Face-to-face	
8	SolyNet	Interview 1	II III	09/09/2019	Manager	1h33	Face-to-face	Website; Facebook; legal documents
9	GivingWhizz	Interview 1	II	03/05/2017	Co-founder	2h03	Face-to-face	Website; Facebook; LinkedIn; legal documents, Press
		Interview 2	I II III	27/09/2019	Another co-founder	1h25	Face-to-face	
10	LinkedUp	Interview 1	II	03/03/2017	Founder	1h42	Face-to-face	Website (does not exist anymore); Facebook; legal documents; Podcast
		Interview 2	II	20/11/2019	Same as Interview 1	1h30	Face-to-face	
11	Smile&Pick	Interview 1	(FG)	13/04/2017	Founder	1h42	Face-to-face	Facebook; Press
12	HelpPooling	Interview 1	I III	15/11/2019	Founder	1h28	Face-to-face	Website; Facebook; Legal documents

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#	Name	# Interview	Chapters	Date	Interviewee	Length	Means	Archival documents
Incumbent philanthropic organizations (25)								
1	*The Big Foundation*	Interview 1	I III	19/11/2018	Senior Program Coordinator	1h22	Face-to-face	Websites; Legal documents; Reports; Newsletters; Publications
		Interview 2	I III	23/11/2018	Senior Program Coordinator	1h12	Face-to-face	
		Interview 3	I III	26/11/2018	Director	1h32	Face-to-face	
		Interview 4	III	23/10/2020	Same as Interview 2	0h55	Online	
2	*The Transformative Foundation*	Interview 1	I III	17/12/2018	Program Coordinator	1h21	Face-to-face	Website; Legal documents; Reports, Newsletters; Publications; Jury comments
		Interview 2	I III	19/01/2019	Founder	2h22	Face-to-face	
		Interview 3	III	19/03/2021	Program Coordinator	0h40	Online	
3	*The Family Foundation*	Interview 1	I III	21/01/2019	Executive Director	1h20	Face-to-face	Website; Legal documents; Reports
4	*Well-Being Coop*	Interview 1	I III	12/02/2019	Project Coordinator	2h20	Face-to-face	Website; Legal documents; Leaflet
5	*The YouthPower Foundation*	Interview 1	I III	15/11/2018	Executive Director	1h27	Face-to-face	Website; Legal documents; Reports; Newsletters
		Interview 2	III	29/03/2021	Same as Interview 1	1h02	Online	
6	*The Job4All Foundation*	Interview 1	I III	20/8/2019	Manager	1h38	Face-to-face	Website; Legal documents

7	*The Citizenship Foundation*	Interview 1	I III	17/07/2019	Coordinator	1h46	Face-to-face	Website; Legal documents; Newsletters
		Interview 2	III	23/04/2021	Same as Interview 1	1h07	Online	
8	*The Oldest Fund*	Interview 1	I III	21/03/2019	General Secretary	1h28	Face-to-face	Website; Legal documents
9	*Holism&Harmony*	Interview 1	I III	20/11/2019	Manager	1h46	Face-to-face	Website; Legal documents
10	*GlobalizAid*	Interview 1	I III	30/09/2019	Manager	1h53	Face-to-face	Website; Legal documents
11	*The Nextdoor Bank*	Interview 1	I III	07/11/2018	Director		Face-to-face	Website; Meetings documents
12	*The Association*	Interview 1	I III	07/12/2018	General Secretary	1h52	Face-to-face	Website; Legal documents; Leaflet; Publication
		Interview 2	III	25/03/2021	New General Secretary	1h19	Online	
13	*The Volunteering Center*	Interview 1	I III	07/08/2019	Executive Director	2h28	Face-to-face	Website; Legal documents; Publication
		Interview 2	III	07/04/2021	Same as Interview 1	1h30	Online	
14	*The Fundraising Center*	Interview 1	I III	02/04/2021	President and General Secretary	1h22	Online	Website; Legal documents
15	*Funds4Impact*	Interview 1	I III	14/11/2018	Manager	0h50	Face-to-face	Website; Legal documents
16	*The ClearView Foundation*	Interview 1	I	14/07/2020	Coordinator	0:25	Phone	Website; Legal documents

FOCUS GROUP						
#	Organizers	Date	Purpose	Chapters	Attendees	Participation
1	The Nextdoor bank and the University Chair	09/10/2017	Collectively reflect on, refine and confirm our first insights with platform-based newcomers	II III	Biz4Good Money&More SkillUp GivingWhizz LinkedUp Smile&Pick	Animator

EVENTS OBSERVATION (9)								
#	Name	Theme	Date	Organizer	Type of event	Attendees	Chapters	Participation	Archival documents
1	*Philanthropy works!* (Antwerp)	Field-configuring event on and around philanthropy	27/04/2017	The Big Foundation	Public	Biz4Good Time2Give	I II III	Active	Program, videos, journal
2	*Philanthropy works!* (Namur)	Field-configuring event on and around philanthropy	03/05/2017	The Big Foundation	Public	Diverse philanthropic organizations	I	Visitor	Program, videos, journal
3	*Philanthropy & Platforms*	Public conference presenting results of study on platform-based newcomers	08/10/2018	The Nextdoor Bank and The Big Foundation	Public	Money&More SkillUp AllDonors Time2Give SolyNet LinkedUp	II III	Active	Press Communiqué List of participants

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	Transformativ e philanthropy	Field-configuring event on and around philanthropy	10/12/2018	The Transformative Foundation	Public	Diverse philanthropic organizations: The Big Foundation The Family Foundation Well-Being Coop	I III	Visitor	Conference report List of participants
5	*Chair's annual meeting*	Annual meeting of the University Chair with its funders	21/02/2019	The University Chair and The Oldest Fund	Private	/	I	Active	/
6	*Philanthropy & Society*	Event following the general assembly of the Association and questioning philanthropy's role in today's society	28/03/2019	The Association	Public	Diverse philanthropic organizations: The Big Foundation The YouthPower Foundation	I III	Visitor	/
7	*YouthProject*	Event presenting a project of the foundation on youth's social engagement	03/05/2019	The Citizenship Foundation	Public	SolyNet	II III	Visitor	Program List of participants

8	*Expertise Center's meeting*	Event to discuss the creation of a center of expertise on Belgian philanthropic organizations	12/09/2019	The University Chair	Private	Diverse philanthropic organizations: The Association The Big Foundation The Oldest Fund GlobalizAid The YouthPower Foundation The Family Foundation	I	Active	Notes taken during the meeting by myself, my supervisor and other participants Emails exchanged before and after the meeting
9	*Stakeholders' meeting*	Meeting to gather the stakeholders of a platform and encourage them to exchange ideas, best practices…	25/10/2019	AllDonors	Private	Diverse philanthropic organizations: The Oldest Fund The ClearView Foundation	II	Active	/

## 4	Dissertation structure

The core of this dissertation consists of three papers forming the following three chapters. Each chapter specifically addresses one of the three research questions while still relating to the other two, as all chapters examine the same empirical context of Belgian philanthropy and social-mission platforms.

Chapter I is co-authored with Virginie Xhauflair and is entitled "*Position-taking strategies within a fragmented issue field: Evidence from the Belgian field of organizational philanthropy*". This chapter focuses on the field's institutional infrastructure and asks *how organizations make strategic use of an issue field's fragmented infrastructure to take a field-structuring position?* To address this question, we focus on the power struggles to take a field-structuring position between two incumbent philanthropic resource-providers – The Big Foundation and The Transformative Foundation – as well as on how the position-taking strategies of these two actors are perceived by other field members.

We show that within fragmented issues fields (such as Belgian philanthropy) strategies to take a field-structuring position take place at different levels of action (i.e., organizational, population, field, and broader environment) and rely on different infrastructural dimensions (i.e., meaning, operational and relational). While the two actors studied were embedded in the same field, they enacted structural opportunities differently, as they occupied different social positions and were endorsed differently by other field members. While one actor mainly relied on meaning and operational dimensions and acted at its organizational level and at the field level, the other mainly relied on meaning and relational dimensions and acted at the population and field levels. With this chapter, we contribute to literature on field-structuring position and on institutional infrastructure. We bring nuances in the type of actors who can play a field-structuring role. As such, we emphasize the importance to look beyond formal elements of governance and document informal elements of a field infrastructure.

Chapter II is co-authored with Johanna Mair and Virginie Xhauflair and is entitled "*Social-mission platforms: a typology based on organizational configurations*". This chapter looks closely at platform-based newcomers and asks *what different types of social-mission platforms exist, and how does each type build and manage their network of stakeholders in order to address societal issues?* We leverage a case-based and configurational approach and draw on the study of ten Belgian social-mission platforms. We develop a typology of social-mission platforms based

on organizational configurations and accounting for their institutional embeddedness in Belgium.

Our findings show, on one hand, that five organizing elements (orientation, technological reliance, access, stakeholders' management and interactions) combine into three organizational configurations of social-mission platforms (the ecosystem-building platform, the meeting-space platform and the community-designing platform). On the other hand, they point out to outlier cases which underline the importance of internal and external consistency. In this regard, this chapter contributes to organizational studies on digital platforms and more specifically our typology intends to play a particular role in a programmatic research effort on and around social-mission platforms.

Chapter III is co-authored with Benjamin Huybrechts and is entitled "*Opening the gates or closing the fortress? Exploring the divergent types of boundary work among incumbent organizations in the Belgian philanthropy field*". This chapter focuses on field boundaries and incumbents' boundary work vis-à-vis newcomers and asks *how do incumbent organizations within a given population diverge in the ways in which they define symbolic and social boundaries of an issue field, and how these definition strategies interact to shape these boundaries*. We unveil two boundary strategies – an affiliating and a discriminating strategy – within the incumbent population of philanthropic organizations. At first, these strategies opposed themselves: affiliators flexibilized boundaries to include newcomers while discriminators strengthened them to exclude newcomers.

Following an interacting play between the field's symbolic and social boundaries, the affiliating strategy eventually prevailed and the discriminating strategy softened to partially include platform-based newcomers. With this chapter, we contribute to literature on field configurations and boundary work, as we theorize, on one hand, how given fields yield in-population heterogeneity in boundary work strategies, and then how, on the other hand, diverse boundary work strategies interact to shape field boundaries.

Following these three chapters, this dissertation closes on a transversal discussion. This discussion includes five sections. A first section is dedicated to an integration of findings within which transversal connections are made between the three chapters and the questions they address. Second, building on this integration of findings, I detail the transversal theoretical contributions of this dissertation with regard to philanthropy studies as well as institutional theory and especially fields theory. Thereby, I introduce and develop two constructs forming the common thread of this dissertation: divergent boundary work and fragmented structuration. Following theoretical contributions, I consider the possible managerial implications of my academic work. The fourth section reviews the limitations of my research process and suggests future research avenues. Finally, I reflect on my role in the research process.

CHAPTER I

POSITION-TAKING STRATEGIES WITHIN A FRAGMENTED ISSUE FIELD: EVIDENCE FROM THE BELGIAN FIELD OF ORGANIZATIONAL PHILANTHROPY

1 Introduction

Since long recognized as a core construct of organizational theory – and more broadly of social sciences as a whole – the field construct has mostly been used as a backdrop for analysis (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012; Scott, 2014; Zietsma et al., 2017). Viewing fields as either spaces of constrains or political arenas, researchers have tended to neglect the very structural mechanisms biding a field together and allowing field members to interact and develop a collective rationality (Hinings et al., 2017). However, taking a structural lens on fields appears essential to further understand both institutional processes and organizational behaviors. Understanding organizational behaviors requires to locate organizations both internally – that is, within its matrices of relations with other organizations – and externally – that is, with its broader institutional environment. Conversely, understanding institutional processes – that is, how field emerge, structure and change – requires to pay attention to organizations and their actions (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017). As Bourdieu explicitly states, "to think in terms of field is to *think relationally*" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 96). Interactive processes occurring among organizations, field structuration is an inter-organizational phenomenon.

This paper falls within this structural approach of field and takes a particular interest in the field-structuring position some organizations take within their field. Looking closer at structural mechanisms, researchers highlight that field infrastructures are composed of both formal and informal elements (Faulconbridge & Muzio, 2021; Hinings et al., 2017). They also point to the role particular field members play in structuring dynamics by developing and maintaining these elements (Zietsma et al., 2017). These field members take a field-structuring position and are said to perform a "multifaceted role" (Greenwood et al., 2002, p. 76). They can be conservative – defending their field's status quo (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012) – as well as progressive forces – managing field-level change (van

Wijk et al., 2013). Hence, documenting field-structuring position may constitute an important pathway to further our understanding of field structuration.

Yet, while we understand field-structuring actors' activities and their implications on field development, less is known on how a field-structuring position is created and taken. This gap is mostly due to researchers' focus on established fields – highly elaborated and coherent institutional infrastructure – in which the field-structuring actor is well-known (Buchanan, 2016; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010), either appointed by the State or created by incumbent populations (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012). Research is lacking on field-structuring actors in fragmented issue fields, that comprise fewer elaborated and coherent infrastructural mechanisms and where several actors may compete for field-structuring position depending on the issue at stake (Kipping & Kirkpatrick, 2013; O'Sullivan & O'Dwyer, 2015). Position-taking strategies – that is, how organizations transit from one social position to another – rely on power plays as they depend on organizations' initial social position and resource endowments, on other field members as well as on field conditions (Wild et al., 2020). This scarce attention to active, relational and contentious aspects of creating and taking a field-structuring position motivated this research at a theoretical level. More specifically, we ask: *how do organizations make strategic use of an issue field's fragmented infrastructure to take a field-structuring position?*

To address this question, we draw on a qualitative study of the Belgian field of organizational philanthropy. More particularly, we focus on an episode of contention during which the field's lack of structuration stimulated power plays between two specific field members, each developing their strategy to take a field-structuring position. Philanthropy can be characterized as an issue field. As various populations of actors gather around the issue of what giving means and how to give, concept and practices of philanthropy have always been ambiguous (Jung, Phillips, & Harrow, 2016; Zietsma et al., 2017). Moreover, Belgium demonstrates slow philanthropic dynamics (Hinings et al., 2017; Mernier, 2017; Vandenbulke, 2016). This empirical context is thus relevant to document position-taking strategies within a fragmented issue field.

Our findings show that strategies take place at different levels of action (i.e., organizational, population, field and broader environment) and rely on different infrastructural dimensions (i.e., meaning, operational and relational). While actors studied were embedded in the same fragmented field, they enacted structural

opportunities differently, as they occupied different social positions, were endowed with various resources and endorsed differently by other field members. As a result, their strategies differed and challenged one another: while one actor mainly relied on meaning and operational dimensions and acted at its organizational level and at the field level, the other mainly relied on meaning and relational dimensions and acted at the population and field levels.

We contribute to literature on field-structuring position and on institutional infrastructure. We bring nuances in the type of actors who can play a field-structuring role. Formally appointed actors are not always regarded as legitimate and informal and challenging actors can step in. In this regard, we emphasize the importance to look beyond formal elements of governance and document informal elements of a field infrastructure. Further, we highlight the strategies to take these informal and challenging field-structuring positions. Depending on strategies undertaken, we also show that more than "multifaceted" the role of field-structuring actors seems to be a high-wire act.

This paper is structured as follows. The next section details the structural turn of field research. The second section describes our data collection and our analysis as well as our research setting. Findings are presented in the third section. Finally, the discussion compares findings to extant literature, underlines some limitations and suggests future research avenues regarding field-structuring positions and field infrastructure.

2   Theoretical background

2.1   *Fields as spaces of constrains or political arenas*

Led by institutional theorists of the 1980s, a first stream of research defines a field as "organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 148), that "partake of a common meaning system" and who "interact more frequently and fatefully with one another than with actors outside the field" (Scott, 1994, p. 56). Central to these definitions is the conceptualization of a field as a bounded space forming around an industry, market, profession or technology common to focal populations of organizations exchanging with one another. Within this first stream of research, scholars show the effects of fields and their institutions on embedded organizational actors (N. Phillips et al., 2000). The field is depicted as a space of constrains and acting as a source of pressure for conformity and stability (Zietsma et al., 2017).

In the face of this depoliticized and top-down view, a second stream of field research develops with the aim of moving beyond stability and explaining instances of variations. Second stream researchers do not conceptualize fields as centering around industry or market exchanges, but rather as forming "around issues that bring together various field constituents with disparate purposes" (Hoffman, 1999, p. 352) and as spaces of strategic action "within which actors with varying resource endowments vie for advantage" (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012, p. 10).

Therefore, the second stream of research emphasizes struggle within fields rather than conformity. Issue fields are continuously structured and re-structured along with the entrance of organizational actors who bring to the fore their salient interpretation of the issue. Rather than islands, issue fields are "linked arenas" (Furnari, 2016, p. 553) embedded in a broader environment of overlapping other fields (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012). It is the issue at stake that delineates the field and specifies who is part of it and around what and how its members revolve. As each of the populations negotiating around the issue at stake is embedded within its own set of institutions, they hold different and often competing interpretations of this issue. Rather than isomorphic, fields are contested in nature and members are likely to experience institutional complexity (Greenwood et al., 2011). As exchange fields, issue fields would be hierarchically structured (Zietsma et al., 2017). Some members occupy specific social positions within the field (core, middle, periphery) (Battilana et al., 2009) determined by the resources (financial, cultural, social) to which they have access (Bourdieu, 1977).

Overall, the second research stream offers a more dynamic picture of organizational behavior than that of "cultural dopes" (Fligstein, 2001, p. 110) depicted by the first stream. Researchers have documented how occupying specific positions and possessing particular resources influenced field members perception on the field and trigger their reflexive capacity – that is, how they interpret what is going on in the field and how they react (Battilana, 2006). All actors within a same field do not behave in the same way and some may be willing and able to influence their institutional environment, to act as institutional entrepreneurs (Battilana et al., 2009; DiMaggio, 1988). Yet, institutional entrepreneurship research has tended to portray certain field members as "hypermuscular" agents (Lawrence, Suddaby, & Leca, 2009, p. 1), having outstanding and unrestricted abilities to influence their institutional environment. Empirical findings vary significantly: some researchers show that core populations are likely to defend status quo and resist divergent change initiated by peripheral populations (Garud, Jain, & Kumaraswamy, 2002;

Maguire et al., 2004), while others find that change can also be initiated by core populations whereas peripheral populations do not often have the necessary resources to deviate from institutional constrains (Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006).

This variance in findings has put the paradox of embedded agency on the institutional theory agenda (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009). If organizational actors in different social positions and with different resource endowments can wield influence on their respective field, it means that the value of a resource, and thereby the power of a position, depends on the nature of the institutional environment – that is, on the conditions of the field in which actors are embedded. As Bourdieu puts it: "a capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 101). Subsequently, while it has been shown that social positions are not fixed and can change (e.g. going from periphery to center (Battilana, 2006; Leblebici et al., 1991)), as actors enhance their resource endowments (e.g. converting one type of resources into another or using one type to get another), this does not occur under any circumstances (Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008).

Bourdieu explains that organizational actors can change their social position through a space of position-takings – a "structured system of practices and expressions of agents" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 105) – that is to be conceived as a "space of possibles […] or impossibles" (Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008, p. 16). This means that changing social position does not happen automatically but implies for actors to strategically undertake actions that meet specific criteria. First, strategies available to organizations depend on their initial position which, in turn, depends on their initial resource endowments. The type of strategies developed gives information on the position-taker (Bourdieu, 1977).

Second, as strategies aim to increase one's resource endowments or diminish that of others, actors know the position they occupy and how it relates to the position of others. Strategies are thus developed in relation to other field members (Fligstein, 2001). Third, it is not enough for actors to be in a position allowing them to access valuable resources to implement strategies, they also need to undertake appropriate actions; actions that "make sense" within their current environment and hence for other field members (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012). In this regard, organizations do not merely "discover" opportunities for agency, they "enact" them (Wild et al., 2020, p. 353). To understand actors' enactments, it is therefore essential to

understand the field conditions under which they occur – in other words, to understand of what fields are made.

2.2   *Taking a structural lens on fields*

While the first and second research streams bring valuable insights on explaining how organizational actors tend toward isomorphism or bring about change, they tend to overlook field's structural makeup (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017; Zietsma et al., 2017). In other words, they neglect to analyze the various mechanisms on which actors rely in order to relate to one another – that is, to form a "recognized area of institutional life" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 148) or to gather around a rising societal issue (Hoffman, 1999) – as well as how these mechanisms are developed and maintained in order to allow a field to continue to exist. Contrary to what the process of isomorphism may suggest, institutions are not self-reproducing, but are naturally characterized by entropic tendencies (Dacin et al., 2010). Maintenance is thus more than "simple stability or absence of change" (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, p. 234).

As second stream researchers illustrate it, fields are more or less in constant flux (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012). They are so because maintaining them requires more than organizations passively transmitting shared meanings through their repeated interactions. It requires active reflexivity and involvement of actors (Hampel et al., 2017; Lawrence, Leca, & Zilber, 2013). Therefore, a field does not exist *per se*; as collective rationality on which it relies needs to be structured, managed and sustained. A third stream of research adopting a structural approach to fields has emerged to investigate the mechanisms binding a field together (Faulconbridge & Muzio, 2021; Hinings et al., 2017).

Zietsma and colleagues (2017), and further Hinings and colleagues (2017), have taken a great step forward in this structural orientation. Building on Greenwood and colleagues (2011) as well as on other seminal studies (Compagni et al., 2015; O'Sullivan & O'Dwyer, 2015), the authors argue that field dynamics go beyond shared meanings (Leibel et al., 2018) and develop the notion of fields' institutional infrastructure which "comprises the mechanisms of social coordination by which embedded actors interact with one another in predictable ways" (Zietsma et al., 2017, p. 392). In a first phase, Zietsma and colleagues (2017) show how the notion of institutional infrastructure contributes to a more refined specification of fields' conditions and thereby allow for greater comparisons among fields. Distinguishing

between two dimensions of infrastructure – its degree of coherency (unitary or competing set of institutions) and of elaboration (more or less infrastructural mechanisms) – the authors build a four-fold typology of fields: established (high coherency and elaboration), fragmented (low coherency and elaboration), aligned (high coherency and low elaboration) and contested (low coherency and high elaboration).

In a second phase, Hinings and colleagues (Hinings et al., 2017, p. 165) add granularity to the notion of institutional infrastructure by relating it to that of field governance and by disentangling its various "structural elements underpinning field activity". Field governance refers to formal infrastructural mechanisms that exert regulatory and normative control over field members (Scott, 2014) – among others, regulatory institutions (e.g. international, national and local governments) and their legislations, as well as collective interest organizations (e.g. unions, professional, trade and industry associations). Informal infrastructural mechanisms comprise, *inter alia*, informal governance bodies (e.g., accreditation and certification organizations), status differentiators (e.g., labels, awards, rankings), norms, categories, organizational templates (e.g., hybrid organizations), field-configuring events (e.g., events, conferences, fairs) and relational channels (e.g., normative networks). In other words, the institutional infrastructure encompasses meanings, operational and relational systems which are common to the whole field and which are mutually reinforcing (O'Sullivan & O'Dwyer, 2015).

By adopting a structural lens on fields, developing a typology of field conditions and detailing the various infrastructural mechanisms, the third stream of research is looking deeper into the paradox of embedded agency (Hinings et al., 2017). On one hand, the nature of the infrastructure – degree of coherency and elaboration – underpinning a field allows to appraise the degree of field members' agency. Infrastructural mechanisms must be considered as a whole: they are tied to one another and operate in concert. The more elements there are (elaboration) and the more tightly coupled they are (coherency), the less room there is for ambiguity and uncertainty in the appropriate way for field members to behave and, therefore, the lesser their willingness and ability to distant from institutional arrangements; and vice versa (Greenwood et al., 2011).

On the other hand, the various infrastructural mechanisms that develop, support and maintain collective rationality themselves consist of and are the result of particular organizational actors whose role is to enable, structure, govern and configure other actors' interactions. The third stream contributes to identifying the mechanisms on which actors must work to construct, structure and manage their field. A field does not exist *per se* and neither does its institutional infrastructure (Zietsma et al., 2017). In sum, the social interaction among field members only occurs because of the infrastructure, and, in reverse, the infrastructure only exists because of field members. While field infrastructure guides field members behaviors and interactions, interactive processes further "feed into the structuration of institutional field" (N. Phillips et al., 2000, p. 34). As these interactive processes occur among organizations, field structuration is deeply an inter-organizational phenomenon. This means that when studying fields, scholars must not only consider its infrastructure but also the role field members play in elaborating it.

2.3   Organizational actors structuring their field

Wooten and Hoffman (2017) argue that as institutional theory mainly considers social positions from a spatial perspective (i.e. core, middle, peripheral actors and outsiders), the various and distinct roles field members play have been neglected. A role-centric perspective might allow to better appraise the work – as well as associated responsibilities and social skill (Fligstein, 2001) – conducted by some field members to turn the field into a true relational space. In this sense, scholars have started to focus on the particular significance and uniqueness of organizational actors playing a structuring, governing and configuring role in their field. Researchers have variously spoken of internal governance units (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012), field governing bodies (van Wijk et al., 2013), or field-configuring organizations (Wolf & Pandza, 2014). Acknowledging the diverse realities these terms embody, Zietsma and colleagues (2017) coin the umbrella term "field-structuring or governing organizations" and outline three different types of such organizations: (1) formal governance units which are either internal or external to a field, national or transnational (e.g. regulators, international organizations), (2) arbiters of taste such as award or rating organizations, (3) field coordinators encompassing the various professional, trade and industry associations, and other collective interest organizations.

Actors playing a structuring role – and especially the third type "field coordinators" – have been the subject of empirical analyses describing the activities they carry out as well as explaining how and under which conditions they affect field-level dynamics (Barley, 2010; Greenwood et al., 2002; van Wijk et al., 2013). The singularity of field members acting as structuring forces is their intermediary position: they usually have "one foot in the field and the other outside" (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012, p. 77) Structuring a field requires to enable field members to interact among them but also to enable the field to interact with its broader environment, as any field is embedded in a web of other fields influencing each other (Furnari, 2016). Therefore, field members involved in elaborating field infrastructure undertake activities that are both internally and externally driven.

Activities related to cultivating and fostering external relations can be divided into two groups: one directed toward state fields (e.g., public authorities, regulatory bodies) and the other toward nonstate fields (e.g., related societal stakeholders). (1) Toward state fields or regulators, field-structuring actors act as lobbying arms; they are the channel between the field and the State (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012). They voice field members' interests in order to fashion a more favorable regulatory environment. They also watch carefully changes in regulations that may concern the field's operation and keep members up to date (Buchanan, 2016). (2) Toward other related nonstate fields, field-structuring actors act as public faces. They represent the field and attempt to convey a positive image to related audiences (e.g., through organizing events or disseminating information). As such, they outwardly portray the identity of the field (Greenwood et al., 2002). They foster good and steady relationships with these related audiences and may also proactively try to shape how these audiences view the field in order to advance field's interests, avoid future conflict and ensure stability (e.g. through educational activities or co-optation of social movement) (van Wijk et al., 2013; Zietsma et al., 2017).

Internally, activities undertaken by field-structuring actors can be divided into four groups: defining behaviors, gatekeeping, informing and building collaborations. (1) They contribute to developing the shared meanings (rules, norms, standards, and best practices) which serve to define and guide the appropriate behaviors associated to field membership (Faulconbridge & Muzio, 2021). They disseminate, implement and enforce these shared meanings and they may sanction members who violate them as well as recognize and reward members who perform well (van Wijk et al., 2013). (2) Field-structuring actors tend to control access to the field by recognizing and certifying actors that they deem eligible to membership and by educating

members to the shared meanings and related practices to which they must adhere (Greenwood et al., 2002; Kipping & Kirkpatrick, 2013). (3) They have an important function in collecting and disseminating data and (new) information to field members as well as to external audiences (as mentioned above) (Buchanan, 2016). (4) They foster the interactions and collaborations of field members, thereby strengthening shared meanings (Zietsma et al., 2017).

In these respects, extant literature shows how actors occupying a field-structuring position can perform a pivotal role in their field (Kipping & Kirkpatrick, 2013; van Wijk et al., 2013). They possess the power, legitimacy and authority to elaborate and expand the meaning (e.g. publications they release), operational (e.g. off-the-shelf tools, templates and training programs they implement) and relational systems (e.g. social events and bilateral meetings they organize) of their field, and thereby develop, support and maintain collective rationality (Hinings et al., 2017). They serve as means and avenues for field members to widely construct, acknowledge and perpetuate shared meanings, practices and interactions required for field's formation and operation (Leibel et al., 2018). As field-structuring actors are said to be strongly influenced by field incumbents, of which they protect the interests, they are said to primarily defend status quo and to be conservative forces (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012). Yet, as they have a privileged connection to the field's broader environment, they can also educate members to innovative practices and technologies and become central in the management of field-level change (N. Phillips et al., 2000; van Wijk et al., 2013). Field-structuring actors may thus have a "multifaceted role" (Greenwood et al., 2002, p. 76) depending on their field conditions and their evolution (Zietsma et al., 2017).

Still, empirical analyses on this particular role remain limited in number and scope and scholars argue that the field-structuring position has still not been thoroughly explored (Lawrence & Phillips, 2019). This gap is due to the fact that scholars have tended to focus more on established fields with highly elaborated and coherent institutional infrastructure, and even more on fields centered around exchanges in which the actor occupying a field-structuring position is well-known and wields a certain influence on the field (Buchanan, 2016; van Wijk et al., 2013; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). Therefore, as current studies solely focus on already and formally established field-structuring actors, literature could lead us to believe that field-structuring actors are automatically and actively present in every field. Yet, as Fligstein & McAdam (2012, p. 78) slightly point out, field-structuring actors can be either imposed by state actors "to curb the power of incumbents" or collectively

created by population members at the creation of the field or when it goes through an episode of contention. Besides this shortly described passive and formal emerging process, it appears that little is actually known on how field-structuring actors emerge.

Research considering field-structuring actors in fragmented fields, that are less regulated and comprise fewer elaborated and coherent infrastructural mechanisms, is lacking (Grodal, 2018; Hinings et al., 2017). An exception is the study of the weakly institutionalized management consulting field in the UK by Kipping & Kirkpatrick (2013). The authors show that a state of fragmented structure increasingly emerges when, on one hand, the professional association's ability to regulate is limited and the field is thus unable to resist outsiders and newcomers' influence; and, on the other hand, when the professional association seeks to ensure its survival and relevance by pragmatically accommodating newcomers as field members. As a result, field membership diversifies, and field governance is rather scattered and uncoordinated.

The fragmented structure highlighted by this latter study and the subsequent internal dynamics of the field calls for more research on fragmented fields. What about fields where there is no formal field-structuring actor or where the existing one does not actively play the role for which it has been created? In these later cases, is the emergence of a field-structuring actor always a passive and formal process (granted by the State or collectively created by field members) or can existing organizational actors purposefully take field-structuring positions? Researchers have already demonstrated that a social position is not fixed but changes over time (Battilana, 2006) and that changing positions requires direct involvement from organizational actors, as their position-taking strategies depend on their own initial social position and resource endowments, on other field members as well as on field conditions (Wild et al., 2020). Rather than being merely passive and formal, can field-structuring position's emergence be active and deeply relational?

Furthermore, Zietsma and colleagues (2017) highlight that issue fields, as they gather different and multiple populations, each with their own set of institutions, are more contested and dynamic. Within issue fields, consensus is weak regarding who are the core incumbent populations and who are the peripheral challenger ones. Social positions are in flux. The situation being equivocal, several organizational actors may compete to take a field-structuring position. According to O'Sullivan &

O'Dwyer (2015), it is likely that these actors belong to one of the incumbent populations of the field. In their empirical analysis, the authors show that the structuring process of an issue-based field, and thereby the work undertaken by field members on infrastructural mechanisms, is conducted by powerful populations as they control the valuable resources in this given field. More than active and relational, might taking a field-structuring position be a contentious process?

Field-structuring positions within fragmented issue fields and further the type of actors occupying these positions as well as their active, relational and contentious strategies to take them being insufficiently documented, the present paper asks: *how do organizations make strategic use of an issue field's fragmented infrastructure to take a field-structuring position?*

3   Methods

To address our research question, we draw on a study of the Belgian field of organizational philanthropy. More particularly, we focus on an episode of contention during which the field's lack of structuration stimulated power plays between two specific field members, each developing their strategy to take a field-structuring position. As field structuration is an inter-organizational phenomenon, we adopted a methodological approach sensitive to inter-organizational level of analysis (N. Phillips et al., 2000). We collected three types of data (interviews, observations and archival documents) and conducted a qualitative and abductive analysis. We paid particular attention to field members' perception of their field and its infrastructure, their discourse and action regarding infrastructural elements, and the value judgements they expressed on each other. Researchers having yet thoroughly explored and understood position-taking strategies as well as the Belgian field of organizational philanthropy, a qualitative method is well-suited (Gehman et al., 2018). Our research follows a grounded theory process (Glaser & Strauss, 2008; Suddaby, 2006) "that allowed us to stay true to the data while detecting patterns that had relevance for theory building" (Mair & Hehenberger, 2014, p. 1178). Hereunder, we first depict our research setting, organizational philanthropy in Belgium, and then describe our data collection and analysis process.

3.1   Research setting

Organizational philanthropy in Belgium can be characterized as a fragmented issue field. In terms of institutional infrastructure, this means that Belgian philanthropy's meaning, operational and relational systems are lowly elaborated and coherent. On one hand, the philanthropic field forms around the issue of what it means to use private resources for public purposes, how to do so and who is allowed to do so and gathers (increasingly) various populations of actors around this issue, each with its own interpretation of the issue and all negotiating accordingly the meanings and practices of philanthropy. As a result, philanthropy's meanings and practices are ambiguous and essentially contested (Daly, 2012; von Schnurbein et al., 2021).

Yet, this interactive negotiation of meanings and practices, and eventually field members' reaching of a shared understanding, is instrumental in the formation and structuration of a field (Leibel et al., 2018). Indeed, when field's meanings and practices are enduringly fuzzy and contested, they risk being misunderstood and misused, with various actors – sometimes at odds with the field – claiming membership (Kipping & Kirkpatrick, 2013). When its membership increasingly diversifies, a field may eventually become meaningless and subsequently boundaryless; hence hindering actors' identification to and interaction within the field and leading to the field's decay and entropy (Grodal, 2018; Zucker, 1988).

On the other hand, the Belgian legal framework regulating philanthropy has been made more and more flexible along its amendments (1921 – 2002 – 2019) (Vandenbulke, 2016; Vanwelde, 2020). This soft governance of Belgian organizational philanthropy has two interrelated implications. First, philanthropic organizations are provided with few specific guidelines on how to translate the already ambiguous shared meanings into actual acts and to operate their philanthropic action. Second, Belgian philanthropic organizations – and especially resource-providers – are quite heterogenous and diversified in, among others, legal forms (e.g., foundations, nonprofit organizations, cooperatives, for-profit businesses), actions (e.g., grantmaking, operating), and strategic visions (from no performance management at all to great emphasis on impact reporting and measurement) (Mernier, 2017). This diversification makes field members sometimes hard to identify which limits their interaction.

However, operational and relational systems are essential elements of a field infrastructure, and more so of its existence, as – along with a meaning system – they regulate the inner behavior of field members (that is, how they should act and interact) which eventually builds their collective identity as well as outwardly portray the field (that is, how the field is similar and different from other related fields in its broader environment and how its collective identity is externally perceived) (O'Sullivan & O'Dwyer, 2015; Scott, 1995).

As a result, building the meaning, operational and relational systems of philanthropy's institutional infrastructure appears to be a crucial concern. More and more field members – and especially incumbent organizations (i.e., resource-providing and collective interest organizations) – are well aware of their field's lack of structuration, are convinced of the need to expand their field infrastructure and act upon it. Within the field, we observe collective as well as individual structuration dynamics.

The first collective act of field structuration was the creation in 2004 of The Association. Following the 2002 amendment of the law and the subsequent diversification of the field, a group of resource-providing organizations (among others The Big Foundation, The Transformative Foundation, Well-Being Coop…) felt the need to create a professional association to represent philanthropic foundations and related resource-providing organizations with a general interest mission. The Association's objectives are (1) to be a forum for philanthropic foundations to meet and exchange ideas and best practices; (2) to foster a favorable societal environment for philanthropy to thrive; and (3) to be a major actor of and at the service of philanthropic foundations with a general interest mission (The Association, Document 2).

To fulfill these objectives, the Association implements various activities: lobby Belgian public authorities to represent, defend and promote the common interests of its members; provide public at large with general information on philanthropic foundations and on philanthropy's societal role; and organize internal seminars to give its members legal and fiscal advice, to foster their interaction around common issues, and to broadly professionalize their operation (The Association, Document 1). In this respect, The Association has the potential to compensate – to a certain extent – for the limits of the legal framework and to expand the meaning, operational and relational systems of Belgian philanthropic infrastructure. In other words, to be a field-structuring actor.

Yet, despite The Association's potential, little progress has been made since 2004. As a result, other incumbents have attempted to undertake infrastructural work, in order to better identify field members and their activities as well as to foster their interaction. For instance, in 2005, The ClearView Foundation was created by an individual philanthropist with the aim to increase the transparency of the field and the interaction of its members (The ClearView Foundation, Documents 1 and 2). In 2012, the University Chair in Philanthropy and Social Investment was created by The Oldest Fund, in order to develop teaching and research activities on philanthropy and its practices (The Oldest Fund, Document 1). In 2017, a first collective impact project was launched under the impulse of the YouthPower Foundation in order to foster collaboration among philanthropic organizations (The YouthPower Foundation, Documents 3, 4, 5). And lately, several incumbents (e.g., The Oldest Fund, The YouthPower Foundation, The Family Foundation and GlobalizAid) pushed for the creation of an expertise center on philanthropic foundations, to further develop knowledge on the field (notes from event "Expertise Center's meeting").

Besides these uncoordinated acts of structuration, Belgian philanthropic organizations point especially to two field members – The Big Foundation (TBF) and The Transformative Foundation (TFF) – who strategically attempt to take a field-structuring position within the field. Created in 1976 by the Belgian State, TBF aims to build a better society through philanthropic actions in Belgium, in Europe as well as around the world (The Big Foundation, Document 5). The foundation has rapidly established itself as a prominent actor in the Belgian philanthropic field and its structuration. Its available resources make TBF one of the largest foundations in Belgium in terms of financial assets (data from 2012, see Mernier & Xhauflair (2014)). TBF's financial capital rests upon four pillars: (1) its own endowment invested to make it grow (97 millions euros in 2020), (2) an annual subsidy coming from the Belgian National Lottery (10 millions in 2020), (3) missions undertaken for Belgian public authorities, and (4) financial resources from funds it hosts (The Big Foundation, Document 9).

Hosted funds are a specificity of Belgian organizational philanthropy. Hosted funds are no legal entities as such (Vandenbulke, 2016) but in practice they operate as foundations. Foundations hosting funds act as umbrella organizations (Mernier & Xhauflair, 2017). While many foundations have the ability to host funds, TBF is the largest host with 801 hosted funds for a total of 725 millions euros in 2019 (with a great increase since 2015: 524 hosted for 450 millions euros) (The Big

Foundation, Documents 6 and 7). TBF's hosted funds are all coordinated by its Center for Philanthropy (The Big Foundation, Documents 16 and 17). TBF also coordinates an "Observatory of nonprofits and foundations" in order to produce knowledge on philanthropy and organizes events gathering philanthropic stakeholders in Belgium and abroad (The Big Foundation, Documents 8 and 20 to 24).

The increasing salience of TBF within Belgian organizational philanthropy has triggered the creation in 1998 of TFF. Conceived as a *"transformative philanthropic platform"* (The Transformative Foundation, Document 1), TFF points out TBF's flaws in bringing structuration to the field. Initially created with no endowment (in total 2.32 millions in 2017 (The Transformative Foundation, Document 3)), TFF was first not considered to be a philanthropic foundation by other Belgian philanthropic organizations; it is now becoming an important player in the field. Coming from periphery to field's center, TFF acts like a challenger against TBF in field structuration. In this respect, it aims to use the philanthropic foundation as a tool for systemic societal change (The Transformative Foundation, Document 2). It recognizes that the foundation is a deeply undemocratic organization and strives to turn its structural weaknesses into strengths: it makes mission-related investments, it implements participative governance mechanisms, it publicly publishes its archives, it hosts funds but only those aligned on its core values (The Transformative Foundation, Document 3). It has also created a peer-learning group gathering European foundations and inciting them to share best practices and organizes events on and around philanthropy (The Transformative Foundation, Documents 1, 5 and 8).

Therefore, with its lowly structured meaning, operational and relational systems, its various actors attempting to undertake infrastructural work, Belgian philanthropy constitutes a stimulating empirical context to study strategies to take a field-structuring position. More specifically, as TBF and TTF promote different visions of how organizational philanthropy must be structured, power plays between them subsequently develop and they each pursue their strategy to take a field-structuring position. We document their respective strategy in the findings section below.

Table 3 – Key moments in the creation of Belgian philanthropy's field infrastructure

Year	Key moments
1921/2002	1921: First regulatory framework on (international) nonprofit organizations, including philanthropic foundations 2002: Amendment of Law 1921 2019: Latest amendment Implications: Rapid growth and diversification of philanthropic organizations
1976	Creation of The Big Foundation by the Belgian State First foundation in Belgium in terms of financial asset 801 hosted funds for a total asset of 725 millions euros Organization of field-configuring event *Philanthropy works!* (Events 1 and 2)
1998	Creation of The Transformative Foundation The foundation as a transformative philanthropic platform Since 2014 – Hosts philanthropic vehicles Organization of field-configuring event *Transformative Philanthropy* (Event 4)
2004	Creation of The Association of Philanthropic Foundations Objectives: be a forum for philanthropic resource-providers, foster philanthropy, be a major actor (at the service) of resource-providers 125 members, about 10% of all foundations with a general interest mission
2005 to present	Isolated acts of field structuration 2005 – Creation of The ClearView Foundation for transparency of the field 2012 – Creation of University Chair in Philanthropy and Social Investment to produce knowledge on philanthropy 2017 – Collective impact project at the initiative of The YouthPower Foundation 2019 – Collective attempt to create an expertise center on philanthropy

3.2   Collecting data

Our data collection took place from April 2017 to July 2020 and relied on three types of data: interviews, observations and archival documents. Multiple sources of data enabled us to triangulate and validate our findings and reach robust conclusions (Rouse & Spencer, 2016). Choosing for a grounded theory approach, we collected and analyzed data in parallel and made decisions about what data to collect next based on our previous analyses. We stopped gathering data once we reached theoretical saturation – that is, when we did not learn anything new from adding new data (Walsh et al., 2015).

We had the opportunity to observe six events related to Belgian philanthropy which took place between April 2017 and September 2019. Four of these events were field-gathering events and focused on philanthropy at large; they were open to anyone interested. The other two events were private meetings centering on the population of Belgian foundations. We played an active role during one of the public events, as we presented the preliminary findings of the study requested by the two incumbents (The Big Foundation and The Nextdoor Bank). We also played an active role during the two private meetings, as the University Chair in Philanthropy and Social Investment convened them. During the other events, we acted as non-participant observers. During and after each event, we systematically recorded our observations, impressions, and informal talks we had with participants in field notes. As studying fields implies for researchers to identify their members, resources and rules (Fligstein, 2001), attending these events enabled us to spot the prominent organizational actors associated with Belgian philanthropy, but also to refine our interview guide according to arising salient issues. These observations allowed us to witness *in situ* field as well as population dynamics (Garud, 2008). Indeed, field-configuring events are "windows to examine interactions" (Mair & Hehenberger, 2014, p. 1179); they turn the abstract construct of field into a concrete and observable space (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017). While we asked about field members' interactions during interviews, we could actually observe them during events.

We conducted 21 semi-structured interviews with 18 organizations from November 2018 to July 2020. These interviews are our primary source of data. Interviewees were selected according to a snowball technique, their attendance to events observed and in-depth knowledge of the field. On average, interviews lasted 1h30. They were all conducted in French, except for one in English. They were all

recorded with interviewees' authorization (except for one during which extensive notes were taken) and were transcribed and subsequently sent to interviewees for approval.

Among these interviews, we met with nine philanthropic resource-providers and three collective interest organizations related to the field and its infrastructure. Interviews explored themes related to philanthropy in Belgium. The type of questions included: In their view, who is part of philanthropy, who is not and why? Do they consider themselves as part of philanthropy? In their opinion, has philanthropy changed and how? If so, how do they position themselves regarding these changes? What are the strengths and weaknesses of philanthropy in Belgium; in other words, what works well, what does not and why? In this regard, what do they think of The Association and about its activities regarding philanthropy and more specifically resource-providers? And why are they a member or not? What are their own philanthropic actions and resources? How do they view themselves in relation to other organizations? How do they interact with other philanthropy-related organizations as well as with public authorities, corporations, and any other Belgian societal actors they deem important? At the end of the interview, we asked them to point us to philanthropic actors they considered significant in Belgium.

Two foundations were systematically referred to us by other philanthropic organizations as having a significant influence on Belgian philanthropy: The Big Foundation (hereafter referred to as TBF) and The Transformative Foundation (hereafter referred to as TTF). We met with three representatives from TBF and two representatives from TTF. During these interviews, we had a similar conversation to the one we had with other philanthropic organizations. We also met with The Association, which was depicted in previous interviews as the formal field-structuring actor. With its representative, we talked about The Association's role in philanthropy and regarding philanthropic organizations, the reasons for its creation, its activities and interactions with its members and non-members. In addition, we conducted three interviews with platform-based newcomers that would bring innovative practices in Belgian philanthropy and that appeared to be closely related to TBF. They explained their position regarding philanthropy and their relations with philanthropic organizations and especially TBF.

For each field member, interviewees were knowledgeable representatives of their organization, as they either are its founder or occupy manager positions. Even though we centered our analysis on the position-taking strategies of two specific field members (TBF and TTF), we chose a multi-actor process to gather a rich set of data, take a relational view on the field and avoid giving a too simple image of it. From these interviews, we gained a retrospective account of the field for the period before our data collection, a more thorough understanding of the field infrastructure and its gaps, of the population of incumbents and its core organizational actors, their resource endowments and thereby their social position, their interactions with other field members, as well as how they are perceived by these other members. The following Table 2.3.1. is retrieved from the global Table 2.3. presented in introduction and displays data relevant for this chapter.

All along the research process (2017 – 2020), we also gathered archival documents, in order to complement and cross-check information collected during interviews and observations (Rouse & Spencer, 2016). These archival documents comprise interviewees' legal status, their websites and the websites of activities in which they are involved, their annual reports, their newsletters, and their publications on themes related to philanthropy or their philanthropic activities. We also collected documents from events we attended (such as programs, reports, lists of participants). Table 2.4. in appendices displays a list of these various documents, including their title and the organization who issued them. Each document is attached to a specific code used to refer to the document. Finally, we consulted various secondary sources – that is, research articles and working papers previously published on Belgian and European philanthropy in order to give us a better idea of the field: statistical information on Belgian foundations, history of philanthropy and foundations, and evolutions prior to the present research (Garbarczyk, 2018; Gautier, 2019; Hustinx & Dudal, 2020; Hustinx et al., 2014; Jung et al., 2016; Mernier, 2017; Mernier & Xhauflair, 2014, 2017; Vandenbulke, 2016; Wiepking & Handy, 2015). This enabled us to partly reduce biases to which interviews may be subject.

Table 2.3.1. – Data used for Chapter I

Events observations				
#1	Philanthropy works! (Antwerp)	Public	Active participation	27/04/2017
#2	Philanthropy works! (Namur)	Public	Visitor	03/05/2017
#4	Transformative philanthropy	Public	Visitor	10/12/2018
#5	Chair's annual meeting	Private	Active participation	21/02/2019
#6	Philanthropy & Society	Public	Visitor	28/03/2019
#8	Expertise Center's meeting	Private	Active participation	12/09/2019
Interviews				
#1			Interview 1	19/11/2018
#2	The Big Foundation	Resource-provider	Interview 2	23/11/2018
#3			Interview 3	26/11/2018
#4	The Transformative Foundation	Resource-provider	Interview 1	17/12/2018
#5			Interview 2	19/01/2019
#6	The Family Foundation	Resource-provider	Interview 1	21/01/2019
#7	Well-Being Coop	Resource-provider	Interview 1	12/02/2019
#8	The YouthPower Foundation	Resource-provider	Interview 1	15/11/2018
#9	The Job4All Foundation	Resource-provider	Interview 1	20/08/2019
#10	The Citizenship Foundation	Resource-provider	Interview 1	17/07/2019
#11	The Oldest Fund	Resource-provider	Interview 1	21/03/2019
#12	Holism&Harmony	Resource-provider	Interview 1	20/11/2019
#13	GlobalizAid	Resource-provider	Interview 1	30/09/2019
#14	The Nextdoor Bank	Resource-provider	Interview 1	07/11/2018
#15	The Association	Collective interest organization	Interview 1	07/12/2018
#16	The Volunteering Center	Collective interest organizations	Interview 1	07/08/2019
#17	The ClearView Foundation	Collective interest organization	Interview 1	14/07/2020
#18	Fund4Impact	Collective interest organization	Interview 1	14/11/2018
#19	Time2Give	Social-mission platform	Interview 2	03/10/2019
#21	HelpPooling	Social-mission platform	Interview 1	15/11/2019
#21	GivingWhizz	Social-mission platform	Interview 2	27/09/2019

3.3   Analyzing data

Our analysis built on a variant of grounded theory (Gioia et al., 2012; Glaser & Strauss, 2008) and an abductive reasoning (Sætre & Van de Ven, 2021; Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). Throughout our research process, we cycled among collecting and analyzing data as well as relating emerging insights to extant literature and developing theoretical categories. Our data analysis proceeded in five stages. In the first stage, using interviews, archival documents and secondary sources, we traced back the evolution of field infrastructure by way of highlighting key moments (see Table 3 in Research setting). This chronology helped reveal the current infrastructure, its existing and missing elements, field members involved, and thereby its degree of elaboration and coherency. Portraying field infrastructure is crucial to understand the context in which actors are embedded as well as the extent to which this context constrains or enables actors' agency and power play (Zietsma et al., 2017).

In the second stage, we specifically focused on infrastructural elements. For each element, we sought to discern the field member(s) behind its creation and maintenance. Our analysis confirmed our initial intuition, revealing, on one hand, the infrastructural void left by The Association, and on the other hand, the particular significance of TBF and TTF in filling in this void. Therefore, we decided at this point to focus on these three actors and how the last two were taking a field-structuring position to compensate for the shortcomings of the first one. The remainder of our analysis centered on exploring position-taking strategies.

In the third stage, we openly coded interviews, observations and archival documents seeking evidence of discourses and actions by TBF and TTF related to field infrastructure and how these discourses and actions shaped their respective resource endowment, their perception by other field members, and inherently their position in the field. Through this open coding, we compiled for each actor a comprehensive set of infrastructure-oriented acts which form our first order codes (Hinings et al., 2017). For example, TBF *"appointed research centers and think-tank groups to produce knowledge related to philanthropy"* and TFF *"formed learning-oriented partnerships to further reflect on and around philanthropy"*. Both actors *"organized field-configuring events and spaces"*.

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In the fourth stage, we grouped first order codes into second order codes using axial coding for each actor. Simultaneously, while grouping first order codes, we also compared TBF's first order codes with TTF's first order codes to understand how TBF's and TTF's infrastructure-oriented acts differentiated from one another. While both actors reflected on philanthropy, they did not draw on the same resources to do so: TBF built on its financial and reputational resources while TTF mainly built on its relational resources. Similarly, TBF and TTF did not undertake their respective infrastructure-oriented acts at the same levels. Examples of second order codes are therefore the following: TBF *"developed and refined its own understanding of philanthropy"* at its <u>organizational level</u> while TTF *"collectively developed an alternative understanding of philanthropy"* at <u>the population and broader environment levels</u>. We identified four levels: organization, population, field and broader environment. Identifying resources and levels helped outline actors' strategic pattern to take a field-structuring position.

In the fifth and final stage of abstraction, we confronted our analysis to extant literature on institutional infrastructure and field-structuring actors (Buchanan, 2016; Hinings et al., 2017; O'Sullivan & O'Dwyer, 2015). Guided by this literature, we sought how the strategic pattern undertaken by each actors impacted the meaning, operational and relational systems of field infrastructure. For instance, TBF *"created the field's internal and external channels through convening"* and TTF *"created the field's internal and external channels through collaborating"*. As such, our analysis showed that both actors' strategies to take a field-structuring position developed on four levels of actions and rely on the three infrastructural systems identified in extant literature, but not to the same extent. The two following tables (Tables 4.1. and 4.2.) represent our coding process.

Table 4.1. – Coding table of TBF's position-taking strategy

1st order codes of KBF	2nd order codes		Abstract dimensions
Calling on experts to delineate general interest and guide its philanthropic action	Developing and refining its own understanding of philanthropy	*Organizational level*	Circumscribing the field's shared meanings through organizational mechanisms
Appointing research centers and think-tank groups to produce knowledge related to philanthropy			
Educating field members using its philanthropic vehicles to its understanding of philanthropy	Disseminating its own understanding of philanthropy	*Field level*	
Diffusing factual and descriptive knowledge through public channels		*Broader environment level*	
Sharing cutting-edge and innovative knowledge within international networks			
Hosting diversified and flexible vehicles to operationalize as much philanthropic projects as possible	Building field members' capacities within its organization	*Organizational level*	Operationalizing the field through centralization
Providing financial help and consultancy for field members to structure their organization			
Advising field members regarding the early implementation of their ideas	Building field members' capacities through open access supports	*Field level*	
Developing tools to help field members better undertake their actions			
Matching field members together	Defining field members' interactions	*Field level*	Creating the field's internal and external channels through convening
Organizing broad field-configuring events and spaces			
Building and being part of international networks related to philanthropy	Representing its organization outside the field	*Broader environment level*	
Establishing close connections between its organization and various stakeholders			
Having a close relationship with Belgian State			

Table 4.2. – Coding table of TFF's position-taking strategy

1st order codes of FFG	2nd order codes		Abstract dimensions
Critically reflecting on and around philanthropy with population members	Collectively developing an alternative understanding of philanthropy	*Population level*	Circumscribing the field's shared meanings through collective mechanisms
Forming learning-oriented partnerships to further reflect on and around philanthropy		*Broader environment level*	
Educating field members using its philanthropic vehicles to its alternative understanding of philanthropy	Disseminating its co-developed understanding of philanthropy	*Field level*	
Diffusing its critical reflections through public channels		*Broader environment level*	
Providing philanthropic vehicles to operationalize philanthropic projects according to its alternative understanding	Building population members' capacities within and outside its organization	*Organizational level*	Operationalizing the field through decentralization and exemplariness
Advising population members regarding their philanthropic strategy		*Population level*	
Embodying its alternative understanding to inspire others to operate similarly	Setting examples on how to undertake philanthropic actions	*Broader environment level*	
Publicly sharing its own operational mechanisms			
Inviting other population members to join peer-learning groups	Defining population and field-members interactions	*Population level*	Creating the field's internal and external channels through collaborating
Organizing field-configuring events and spaces centered on its alternative understanding		*Field level*	
Building and being part of international (and alternative) networks related to philanthropy	Establishing connections among stakeholders of the broader environment and the field	*Broader environment level*	
Gathering various stakeholders around large-scale partnerships			
Having a project-related relationship with Belgian State			

4 Findings

In this section we address our research question: *how do organizations make strategic use of an issue field's fragmented infrastructure to take a field-structuring position?* We first document the structural opportunity left by the weaknesses of the formal field-structuring actor – The Association. Then, we describe the infrastructural acts undertaken by The Big Foundation (TBF) and explain how these enabled TBF to take an informal field-structuring position. Further, we show how TBF's position-taking strategy was perceived and criticized by population members. Building on these criticisms, we finally turn to The Transformative Foundation's (TTF) infrastructural acts undertaken in reaction to TBF's strategy and highlight how TTF's acts enabled it to take a challenging field-structuring position.

4.1 The Association's weaknesses as a structural opportunity

Originally created by several Belgian philanthropic resource-providers to play a structuring role, The Association was criticized and its ability to build the meaning, operational and relational systems of philanthropic infrastructure questioned. Regarding philanthropy's shared meanings, while the Belgian philanthropic legal framework was considered too *"vast"* (The Family Foundation, Interview 1), The Association was compared by its members to *"a mere administrative office"* (GlobalizAid, Interview 1). As The Association only conveyed the legal and fiscal information prescribed by the law to its members, it did not develop more detailed and strategic guidelines on what ought to be and should do a philanthropic organization. As such, The Association appeared as familiar with philanthropy and its organizations as any other philanthropic organization.

> *I asked* [The Association] *for a list of family foundations. And I could tell they did not have that list; they did not know who Belgian family foundations are. They sent me a list of foundations on which half were actual family foundations and the other half were not.* (The Family Foundation, Interview 1)

While foundations all worked on different themes, they still faced similar issues (e.g., endowment investment, project management, governance practices, social impact evaluation) and could be inspired by one another's work. However, rather than being a place where these issues could be discussed and innovative solutions stimulated, The Association was said to be a place *"where each foundation defends*

its own interests" (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2). As a result, in terms of societal evolution and philanthropic innovations, The Association usually lagged behind its members which considered it as *"fossilized"* (The Family Foundation, Interview 1), *"old"* (The Job4All Foundation, Interview 1) and *"doddery"* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2). This way of working ran counter to The Association's objectives of being a *"forum for best practices exchange"* and *"a major actor of and at the service of foundations"* (The Association, Document 1). In 2017, in an attempt to rectify this situation, members requested The Association to organize thematic workshops in order for them to meet, interact and exchange useful information.

> *They only give little pieces of advice to philanthropists who want to create a foundation: this is legal obligation, this is tax advantages, this is how to organize yourselves, a little bit. Only on legal, tax and financial part. But content-wise... what are you going to do with your foundation? They do not do anything.* (GlobalizAid, Interview 1)

Regarding the operationalization of philanthropic actions, The Association did not provide its members and others with vehicles, tools, templates or trainings on how to implement philanthropic actions. When philanthropists looked for support in designing and implementing their philanthropic projects, The Association referred them to TBF. Yet, with the growth and complexity of societal issues, new philanthropic approaches have emerged (e.g., venture philanthropy, digital philanthropy). Neither the organizational form of foundation nor the limited legal operational guidelines suited these emerging actors and practices, which sometimes needed other philanthropic structures to be operationalized. Some thus wondered *"what added value there was in having a collective organization"* (GlobalizAid, Interview 1) and in being part of it if this organization was not capable to empower its members beyond what they could achieve on their own. Some foundations knew The Association existed but preferred to be part of other (European) networks which they deemed more useful (e.g., Holism&Harmony, Interview 1).

Regarding its relational channels, the field of philanthropy was said to not be sufficiently connected, both internally and externally. Internally, The Association commented that Belgian foundations, although *"they fished in the same pond"*, *"collaborated with difficulty"* (The Association, Interview 1) and one of its members regretted that *"there were no spontaneous exchange"* (The Oldest Fund, Interview 1). This is corroborated by Mernier & Xhauflair (2017) who state that

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only 23% of Belgian foundations are part of a group or a network that could help them identify potential collaborations. And Belgium had no open and accessible database gathering relevant information on philanthropic organizations in order for them to identify who could be a potential partner. The field and its make-up remained quite invisible. Pooling of resources – be they money, skills or knowledge – was difficult and usually occurred as each foundation met bilaterally with its peers. Faced with this situation, foundations started to develop more collective initiatives (e.g., collective impact project (The YouthPower Foundation, Document 1)).

Externally, The Association's mission was to serve as the public face and lobbying arm of the population and the field. According to its legal documents (Document 2), The Association had the role to represent the Belgian population of foundations as well as the field of philanthropy vis-à-vis public at large, public authorities and related societal stakeholders (universities, corporations, banks, cultural organizations). Yet, in fact, The Association was said to be *"withdrawn into itself"* (Holism&Harmony, Interview 1) and loosely connected. It hardly organized events promoting philanthropy. On this matter, The Association tended to be dependent on and even disappeared behind its members: it had no independent premises, and its financial resources depended in large part on annual membership fees (which was quite low compared to other European associations (The Association, Interview 1)). It refused to partner with banks or enterprises which could be interested in philanthropy.

While it said it strove to establish strong relationships with public authorities to develop a more favorable and enabling regulatory framework for philanthropy, foundations were skeptical on the efficiency of its lobbying efforts: *"it wants to legally defend and protect foundations, but I don't see any result…"* (The Oldest Fund, Interview 1). It rarely intervened in Belgian media or represented Belgium in international events. It was part of DAFNE (Donors and Foundations Networks in Europe) but was said to have *"few connections with other networks or think-tank groups"* (GlobalizAid, Interview 1) (such as the European Foundation Center). Yet, as philanthropic organizations' legitimacy lies within the added value they bring to society, shedding light on this added value by opening the field to its broader environment should contribute to strengthening philanthropy's legitimacy.

Consequently, although The Association was to play a major field-structuring role, it was in practice failing to do so. The Association's failure left a void in the Belgian philanthropic field – that is, a field-structuring position that was not fulfilled and room for other field members to take that position. Particularly, philanthropic organizations pointed to two foundations who played a structuring role: TBF and TTF.

> *If I was asked: what is Belgian philanthropy? I would answer* [The Big Foundation]. *This is my main reference*. (Holism&Harmony, Interview 1)

> [The Transformative Foundation] *is an institution in the field*. (The YouthPower Foundation, Interview 1)

4.2   *TBF's position-taking strategy: organizational mechanisms, centralization, and convening*

TBF's position-taking strategy developed at its organizational level, at the field level and at the broader environment level and relied on circumscribing the fields' shared meanings through organizational mechanisms, on operationalizing the field through centralization and on creating the field's internal and external channels through convening.

Regarding philanthropy's shared meanings, TBF argued that *"the word 'philanthropy' cannot be put on everything"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 1) and undertook actions to circumscribe philanthropy's meaning as well as to make this circumscription shared by other field members. At its organizational level, TBF had the financial means and reputation to **develop and refine its own understanding of philanthropy**. First, TBF *called on various experts* to help it ensure that its implemented projects and its hosted vehicles fell within general interest. Experts were chosen by TBF to reflect a plurality of opinions as they come from various societal domains. They gave TBF an actual view on philanthropic and, more broadly, societal evolutions, and thus served to guide its philanthropic action, which then was said to *"create precedents"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 1).

In other words, by implementing projects and hosting vehicles which were approved by external experts as contributing to general interest, TBF refined and advanced its understanding of philanthropy.

> *We basically know what feels right and what does not. But there are borderline cases. […] These are cases that raise questions and there, it is true, we create precedents. We say: to us, that is right and that is not. But we know it is true today and might not be true tomorrow. This is what society reflects. And that is why it is really important to work with experts. We never decide alone, just between us within the Foundation.* (The Big Foundation, Interview 1)

Second, TBF *appointed research centers and think-tank groups to produce knowledge related to philanthropy*. For example, analyses were produced within its Observatory of nonprofits and foundations (The Big Foundation, Document 1), and studies were conducted by various universities at TBF's request to document philanthropic evolutions and reflect on their inherent opportunities and challenges (The Big Foundation, Document 19). Doing so, TBF argued that it *"clarified the grey zone of philanthropy"* (The Big Foundation, Interviews 1 and 2).

Subsequently, TBF **disseminated its understanding of philanthropy** at the field and broader environment level. At the field level, TBF *educated field members using its philanthropic vehicles*. When field members used TBF's vehicles, they needed to comply with TBF's understanding of philanthropy (The Big Foundation, Document 17). At the broader environment level, TBF *diffused its knowledge through public channels* (websites, events, newsletters…) and *shared it within international networks*. For instance, it gave speeches on philanthropy in international gatherings (e.g., speech at the European Economic and Social Committee on *European philanthropy – an untapped potential* on January 16, 2019 (The Big Foundation, Document 4)).

Through disseminating its understanding of philanthropy, TBF ensured that the meaning it assigned to philanthropy – as developed at its organizational level – became largely known by other field members, but also outside the field. As such, TBF embodied a significant portal of information on the field and was regarded as an *"example"* (The Citizenship Foundation, Interview 1), *"a source of inspiration"* (The Family Foundation, Interview 1), *"a good voice to listen to"* (GivingWhizz, Interview 2) by other foundations as well as by other populations of actors related to philanthropy.

Regarding the operationalization of philanthropic actions, TBF expressed its willingness *"to be at the service of philanthropists to help them operationalize their actions"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 3). To do so, TBF **built field members' capacities within its organization**. The goal of its Center for Philanthropy was to *host diversified and flexible vehicles* (e.g., hosted funds, project accounts, giving circles…) *to operationalize as much philanthropic projects as possible*. Besides hosting vehicles, TBF *provided financial help and consultancy for field members to structure their organization*. For instance, since 2010, TBF ran a Venture Philanthropy Fund dedicated to helping nonprofits and social enterprises reflect on their organizational structure (The Big Foundation, Document 3). In the same vein, since 2017 TBF attempted to redesign its investment policy in order to better include Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) criteria. While this consideration was undertaken at the level of its own investments, TBF also incited its hosted funds to include ESG criteria as well (The Big Foundation, Document 8).

TBF's operationalization of philanthropy at its organizational level echoed at the field level, as TBF **built field members' capacities through open access supports**. On one hand, it *advised field members regarding the early implementation of their ideas*. Philanthropists-to-be tended to come to TBF for answers to their legal and fiscal questions: "*we are a good first line regarding legal and fiscal aspects, we help and guide philanthropists*" (The Big Foundation, Interview 1). On the other hand, TBF *developed tools to help field members better undertake their actions*. Since 2010, it reflected on governance issues in philanthropic organizations. In 2016, it launched a tool to help organizations self-assess their governance practices. Its objective with this tool was to *"strengthen best practices regarding governance"* (The Big Foundation, Document 18, p.9) in the philanthropic field. Facing digital evolutions, The Big Foundation reflected on how to help field members better take advantage of new technologies (Document 15).

> We hired a data scientist, and we gave him carte blanche. We told him: look at what other countries do, look at what we can do, at what Belgian philanthropy can do. Then, we are going to learn, and we are going to share our knowledge with the field. That is our goal. […] And we will have to establish governance mechanisms: how can digital data contribute to general interest? (The Big Foundation, Interview 2)

TBF's operationalization of philanthropy relied on centralization, as vehicles, consultancy and tools implemented at its organizational level and at the field level unavoidably linked field members to TBF. Through its Center for Philanthropy and its Venture Philanthropy Fund, TBF helped field members to *"clarify, plan, organize, manage and evaluate the impact of their projects"* (The Big Foundation, Document 7, p. 144). Doing so, TBF made these field members enter its organizational boundaries. As a consequence, TBF was increasingly growing in size: it covered more and more societal causes. TBF regarded the philanthropic vehicles it hosted as a *"significant strike force"* (The Big Foundation, Document 8, p.8). And The Association, among others in the field, compared TBF to *"a centralized government"* (The Association, Interview 1).

As TBF's operational mechanisms were increasingly used, more and more field members framed their own action according to TBF's understanding of philanthropy. This meant that, beyond being shared, the meaning assigned to philanthropy by TBF became standardized and took a taken-for-granted aspect. As illustrated by a platform-based newcomer who explained that it *"didn't develop selection criteria on* [its] *own but mostly tends to use those developed by* [TBF]*"* (HelpPooling, Interview 1). Consequently, TBF defined the appropriate ways of behaving of field members and became a normative force in the field.

In addition, TBF's operational mechanisms played a certifying role. As TBF built its decisions to allow access or not to its operational mechanisms upon its own understanding of philanthropy, TBF could decide to a certain extent whether an actor was allowed or not to undertake a philanthropic action. In other words, TBF could decide whether an actor could enter the field or not and could certify membership of this actor. As such, TBF acted as the field's gatekeeper. Acting as a gatekeeper, TBF witnessed what happened at the fringes of the field and was thus able to spot innovations. When innovative philanthropic practices did not quite fit within its existing operational mechanisms, TBF adapted them, *"created the right box"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 3).

Being aware of innovations enabled TBF to enrich its own knowledge of philanthropy and more broadly of societal evolutions. This helped TBF *"connect and discuss with very interesting people"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 1)*, "explore new themes and approaches"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 3) and refine its understanding of philanthropy to keep it in line with societal realities and avoid entropy. For instance, while the legal framework did not take into account

corporate philanthropy, TBF made corporations one of their *"target audiences"* (The Big Foundation, Document 8, p.85) and provided vehicles and tools to meet their philanthropic plans. Doing so, it included in the field of philanthropy a societal actor – the corporation – which was traditionally not considered but which had become increasingly regarded as required to play its part in addressing societal challenges. Therefore, TBF had the power to bring change into the field and make its makeup evolve.

Regarding philanthropy's internal and external relational channels, TBF claimed it was its *"raison d'être to gather people together"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 1) and undertook actions to create interactions within the field as well as with its broader environment. Given its creation by the Belgian State, its significant financial resources, its all-encompassing studies and the growing number of vehicles it hosted, TBF was highly visible, known and recognized on the Belgian, European and international stage. At the field level, TBF **defined field members interactions** by *matching field members together* and by *organizing field-configuring events and spaces*.

Through its vehicles, consultancy, and tools operationalizing philanthropy, TBF was able to identify field members, as various actors came and sought for its operational mechanisms. More than identifying field members, TBF matched those that did not know each other but that could be mutually helpful. Doing so, TBF specified the relationships between field members.

> *This is a beautiful example regarding what we can do in terms of bridge building. A first organization came to see me. And two weeks later, another one came. I put them together. I told them: listen, you do the same thing, so do something about it. And now they are a single one organization.* (The Big Foundation, Interview 2)

Along the same lines, TBF organized every three years a large field-configuring event bringing together Belgian but also foreign philanthropic organizations and other societal actors related to philanthropy (Events 1 and 2). TBF considered that *"it was* [its] *responsibility"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 2) to organize such an event, as it had the means to do so. Beyond being *"the flagship label of [TBF's] communication on philanthropy"* (The Big Foundation, Document 8 p. 51), this event gave a space for field members to meet and interact.

TBF was also behind the creation of a large database on philanthropic organizations. Publicly accessible, this database served as an online field-configuring space. The website was both a display window giving field members visibility and facilitating their interactions as well as a search engine for public at large allowing anyone to contact field members. Nowadays, this database counts 6800 organizations (The Big Foundation, Document 2).

At the broader environment level, TBF **represented its organization outside the field**. First, as TBF aimed to be a *"global philanthropy enabler"* (The Big Foundation, Document 8, p.10), it *built and was part of international networks related to philanthropy*. For instance, TBF created what it called the *"[TBF] Family"* (The Big Foundation, Document 8, p.6), gathering the foundation in Belgium and its sisters in the United States and Canada. It was recognized as a national philanthropic organization in several European countries (France, the Netherlands and Denmark). All these entities shared the same values and practices. It initiated the European network to facilitate cross-border donations. It took part in several international networks (e.g., European Foundation Centre, Network of European Foundations, European Venture Philanthropy Association and DAFNE) (The Big Foundation, Documents 1 and 8). Along with other European foundations, it launched a broad reflection on the European philanthropic infrastructure to represent and defend philanthropy within European institutions as well as to better coordinate the various existing European networks on and around philanthropy (The Big Foundation, Document 11).

Second, TBF *established close connections between its organization and various stakeholders,* such as the National Bank (from which it derived its data displayed in its large database), corporations (with which it created intra-organizational partnerships (e.g., Venture Philanthropy Fund), the professional association for Belgian corporations, banks (with which it funded and carried out studies, such as the Nextdoor Bank) or various nonprofits federations that sat in its executive boards (The Big Foundation, Document 1).

And third and last, TBF *had a close relationship with the Belgian State*. It was regularly consulted and often conducted studies on numerous societal matters to help the government survey public opinion and advise it accordingly in implementing policies.

> *We do missions for public authorities. Of course, they are very important. Our role is to respect and enhance them. I would say that we come upstream from public decisions. Our role is to survey what is legitimate and what is not, in order to lay the groundwork for public decisions.* (The Big Foundation, Interview 1)

> *Let's be clear: besides* [The Big Foundation]*, which is known from public authorities, and which is regularly consulted, I would say that the other foundations are never consulted.* (The Association, Interview 1)

As TBF aimed to be a space where social ties among field members and between field members and outside stakeholders could be fostered, it was said to have a *"powerful convening capacity"* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 1). Through its shared meanings and operational mechanisms, TBF stood out from field members and was viewed by others but had also a clear view on the field and its broader environment. It was thus in a position to identify field members and explicitly convene those it deemed should meet and specify how they should interact. In this sense, TBF was a collaboration builder. In addition, as TBF was widely represented outside the field, so was its shared meanings of philanthropy. Therefore, more than the field's portal of information, TBF acted as Belgian philanthropy's public face and lobbying arm. It was perceived as the *"Ministry of Philanthropy"* (The Oldest Fund, Interview 1) and as *"in charge of the whole charity work of Belgium"* (Holism&Harmony, Interview 1).

> [The Big Foundation] *is an atypical foundation; it is almost an extension of the government to manage foundations rather than a foundation supporting various projects. Some say they fear* [The Big Foundation]*, that it is going to eat them up. But it has a role to play, and all depends on how it positions itself.* (The Oldest Fund, Interview 1)

Taking on the roles of field's portal of information, normative force, gatekeeper, collaboration builder, public face and lobbying arm, TBF developed and maintained mechanisms of collective rationality which compensated for The Association's weaknesses. Doing so, it took an informal field-structuring position.

4.3   Population members' criticisms of TBF' position-taking strategy

Although philanthropic organizations recognized the value of infrastructural elements developed by TBF, incumbent resource-providers still questioned how TBF implemented these elements. First, they questioned how TBF shared its knowledge. Although TBF disseminated its knowledge at the field and broader environment level, it appeared to do it in a rather protective way. Incumbents regretted that TBF mainly shared *factual and descriptive* knowledge with them and that it was *"working behind closed doors"* (GlobalizAid, Interview 1) with international philanthropic meta-organizations. TBF appeared to be willing to share more rapidly and easily *cutting-edge and innovative knowledge* within European and international networks, before sharing it on the Belgian stage. Although TBF was a central actor of the incumbent population, it appeared to be more oriented towards the European and international stage.

> *I have been invited to present impact evaluation methods to the OECD. Well, I am going to the OECD, but maybe there are other Belgian foundations that would be interested in knowing about these methods…* (The Big Foundation, Interview 3)

TBF was said to first test innovative philanthropic practices (e.g., venture philanthropy and data philanthropy) behind closed doors before discussing them with other philanthropic resource-providers or with The Association (Events 5). To a certain extent, TBF set the agenda of the field as it maintained a decision-making power over what was worth pursuing and what was not. In the end, it could position itself as the root of and gateway to any innovation related to philanthropy.

> *Sometimes, they could be more transparent. I often voluntarily take part in their committees, I read a lot of application files. These should appear in an open data base, that would be publicly accessible. There are 3.0 mechanisms that they do not automatically implement.* (The Family Foundation, Interview 1)

> *Three years ago, they organized their event* [Philanthropy works!] (Events 1 and 2). *I was very disappointed by this event. A lot of actors came and gave a speech. And then what? I thought – and I told them so – that this event would enable the creation of common projects. Well, they started projects, but internally, not open to other foundations. They are too closed.* (The Oldest Fund, Interview 1)

Second, incumbents questioned the increasingly monopolistic place of TBF. Some organizations which were once hosted by TBF complained that they felt they lost their identity and autonomy in doing their own philanthropy. As management was handed over to TBF, funders were no longer solely in charge of funding and decision-making processes. In that sense, it could be argued that TBF enabled to operationalize philanthropic action but failed to empower field members, as they might not learn how to implement their philanthropic project.

> *There is always someone from* [The Big Foundation] *in hosted funds' committees. I think they have a bit of influence.* (The Citizenship Foundation, Interview 1)

Other incumbents compared TBF to a *"factory"* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 1) or a *"business"* (The Family Foundation, Interview 1). Behind these metaphors lay the idea that TBF – as any corporation in a monopolistic position – would have a market share to protect. While not necessarily expected in philanthropy – as all organizations aimed to serve general interest –, competition was however quite real. On one side, frustration grew among philanthropic organizations which were not using TBF's tools but were addressing similar causes. As TBF was said to not be keen on collaborating with Belgian foundations, these foundations thought TBF, with its numerous vehicles, was abusing its dominant position.

> *Several of our members support the fight against cancer and specific diseases. At first, The Big Foundation was not working in this sector. But now it is also supporting the fight against cancer. Our members are a bit frustrated, and they say: "well,* [The Big Foundation] *does everything and even more". Hosted funds become increasingly numerous. We have the feeling that* [The Big Foundation] *is sucking the field dry.* (The Association, Interview 1)

On the other side, TBF was said to frown upon new independent foundations created outside its bosom.

> *Sure, a big player is always a bit annoying. And they must think that little ants scratching their elephant feet is also annoying. They have a business; they earn their independence by hosting funds. So, when the family created its foundation, they came to me and asked: "why didn't you create a hosted fund within* [The Big Foundation]*?"* (The Family Foundation, Interview 1)

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Operationalizing philanthropy through a centralized logic, TBF would tend to confuse its organizational boundaries with the field boundaries.

Finally, incumbents questioned how TBF fostered collaborations and outwardly represented the field. TBF was said to neither fully collaborate with other Belgian philanthropic resource-providers nor actually foster interactions among them, although it recognized itself that *"the networking of Belgian philanthropic foundations should be stimulated"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 3). With its access to experts and its many hosted vehicles, TBF was able to undertake philanthropic actions on its own at the Belgian level. Its collaboration with others occurred at the European and international level.

> [The Big Foundation] *does not need anybody, they are big enough. And now they feel they probably have this role to play, but they are not organized in that way. They have the means to do it, they have the meeting rooms. They can do it but not everybody will accept their leadership. And they know that too.* (GlobalizAid, Interview 1)

In the same vein, TBF created in 2015 its database-website (The Big Foundation, Document 2) to provide visibility and transparency to the field and its members, although The ClearView Foundation had already been created ten years earlier and already provided another database gathering philanthropic organizations. Although the information they provided and the way they obtained this information differed, the two databases pursued the same transparency and collaboration goals. Yet, surprisingly, they worked in silos and did not interact with each other (The ClearView Foundation, Interview 1).

Although it was part of the group of foundations which collectively created The Association and was part of its board, TBF maintained with it an ambiguous relationship. On one hand, it openly expressed its wish *"to strengthen* [The Association]*"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 2), but on the other hand it explicitly stated in its strategic vision document its willingness to *"keep* [its] *leadership in philanthropy in Belgium"* (The Big Foundation, Document 8, p.52). Some foundations even wondered *"why* [The Big Foundation] *was interested in* [The Association] *when it had its own department on how to create a foundation"* (GlobalizAid, Interview 1).

In the same vein, the chair of TBF's board of governors was one of the two key speakers at The Association's annual meeting and answered most questions of the audience with illustrations of TBF's actions (Events 6). In that sense, The Association's annual meeting – gathering its members and other interested parties – served to further share TBF's meaning of philanthropy. Doing so, TBF prevented The Association from fully and independently taking its structuring position. Paradoxically, TBF provided numerous relational mechanisms at the field level and for a large scope of stakeholders but did not fully provide them at the population level.

Further, TBF was said to take advantage of its field-structuring position to only *"represent itself"* (The Association, Interview 1) rather than the field's collective interests. Yet, what suited TBF did not always suit the majority; *"it does not always realize the impact of some political decisions on smaller philanthropic organizations"* (The Association, Interview 1). TBF's relationship with the Belgian State was said to be one of dependence. As part of its operation financially relied on the Belgian government, TBF would *"not be free to support causes that are no priority for public authorities"* (The Oldest Fund, Interview 1). In this sense, it was perceived as in no capacity to properly act as the lobbying arm of the field and was rather a defender of status quo.

Figure 2 – TBF's position-taking strategy

Broader environment

Field level

Population level

Organization level

Circumscribing the field' shared meanings through organizational mechanisms

Disseminating its own understanding of philanthropy

Outwardly representing the field

Representing its organization outside the field

Diffusing shared meanings

Refining shared meanings

Refining shared meanings

Standardizing shared meanings

Building field members' capacities through open access supports

Defining field members' interactions

Developing and refining its own understanding of philanthropy

Building field members' capacities within its organization

Operationalizing the field through centralization

Identifying field members

Creating the field's internal and external channels through convening

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4.4 TTF's position-taking strategy: collective mechanisms, decentralization and exemplariness, and collaborating

Contestations of TBF's position-taking strategy further opened an opportunity for TTF to also attempt to take a field-structuring position. TTF's strategy was constructed in reaction to The Association's weakness but also to TBF's strategy – its organizational mechanisms, centralization and convening and its neglect of the population level. Overall, TTF expressed its willingness to position itself as the *"alternative domain of philanthropy"* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 1) – as opposed to TBF which represented the mainstream domain. Rather than being perceived as a conservative influence in the field, TTF wanted to be regarded as a progressive force.

> *I think it is important that people who really want to make society change are able to approach philanthropic actors driven by change and not framed by the establishment.* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 1)

Regarding philanthropy's shared meanings, TTF argued that *"philanthropy is not doing everything and anything"* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2) and advocated a paradigm shift in which philanthropy was no longer concurrently an indirect consequence of and a palliative solution to societal ills but was a real means to cure them. According to TTF, philanthropic organizations needed to go a step further than delineating general interest and *"merely do philanthropy"* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2). As the very existence of philanthropy rested upon social inequalities, TTF emphasized that to actually build a better society – and even more so a sustainable one – philanthropic organizations needed to adopt a systemic and coherent approach to philanthropy (The Transformative Foundation, Documents 1 and 3). If resources allocated to general interest projects came from investments with negative social or environmental effects or if philanthropic actions reproduced social inequalities which they were precisely trying to address, then these resources and actions could not be considered as part of philanthropy (Events 4).

At the population and broader environment levels, TTF aimed to **collectively develop its alternative understanding of philanthropy**. TTF did not have as significant financial resources as TBF and was, therefore, in no position to develop its understanding of philanthropy within its own organizational boundaries and then diffuse it to the field. The meaning dimension of TTF's strategy rested on its social resources. On one hand, TTF *critically reflected on and around philanthropy with*

population members. Sharing their experiences, learning from their successes and failures, foundations created rules, norms, and standards – that is their shared meanings of philanthropy – to guide their ways of behaving.

And on the other hand, TTF *formed learning-oriented partnerships with stakeholders from philanthropy's broader environment* to further its collective reflection. For instance, it created an international peer-learning group to connect together Belgian and European foundations and reflect on how foundations could evolve in their way of working; it initiated a working group within The Association to discuss Belgian foundations' ethical investments; and it formed multi-stakeholder partnerships with Belgian universities to reward research on sustainable development and with corporations to discuss sustainable business models. Beyond being a reaction to TBF's strategy, TTF's strategy also built on a strong international inspiration.

> *We needed to reflect on how foundations could change the world, so we created* [our own peer-learning group]. *We created the tool, the network that was appropriate for us.* […] *We needed to reflect on this question, and we did not have the means to do it on our own. So, we partnered with others and asked them: why don't we create a working group that would gather regularly and discuss the challenges that our profession will face in 2100?* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2)

TTF further **disseminated its understanding of philanthropy** at the field and the broader environment levels. At the broader environment level, TTF *diffused its critical reflections through public channels* (website, events, newsletters…). At the field level, TTF disseminated its alternative understanding of philanthropy through *educating field members using its philanthropic vehicles*. Like TBF, when field members used TTF's vehicles they needed to align with its alternative understanding of philanthropy (The Transformative Foundation, Document 3).

Overall, the co-development of alternative philanthropy's shared meanings enabled TTF to be aware of other Belgian and European organizations' thinking on philanthropy as well as to spot innovations. In that sense, TTF stayed in line with societal evolutions. Furthermore, it gave TTF legitimacy first on the international and European stage and then on the Belgian stage. TTF's social position transitioned from field's periphery to its center.

From not being considered as a proper resource-providers, it became a *"key resource"* (The Family Foundation, Interview 1) in the field, a portal of information:

> *With* [its peer-learning group]*, [The Transformative Foundation] tries to do innovative things and to share its reflections. […] This is one of the first spaces where I found true transparent sharing.* (The Family Foundation, Interview 1)

> *Roundtables that* [The Transformative Foundation] *organizes enabled me to learn about philanthropy. […] At first, I did not even know what philanthropy was, so for me* [TTF's peer-learning group]*. has really been a learning space as well as a sharing space.* (Holism&Harmony, Interview 1)

As more philanthropic organizations joined TTF's learning-oriented groups and partnerships, used its hosted vehicles, and framed their actions upon the shared meanings co-developed within them, these shared meanings became increasingly taken-for-granted and standardization began to occur. As such, TTF challenged the normative influence of TBF by becoming a normative force itself. As two sets of shared meanings co-existed, TTF sometimes failed to largely mobilize other. One clear example was the working group it initiated within The Association. The Association rejected TTF's initial proposition to advise members on how to ethically invest their endowment, considering that this kind of considerations were too radical.

> *I suggested to work on how foundations manage their financial resources, the ethical questions related to our financial management. And they replied: "No. We are going to help foundations invest their resources. But we are not going to tell them how to invest their resources." Alright, these are choices… In Belgium, The Association is weak and gutless. It's terrifying!* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2)

Regarding the operationalization of philanthropic actions, TTF expressed its willingness to help philanthropic organizations *"spread their wings and become independent"* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2). As for the meaning dimension of its position-taking strategy, TTF developed its operational dimension against that of TBF, which it considered to be *"strings attached mechanisms"* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2). According to TTF, the field of

philanthropy did not need to grow in size, but its members needed to rethink how they undertook philanthropic actions. To TBF's centralization, TTF opposed decentralization and exemplariness.

> *Those that have a lot of money only stretch philanthropy in a very centralized manner. They cannot think the world with independent actors. They are in the old paradigm. With transformative philanthropy, I bring a paradigm shift which is: how to create independent-but-related philanthropic actors? […] The old paradigm only grows the size of the field without rethinking its model.* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2)

TTF's strategy first relied on **building population members' capacities** at its organizational level and at the population level. At its organizational level, TTF – like TBF – *provided philanthropic vehicles to operationalize philanthropic projects*. TTF recognized that *"maybe it was slowly stepping on* [The Big Foundation's] *toes"* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2). As explained hereabove, these vehicles served to further standardize TTF's shared meanings, as more philanthropic organizations framed their ways of behaving upon these meanings. Beyond standardization, these vehicles served a membership certification purpose, as TTF decided – according to its shared meanings – whether an actor could use its vehicles and subsequently enter the field of philanthropy. Much as TBF, TTF acted as a gatekeeper.

Yet, unlike TBF, TTF voluntarily hosted a limited number of vehicles (The Transformative Foundation, Document 1 and 7). While TBF emphasized diversification and flexibility to enable the implementation of as much philanthropic projects as possible, TTF applied strict criteria and paid especially attention to coherency in how philanthropic projects were implemented. For instance, while TBF was only recently thinking about the ethical and sustainable implications of its investments, TTF made these a necessary condition for field members to access its philanthropic vehicles (The Transformative Foundation, Document 1). As such, while both foundations played a certifying role, their certifying processes differed. An organization which was deemed eligible to enter the field of philanthropy according to TBF might be found ineligible by TTF. Indeed, there were examples of organizations that got rejected by TTF and that were then hosted by or in close partnership with TBF (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2 and The Big Foundation, Document 7).

At the population level, TTF *advised population members regarding their philanthropic strategy*. TTF believed that what philanthropic organizations needed to operationalize projects, beyond mere hosted funds, was strategic advice. The logic here was similar to that of The Association's working groups: avoid philanthropic organizations to scatter their means by forcing them to search for the same information individually. In this regard, TTF met with other population members.

> *Frequently, we do not give any money, we simply meet with people. Many come to see us so that we can discuss for 3 to 4 times an hour and then they spread their wings.* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 1)

> *Of course, we can simply say: "let's create a great diversity of actors and social challenges will solve themselves". We can also have a more ad hoc strategic vision and say: "there are a lot of things that we already know; so why would everybody need to collect this and that information on their own, scatter their means and limit their effectiveness?" We could all converge on many ideas beforehand.* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2)

The operational dimension of TTF's position-taking strategy further echoed at the broader environment level, as TTF strove to **set examples on how to undertake philanthropic actions**. On one hand, TTF *embodied its alternative understanding to inspire others to operate similarly*: among others, it invested its endowment ethically and implemented participatory governance mechanisms (The Transformative Foundation, Documents 3 and 7).

> *We are not going to give lessons to other philanthropic organizations. Simply because it is not the best way to make things move forward. However, we clearly can send messages: this is possible, we did it.* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2)

On the other hand, TTF *publicly shared its own operational mechanisms*. For instance, it was the first Belgian foundation to make its archives publicly available – which it considered *"a public good"* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2) – recording the complete information on how it carried out its philanthropy for the past 20 years (The Transformative Foundation, Document 7). Overall, the way TTF operationalized philanthropy built on decentralization and exemplariness. Rather than seeking to grow the field and to link its members to its organization,

TTF attempted to inspire existing and new philanthropic organizations as well as to give them the capacities to individually undertake and rethink their philanthropic actions. In that sense, TTF conceived itself as *"an incubator"* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2), a place that helped the development and empowerment of philanthropic organizations.

Regarding philanthropy's internal and external relational channels, TTF claimed that it wished to *"occupy a position of deep intermediation"* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2). TTF believed that TBF's *"super-state nature"* where *"everybody has each other by the short hairs"* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2), its actions *"framed by the establishment"* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 1) and its back turned on foundations are obstacles to *"the empowerment of the Belgian philanthropic field"* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2).

While TTF – much as TBF – created relational channels within the field by *organizing field-configuring events and spaces* (The Transformative Foundation, Document 8), TTF also granted specific importance to develop interactions at the population level. Having limited resources, TTF was in no capacity to *"fly solo"* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2), and thus attempted to stimulate collaborations. TTF *invited other population members to join peer-learning groups.* Contrary to TBF which was said to hold the reins of The Association, TTF tried to vitalize it by inviting new members of its choice to join it and even be part of its board. Similarly, its peer-learning group gathered both Belgian and international foundations (The Transformative Foundation, Document 5). As such, TTF strove to identify and connect population members.

> *We helped* [The Family Foundation] *to come to life, we coached its new executive director. As soon as I heard she was seeking to better understand philanthropy, I invited her to join* [our peer-learning group], *our space for research and development. She was invited free of charge, without even having any legitimacy at first. I did the same with* [Holism&Harmony]. (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2)

While TBF built collaborations by convening field members within its organizational space, TTF rather used existing collective spaces and created new ones to identify population members and foster their interactions. In this sense, TTF acted, as much as TBF, as a collaboration builder, but more so at the population level. In sum, TTF **defined *both* population and field members interactions.**

Paradoxically, although both TBF and TTF pleaded for more collaborations, there happened to be no interaction between the two of them.

At the broader environment level, TTF **established connections among stakeholders of the broader environment and the field**. First, it was *part of international (and alternative) networks related to philanthropy*, and more specifically aiming to change philanthropy and support systemic societal change (e.g., EDGE Funders) (The Transformative Foundation, Document 3). Second, it *gathered various stakeholders around large-scale partnerships*: with universities to make visible cutting-edge academic research on sustainable development and with corporations to discuss and promote sustainable business models (The Transformative Foundation, Document 7). Third, it *had a project-related relationship with Belgian State*. TTF pointed out that it never carried out requested missions – contrary to TBF – but developed projects in which public authorities were then invited to get involved (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 1). Through these multiple external relational channels, TTF ensured that philanthropy's meanings it co-developed were represented outside the field.

Therefore, as TTF outwardly portrayed an alternative image of philanthropy, it sought to provide the field with another public face than that offered by TBF. However, with its distant relationship to the Belgian State, TTF was in a less strategic position to be the field's lobbying arm. Still, taking on the roles of field's portal of information, normative force, gatekeeper, collaboration builder and public face, TTF developed and maintained mechanisms of collective rationality which directly competed with those of TBF. Doing so, it took a challenging field-structuring position.

Figure 3 – TTF's position-taking strategy

Broader environment

Field level

Population level

Organization level

Circumscribing the field' shared meanings through collective mechanisms

Disseminating its co-developed understanding of philanthropy

Collectively developing an alternative understanding of philanthropy

Diffusing shared meanings

Outwardly representing the field

Setting examples on how to undertake philanthropic actions

Outwardly representing the field

Establishing connections among stakeholders of the broader environment and the field

Standardizing shared meanings

Refining shared meanings

Certifying field membership

Building population members' capacities within and outside its organization

Operationalizing the field through decentralization and exemplariness

Defining population and field-members interactions

Identifying field members

Creating the field's internal and external channels through collaborating

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4.5   Summary

In summary, we show how these two organizational actors expanded their field's infrastructural mechanisms by undertaking a series of actions to develop its meaning, operational and relational systems. Undertaken at different levels within the field as well as at the field's broader environment, these actions were perceived and recognized by other population and field members and by stakeholders of the broader environment. As such, TBF and TTF acquired responsibilities and skills (field's public face, lobbying arm, normative force, portal of information, gatekeeper, and collaboration builder) associated with the field-structuring position and were acknowledged by others as playing this role.

While TBF and TTF were embedded in the same fragmented institutional infrastructure and both enacted the structural opportunity opened by the weaknesses of the formal field-structuring actor – The Association – their social position, resource endowment and their endorsement by other field members were different. While TBF was and remained a core organization of the field, TTF transitioned from the periphery of the field to its center. Similarly, while TBF enjoyed large financial, cultural, social and reputational resources, TTF relied on its extant social resources to mobilize greater financial, cultural and reputational resources. As a result, their position-taking strategies were different.

While TBF's strategies started by and centered around the strengthening of its own organizations, TTF's strategy was pursued at the population level. While the former circumscribed shared meanings through organizational mechanisms and then diffused them toward the field and its broader environment, the latter circumscribed shared meanings collectively at the population level then disseminated them to the field and its broader environment. The former's operational mechanisms relied on a centralizing logic as its organizational growth seemed to follow the field's growth. Conversely, the latter's operational mechanisms relied on a decentralizing logic, as it set examples of how to undertake philanthropy in order for others to get inspired and copy its ways of behaving. The former positioned itself as the major convener of the field's internal and external channels, while the latter developed multi-stakeholder collaborations to internally and externally connect the field. Although our findings outline the three dimensions in a linear way, there are interrelated and build on one another.

As both actors undertook strategic actions developing the field infrastructure to take a field-structuring position, their actions influenced the evolution of the field. While our findings do not allow us to fully assess the consequences of each actor's strategy on the evolution of the field, they still allow us to make assumptions. On one hand, through TBF's position-taking strategy, we can see emerging a tension between its willingness to structure and develop the field and its willingness to strengthen its own social position. Based on TBF's actions and on criticisms from other incumbents, it could be argued that TBF's strategy is inclusive to the point that it tends to confuse the field with its organization. Hence, while it would be in a position to build the infrastructure of the field, TBF would also have the power to keep it underdeveloped. Favoring the development of its organization over the development of the field, it does not seem to specifically provide field members with the guidelines to act and interact outside of its influence.

On the other hand, through TTF's position-taking strategy, we can see emerging a tension between its willingness to radically change the field and the risk of excluding some of its members. Promoting a stricter understanding of philanthropy, reserving its operational mechanisms to actors abiding by this understanding, and creating internal and external channels based on this understanding, TTF might make the field more impermeable, which in turn might also prevent its development.

5   Discussion

Studies analyzing field dynamics have shown the pivotal role organizational actors occupying field-structuring position can play in their established environments and how they are able to undertake change or maintenance work within their field (i.e., (Buchanan, 2016; Greenwood et al., 2002; Kipping & Kirkpatrick, 2013; van Wijk et al., 2013)). We complement these studies by documenting the position-taking strategies of two organizational actors in an issue field with a fragmented infrastructure. In other words, we explore how organizational actors come to occupy a particular field-structuring position and we situate their strategies to do so in a field comprising few elaborated and coherent infrastructural mechanisms as well as where various populations of actors gather around an issue at stake rather than exchanges (Zietsma et al., 2017).

Taking an interest in position-taking strategies, we empirically expose that the emergence of a field-structuring actor is not a formal and passive process as previous studies have suggested (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012), but is rather an active, relational and even competitive one. Our research is a first step in describing who are organizational actors strategically competing for a field-structuring position as well as in providing a more granular explanation of their strategic patterns and their underlying actions. Hereunder, we elaborate on how our findings contribute to the literature on field-structuring position and institutional infrastructure. We then conclude with remarks highlighting the opportunities that our research limitations provide for future research avenues.

5.1   Contributions to field-structuring position and institutional infrastructure

We make four contributions to literature on field-structuring position and institutional infrastructure. First, taking a role-centric rather than a spatial perspective on the Belgian field of organizational philanthropy, we find three actors fulfilling a field-structuring role (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017). Consistent with Fligstein & McAdam (2012) and with Zietsma and colleagues (2017), we identify a first field-structuring actor – The Association – which belongs to the "field coordinators" type and is a collective interest organization formally appointed to play the role of professional association by a group of incumbent field members. As this formal field-structuring actor proved to not actively play the role for which it was created and revealed weaknesses, we observe two other actors competing to purposefully take a field-structuring role: TBF and TTF.

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While these two actors differed in their social position, in their resource endowments as well as in how they were endorsed by other field members, neither of them belonged to the categories of formal governance units, arbiters of taste or field coordinators identified by Zietsma and colleagues (2017). In this regard, our research brings nuances in the type of actors who can play a field-structuring role. Formally appointed actors are not always regarded as legitimate and informal and challenging actors can step in.

Second, we highlight the strategic actions these two organizational actors undertake to take and occupy informal and challenging field-structuring positions. As the field within which they were embedded comprised few elaborated and coherent infrastructural mechanisms, there was room for ambiguity and uncertainty in the appropriate way for field members to behave. Taking a field-structuring position thus means to elaborate infrastructural mechanisms which are tied to one another and operate in concert and which subsequently decrease ambiguity and uncertainty and develop, support and maintain collective rationality (Hinings et al., 2017).

While extant literature simply mentions that infrastructural mechanisms are of three dimensions – meanings, operational and relational – (O'Sullivan & O'Dwyer, 2015), we show the particular actions both organizational actors undertake to develop these dimensions and their respective effort to diffuse them to the whole field. By developing and disseminating their understanding of philanthropy, they circumscribed the field's shared meanings; by building philanthropic organizations' capacities and by setting examples on how to undertake philanthropic actions', they operationalized the field; and by defining interactions within the field and outwardly connecting and representing the field, they created the field's internal and external channels.

While both organizational actors acted upon the three dimensions, their respective strategic actions regarding these dimensions differed. In this regard, we build on Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Wild et al., 2020) and his conception of position-taking strategy as a "space of possibles […] or impossibles" (Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008, p. 16) which depends on the position taker's social position, resource endowment and mobilization of other field members. We find that an incumbent organizational actor positioned at the core of the field and enjoying great financial, cultural, social and reputational resources undertook strategic actions that relied on organizational mechanisms, centralization and convening.

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On the contrary, a challenger actor coming from periphery to field's center and only mainly enjoying social resources undertook strategic actions that relied on collective mechanisms, decentralization and exemplariness, and collaborating. As such, the levels (organizational, population, field and broader environment) at which their strategy is undertaken vary.

This idea of levels is a significant element of our findings and is to be related to the issue-based nature of the field of organizational philanthropy. This challenges previous studies which implicitly portray field-structuring actors as knowing the exact jurisdiction area in which they operate (Buchanan, 2016; van Wijk et al., 2013). In issue fields with a fragmented infrastructure, boundaries are not clear nor is the jurisdiction area in which field-structuring actors are supposed to operate, as each organizational actor entering the field brings to the fore its salient interpretation of the issue. In other words, each organizational actor had their own way of interpreting philanthropy – that is, how private resources are used to serve general interest, and further what counts as private resources and as general interest. How organizational actors interpret the issue at stake will thus influence their position-taking strategy; depending on their interpretation, one will give greater attention to one level than the other. As such, TBF neglected the population of foundations and indistinctly encompassed it in the broader field level, while TTF especially focused on the population of foundations as the explicit core of philanthropy.

Third, our study follows on from previous research highlighting the "multifaceted" (Greenwood et al., 2002, p. 76) and "unique" (van Wijk et al., 2013, p. 382) role of field-structuring actors. We show that in an issue field with a fragmented infrastructure the scope of possible and appropriate actions to structure a field is wide, as few infrastructural elements exist and those that exist are loosely connected to one another. Therefore, how field-structuring actors develop the institutional infrastructure will influence how the field evolves. This may lead to tensions. Some field-structuring actors may leave the field in an underdeveloped status quo to their own advantage, as echoed by the professional association's pragmatic strategies unveiled by Kipping & Kirkpatrick (2013). While others may aim to radically change the field at the risk of excluding some of its members or making its boundaries impermeable to external changes. In either case, field-structuring actors may end up preventing their field development rather than expanding it.

Therefore, our empirical analysis highlights that, more than "multifaceted" or "unique", the role of field-structuring actors seems to be a high-wire act.

Fourth and finally, our research falls in line with the third stream of field research as it takes a structural lens on field's makeup. We contribute to refine the concept of institutional infrastructure and its infrastructural elements as outlined by Hinings and colleagues (2017). We show that a field can display formal infrastructural elements (such as a regulatory framework and a collective interest organization) but still be in a fragmented state as these elements only give an appearance of structure. In practice, they do not enable field members to act and interact. In such cases, we found that other field members develop and maintain collective rationality in order for the field to keep existing. In this regard, our study highlights the importance to look beyond formal elements of governance and document informal elements of a field infrastructure.

5.2   *Limitations and future research avenues*

As with all research, our study has limitations which provide opportunities for future research avenues. First, consistent with studies emphasizing the prominent role of incumbent populations in the elaboration of institutional infrastructure (O'Sullivan & O'Dwyer, 2015), we chose to focus our empirical setting on resource-providing philanthropic organizations (mainly in the form of foundations, but also comprising among others a cooperative). Hence, our analysis of other populations is limited (resource-seeking organizations (e.g., nonprofits, social enterprises), regulators, corporations…). While we did collect data from other philanthropic populations (social-mission platforms, professional support organization, volunteering meta-organization) and attended events gathering various actors related to philanthropy, we did not systematically interview organizational actors from each population identified.

As such, we have a thorough understanding of relationships within the incumbent population of resource-providers – that is, how they perceived actions undertaken by The Association, TBF and TTF – but we have a less clear view on how other philanthropic populations or various actors within the field's broader environment perceived the field of philanthropy and its infrastructure. Moreover, as organizational philanthropy is an issue-based field, there might be other actors undertaking field-structuring strategies in other populations (Furnari, 2018; Zietsma et al., 2017). We expect that extending data collection will be necessary to

more broadly situate the strategic patterns outlined and evaluate their institutional outcomes.

Second, as our research takes place in a very particular empirical setting, that of organizational philanthropy in Belgium, this creates limits to generalizability. Therefore, it would be interesting to interrogate the portability of our findings and confront the strategies undertaken by actors in our fragmented issue field with strategies undertaken in other types of field and institutional infrastructure. Furthermore, other European countries and even more so countries with an Anglo-Saxon culture display different philanthropic dynamics. Comparing the various philanthropic traditions and how fields are structured or re-structured as they face societal evolutions (e.g., digital philanthropy, data philanthropy, venture philanthropy) would surely bring more insights on the role of field-structuring actors (von Schnurbein et al., 2021; Wiepking et al., 2021). More comparative studies are therefore required in order to deepen our understanding of the strategic patterns we illustrate as well as to appreciate the extent to which the different levels of action (organizational, population, field and environment) and dimensions of infrastructure (meaning, operational, relational) are significant.

Finally, we observed our phenomenon as it unfolded. As the two organizational actors studied are still developing their respective position-taking strategy, we can only speculate on the institutional outcomes of these strategies. Several scenarios can be considered. In the event that TTF keeps promoting a different vision of philanthropy behind which a group of field members may mobilize, a subfield might emerge with its distinctive infrastructure. As shown by Faulconbridge & Muzio (2021) in their study of the corporate law subfield in Italy, when a population of firms adopt different organizational models than the taken-for-granted models in their field, these firms may develop their own infrastructural elements to enable and consolidate collective rationality among them. Yet, as these firms still all depend on the same regulatory framework, a whole distinct new field cannot form and dependency of the subfield on the parent field persists. As Belgian philanthropic organizations share the same regulatory framework, the field of philanthropy might become partitioned with TBF and TTF each representing the field-structuring actor of their subfield.

An alternative possible outcome is for the field to stay whole with three field-structuring actors (The Association, TBF and TTF) mutually coexisting. Extant empirical research either features fields with a single field-structuring actor fulfilling all responsibilities or assumes competition when several exist (Zietsma et al., 2017). Could there be settings where multiple field-structuring actors exist and complement each other? If so, what would the mechanisms supporting this mutualistic coexistence? Future research building on a longitudinal process is required to shed light on the various institutional outcomes of position-taking strategies.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL-MISSION PLATFORMS:
A TYPOLOGY BASED ON ORGANIZATIONAL CONFIGURATIONS

1   Introduction

Reaching various societal domains (housing, travels, banking) (McIntyre et al., 2020), digital platforms have become a popular means to address the complex social and environmental issues of today's society (Messeni Petruzzelli et al., 2019). Involved in crowdfunding, -timing, or -sourcing , digital platforms operating in social mission settings are part of a phenomenon recently referred to as social-mission platforms (Logue & Grimes, 2020). As new approaches or means to provide private resources for public purposes, social-mission platforms are usually regarded as emerging at the fringes of the field of philanthropy (Bernholz, 2016; S. Phillips & Jung, 2016a). More than enabling the exchange of private resources (e.g., money, time, skills) between resource-seeking organizations and resource-providing organizations, social-mission platforms have the capacity to foster interactions between various stakeholders of society and to include in social change not only philanthropic organizations and public bodies but also for-profit businesses and citizens at large (Kretschmer, Leiponen, Schilling, & Vasudeva, 2020; Presenza et al., 2019). As such, social-mission platforms are expected to bring changes in how societal challenges are tackled (Bernholz et al., 2010; Hinings et al., 2018).

Specifically, philanthropy studies portray platforms as having the potential to overcome long-lasting philanthropic failures (e.g., lack of collaboration, of transparency and increased marketization of public good) (A. Powell, Seldon, & Sahni, 2019; Reich, 2018; Reich et al., 2016). However, social-mission platforms and how they organize to foster multi-stakeholder interactions and address social and environmental issues remain unexplored from an organizational configuration lens.

While research on digital platforms has built on economic and engineering perspectives, it begins to adopt an explicit organizational lens (Gawer, 2014). Emphasizing platforms' organizing process, scholars shed light on two particular

features of platforms: co-dependency and loose coupling (Kretschmer et al., 2020; McIntyre et al., 2020). A platform and its stakeholders are co-dependent: stakeholders need the platform and its digital interface to collectively create value, and the platform needs stakeholders to provide a digital interface with resources to be exchanged. However, stakeholders are not contractually linked to one another nor to the platform. Although co-dependent, stakeholders and platform remain legally independent entities. As such, the platform has no formal authority or control on stakeholders' action and interaction. Platform and stakeholders are loosely coupled.

Acknowledging these two unique features, researchers further highlight the importance for platforms to build and manage their network of stakeholders in order to ensure the quality of interaction between them and in turn the usefulness of the collective value created, and subsequently the success of the platform (Reischauer & Mair, 2018a; Zhang, Pinkse, & Mcmeekin, 2020). In this vein, scholars of platforms emphasize – though in a rather fragmented way – five organizing elements on which platforms decide in their organizing process and which configuration appears instrumental in building and managing their network of stakeholders: orientation, technological reliance, access, stakeholders' management and interactions (de Reuver et al., 2018; Gulati, Puranam, & Tushman, 2012; Kirchner & Schüßler, 2019). Consistent with a configurational approach, scholars also mention how elements and their configuration vary depending on the institutional context in which platforms exist (Mair & Reischauer, 2017; Vallas & Schor, 2020).

Researchers have just started to investigate these organizing elements for social-mission platforms (Logue & Grimes, 2020; Presenza et al., 2019). Given the heterogeneity of stakeholders in social mission settings (ranging from public bodies to for-profit businesses), the strategic importance for social-mission platforms to purposefully and appropriately build and manage their network of stakeholders appears especially relevant. What organizing elements social-mission platforms adopt and how they combine them into a suitable organizational configuration is therefore of particular relevance. However, little is known on social-mission platforms' organizing elements, process and organizational configurations. So far, empirical analyses are rare, largely limited to single cases studies, lack comparative perspective, and neglect to properly account for the institutional embeddedness in which platforms emerge and develop or are mostly Anglo-Saxon-centered.

Bringing clarity to the phenomenon is important to avoid a polarized debate and to extend existing research on digital platforms.

In this paper we ask, *what different types of social-mission platforms exist? How do these types build and manage their network of stakeholders in order to address societal issues?*

As a result of our inquiry, we develop a typology of social-mission platforms based on organizational configurations and accounting for their institutional embeddedness. We leverage a case-based and configurational approach (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007a; Mintzberg, 1980) and draw on the study of 10 social-mission platforms in the setting of Belgian philanthropy. This method allowed us to refine the five organizing elements found in literature in the light of our empirical setting, to further specify each of them and how they relate, as well as to ground them in a social mission setting. Furthermore, as it displays the specific characteristics of a strong Welfare state and a weak philanthropic culture, the Belgian context proved ideal to appraise the influence of the external environment on platforms' organizing process.

Our findings show, on one hand, that organizing elements combine into three organizational configurations of social-mission platforms (the ecosystem-building platform, the meeting-space platform and the community-designing platform), and on the other hand, point out to outlier cases which underline the importance of internal and external consistency. In this regard, our research contributes to organizational studies on digital platforms. More specifically our typology intends to play a particular role in a programmatic research effort on and around social-mission platforms. We end the paper by offering future research avenues as well as insights and reflections for platform founders, philanthropic actors, and policy-makers.

2   Background

We identify three major streams of research on platforms. The first stream contrasts the economic and the engineering perspectives on platforms and focuses on their market structures and technological architectures. The second stream points out the lack of an organizational lens and puts the spotlight on platforms' loosely coupled and co-dependent relations. The third and currently emerging stream considers the relevance of platforms' particular features to tackle societal issues.

2.1 *Platforms as market structures or technological architectures*

Within the initial academic literature on digital platforms, two distinctive conceptualizations have developed in parallel: the transaction platform and the innovation platform. The former is conceptualized by economists as a multi-sided market while the latter is viewed by engineers as a modular technological architecture (Gawer, 2014; Liu, Li, & Wang, 2021).

From an economic perspective, platforms are a specific kind of two-sided or multi-sided marketplaces. They act as the "interaction interface of a business ecosystem" (Presenza et al., 2019, p. 192), as they connect and facilitate the transaction between two or multiple groups or sides (e.g. buyers and sellers). One of the best-known examples of transaction platforms is eBay (McIntyre & Srinivasan, 2017). Transaction platforms' core feature is their openness as their value creation lies in the connection of independent stakeholder groups which could otherwise not transact with each other. Without the platform, these groups could not collectively generate value or not to the same extent (Taeuscher & Laudien, 2018; Thomas, Autio, & Gann, 2014). Conversely, platforms would be useless without their users. Platforms depend on network effects: the more a platform's user base grows, the more a platform's value increases, and vice versa (de Reuver et al., 2018). Economists put emphasis on platforms' competition and on how pricing, specifically, could increase platforms' usage (Gawer, 2014).

Rather than emphasizing transaction and competition, the engineer perspective highlights innovation and complementarity. As technological architecture, platforms help develop and shape innovation by providing "central technological building blocks on which other actors can develop complementary products and services" (Acquier et al., 2017, p. 5). One of the best-known examples of innovation platforms is Intel (Gawer & Phillips, 2013). Innovation platforms' core feature is their modularity, as their value creation lies in the development of a functioning ecosystem divided into a core component or central point of control – that is, the platform – and modular peripheral components – that is, a set of complementary modules added by other organizational actors (McIntyre & Srinivasan, 2017; Thomas et al., 2014). It is the coordination of these otherwise separated modules that collectively form an innovative entity (Jacobides, Cennamo, & Gawer, 2018).

Considering platforms through either their market structures or technological architectures, these two perspectives primarily take interest into platforms' structural aspects and their advantages over traditional corporations to overcome

transaction costs linked to coordination and motivation (Milgrom & Roberts, 1997). On one side, operating as a central interface and emphasizing modularity, platforms do not own goods or services but facilitate the connection and, even more so, the coordination of interdependent stakeholders which provides these goods and services (Thomas et al., 2014). On the other side, for connection and coordination to optimally occur, platforms act as portals for information and generate trust through various algorithmic monitoring and evaluation systems. As such, they reduce information asymmetries and uncertainty, and generate value for each stakeholders, hence motivating their exchange and collaboration (Acquier et al., 2017; Vallas & Schor, 2020). As economic and engineering perspectives limit the study of platforms to market and technical mechanisms, this first stream of research reduces platforms to agent-less entities.

Yet, there is more to platforms than these mechanisms, as a platform cannot be operated without an organization to provide, refine and run it (Mair & Reischauer, 2017). Subsequently, a second stream of research viewing platforms through an organizational lens has expanded the first stream.

2.2   *Platforms through an organizational lens*

The second stream of research draws attention to platforms' organizational agency and argues that platforms are to be conceived as "*socio*technical assemblage encompassing technical elements and associated organizational processes" (de Reuver et al., 2018, p. 126). In other words, this second stream emphasizes that digital platforms – whether they are viewed as interaction interfaces of business ecosystems or as core components of innovation ecosystems – do not rely solely on market and technical mechanisms for stakeholders to collectively create value, but also on organizing elements (Gawer, 2014; Saadatmand, Lindgren, & Schultze, 2019). In this sense, scholars split digital platforms up into three main parts: a (1) *platform organization* which is the "organizer" (Kirchner & Schüßler, 2019) or "architect" (Gulati et al., 2012) of the (2) *digital interface* enabling the interaction of (3) *multiple stakeholders* which are *loosely-coupled yet co-dependent* (Nielsen, 2018; Reischauer & Mair, 2018b).

Emphasizing platform's organizing elements, this second stream of research builds on a conceptualization of organizations as "decided orders" (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011, p. 84), which implies that an organization does not emerge accidentally but is the result of a series of decisions on specific elements (i.e., membership, hierarchy and rules regarding members' tasks division and allocation, as well as

monitoring and sanctioning of members' action and interaction) (Ahrne, Brunsson, & Seidl, 2016). Deciding on each of these elements separately and (re-)configuring bundles of elements – that is, creating a decided order – relates to the process of organizing. The outcome of this process is a specific organizational configuration (Puranam, Alexy, & Reitzig, 2014).

Configurational research highlights the importance of internal as well as external consistency of an organizational configuration (Mintzberg, 1980). Internal consistency implies that configurations are "composed of tight constellations of mutually supportive elements" (Miller, 1986, p. 236). In other words, organizing elements composing a platform configuration are interdependent and complementary. On one hand, this means that adopting one element raises the value of adopting another (Grandori & Furnari, 2008). And on the other hand, platforms coordinating these elements are expected to be more successful than platforms uncoordinatedly adopting single elements of various configurations (Miller, 1996).

On the other side, external consistency implies that all platform organizations exist in an institutional environment (Scott, 1987). Features of this environment are multiple and vary in time and place. Neglecting to take the environment into account is ignoring significant factors in understanding organizational configurations, as environmental features shape organizing elements platforms can adopt as well as how these elements combine into configurations (Misangyi et al., 2017). Conversely, organizational configurations eventually (re-)shape their environment. Internal and external consistency "merge into interactive systems" (Mintzberg, 1980, p. 328)

2.2.1 Loose coupling and co-dependency

Platform researchers have highlighted that the loose coupling and co-dependency features carry particular implications for platforms' organizing process and resulting organizational configuration (Kretschmer et al., 2020; McIntyre et al., 2020). On one hand, co-dependency means that much as stakeholders would have more difficulties to interact without the digital platform, the platform organization is unable to operate without stakeholders' resources (Reischauer & Mair, 2018b). As expressed by the notions of network effects and modularity in the economic and engineering perspectives, platforms' continuous operation relies on their stakeholders and their contribution. Platform organizations are no resource providers themselves: they display and transact products and services provided by others (Taeuscher & Laudien, 2018).

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As a consequence, platform organizations' success – that is, how they create value for their stakeholders and for themselves – but also their identity, legitimacy and sustainability depend on their capacity to "develop the *best* networks of 'complementors'" (Reischauer & Mair, 2018b, p. 117). The community of stakeholders hosted by a platform embodies a core external resource and is of strategic importance (Saadatmand et al., 2019).

On the other hand, loose coupling means that even though stakeholders' relationship with one another and with the platform organizations is one of co-dependence, they remain legally independent entities (Reischauer & Mair, 2018a). What links stakeholders together is not a legal employment relationship, as in traditional organizations, but a shared system-level goal – that is, to collectively create value by transacting or innovating. As stakeholders' engagement remains voluntary, they can individually follow divergent, and even conflicting, interests. As such, platform organizations have no formal authority on stakeholder groups (Gulati et al., 2012).

Yet, federating stakeholders for them to interact, transact and innovate is a purposeful process rather than a taken-for-granted state (Gawer, 2014). To align stakeholders' various interests, platform organizations need to appropriately design their digital interface, implement governance mechanisms and provide incentives of different nature (Reischauer & Mair, 2018a; Zhang et al., 2020). While platform organizations have no formal authority on stakeholders to develop this network, they still can possess a significant informal authority based on their control over technological design and on their central position between the multiple interdependent stakeholders (Gulati et al., 2012; Kretschmer et al., 2020). Despite loose coupling and co-dependency, platform organizations have a hierarchical position toward stakeholders and still enjoy a certain degree of agency, which enables them to decide on some of their organizing elements while leaving the decision on other elements to their stakeholders' discretion (Kirchner & Schüßler, 2019).

Accordingly, more than intermediary tools for collective action, platforms are decision-making organizations in their own right. As each platform differently decides on its organizing elements to purposefully build and manage its own network of stakeholders, each platform embodies a various organizational configuration which influences the way its stakeholders act and interact (Saadatmand et al., 2019). Our review of literature on digital platforms highlights five organizing elements regarding which platform organizations make choices and

shows – consistent with configurational research – the interdependent relationship between these elements as well as the influence of institutional context on platforms' choices.

2.2.2 Platforms' organizing elements

A first organizing element discussed by scholars is the *orientation* of the organization – that is, whether it is market-oriented or mission-oriented depending on its chosen business model (McIntyre et al., 2020). Researchers distinguish platforms' orientation using different criteria: centrality of social and environmental values in relation to economic values, use of alternative sources of funding (e.g., grants or crowdfunding) (Muñoz & Cohen, 2017), side(s) monetized (supply-side participants, demand-side participants, third party or none) (Taeuscher & Laudien, 2018), legal status (Zhang et al., 2020). Orientation choices are related to issues of organizational identity, as a platform's orientation is said to shape its external image and thus to act as a signal to potential stakeholders. From the orientation, stakeholders infer, for instance, the kind of relationships the platform plans to build or how it invests its resources (Zhang et al., 2020). The orientation a platform organization adopts is said to depend on the institutional context in which it is created. It has been shown that US sharing economy platforms mostly adopt a for-profit orientation while German platform are more non-profit oriented (Mair & Reischauer, 2017).

Regarding platforms' digital interface, extant research identifies two organizing elements: *technology reliance and stakeholders' access*. Although the importance of the digital interface and its architecture has been recognized since early economic and engineering perspectives, *technology reliance* has barely been touched upon within the organizational stream of platform research, as attention mostly shifted to governance as a means to coordinate platform's stakeholders (de Reuver et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2021; McIntyre & Srinivasan, 2017). Yet while all platforms use a digital interface as a primary connecting point between the multiple stakeholders they intermediate, they differ from one another in the extent to which their digital interface relies on technology (McIntyre et al., 2020). Researchers have thus started to investigate how governance practices intertwin with specific features of technological architecture (Saadatmand et al., 2019). For instance, Muñoz and Cohen (2017)' typology of sharing economy organizations highlights how technology reliance can be an element of differentiation among several organizations' configurations built on digital platforms.

How digital interfaces are accessed and *by whom* has been extensively discussed in literature (McIntyre et al., 2020). Platforms' degree of openness is determined by who can become members, who grants membership and upon which criteria (Kretschmer et al., 2020). While some platforms have highly permeable boundaries, granting access to their interface to any stakeholder and sometimes allowing self-selection, others have low permeability and control membership through specific criteria and explicit a priori approval (Jacobides et al., 2018). Between these extremes – open or closed – platforms can also be semi-open with an open membership for one side (supply or demand participants) and closed for another (Nielsen, 2018; Thomas et al., 2014).

While issues of platforms' access relate, as for any organizations, to those of organizational membership and boundaries, they still take on a particular aspect due to co-dependency and loose coupling (Boudreau, 2010). Platform organizations need to grant membership to stakeholders so that they can provide goods and services and connect, transact and innovate with others (Reischauer & Mair, 2018b). Yet, once stakeholders are members, platform organizations cannot command them to perform a particular action (Kirchner & Schüßler, 2019).

In this regard, access's choices have external and internal implications. Platform boundaries allow for members to identify as a collective and help forge – alongside a chosen orientation – the external image of a platform and make it distinct from other platforms (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011). On the other side, the degree of openness influences the inner behavioral dynamics. The more open the platform, the wider the set of heterogeneous stakeholders interacting together, and the more likely high-quality transaction and innovation occur (Gawer, 2014; Saadatmand et al., 2019). Yet, the more difficult it also is to ensure willing and efficient collaborations between stakeholders as their interests grow increasingly diverse, which in turn results in low-quality rather than high-quality exchanges. Open boundaries can also lead to the incoming of undesired stakeholders and to the contestation of platforms' system-level goal (Gulati et al., 2012).

As a result, a fourth organizing elements relates to a *platform organization's management of its stakeholders' action and interaction* once they have accessed the interface. For long, digital platforms have emphasized their "noninterventionist position of neutrality" (Logue & Grimes, 2020, p. 22) as a key advantage to favor transaction and innovation. Once the digital interface is created and enables collective value creation, platform organizations are supposed not to extensively

and arbitrarily intervene in how stakeholders act and interact on it, even if controversy arises (Kretschmer et al., 2020).

Yet, with the growth of members diversity – especially on open access interfaces – platform organizations starts to struggle holding their neutral position (Gulati et al., 2012). Platforms face a neutrality-control dilemma: too little intervention leads to failure due to increased divergence while too much intervention leads to hampering free transaction and innovation (McIntyre et al., 2020; Saadatmand et al., 2019).

Acknowledging this dilemma, researchers highlight a spectrum of management mechanisms. Some platforms choose to reduce their management to simple regulations (legal contracts, codes of conducts, written agreements, penalties in case of noncompliance with rules) (Perren & Kozinets, 2018; Zhang et al., 2020). Others attempt to govern action and interaction by undertaking boundary work and creating subcommunities on their interface or by providing nudges for desirable action and interaction in the form of guidelines, best-practice examples and offline events (Reischauer & Mair, 2018a). Still others decide on some mechanisms and decentralize others to their stakeholders (such as monitoring in the form of ratings by others) (Kirchner & Schüßler, 2019; Nielsen, 2018).

The fifth and final organizing element relates to *the type of interactions among stakeholders*. Although all platforms have as a primary objective to connect separate stakeholders, researchers observe that they differ in the type of interactions they promote between and among their various groups of stakeholders and whether interactions between stakeholders are created or not beyond the focal connection occurring on the digital interface. Perren & Kozinets (2018) introduce a spectrum of "consociability" to depict the extent to which social actors interact either online and/or offline. The authors explain that some platforms have a low level of consociability as they minimize social interactions, while others have a high level of consociability as they enable, and even encourage, physical and virtual interactions. Zhang and colleagues (2020) as well as Reischauer & Mair (2018a, 2018b) also touch upon the subject by indicating that some platforms create favorable contexts for mediated or face-to-face interactions by promoting and organizing events and other meeting opportunities next to the focal connection.

2.3   *Platforms as tools to address societal issues*

Digital platforms' capability to collectively generate value by federating loosely coupled but co-dependent stakeholders is extensively recognized outside the economic and engineering spheres and become appealing in the face of current grand societal challenges (Bernholz, 2016). Appearing as an additional means to gather private resources from multiple sources and provide them for public purposes, so-called "mission-driven platforms" (Acquier et al., 2017) or "social-mission platforms" (Logue & Grimes, 2020) emerge at the fringes of the field of philanthropy. Common examples of social-mission platforms are social crowdfunding, -timing, and -sourcing platforms, such as the well-known UK-based Spacehive (Logue & Grimes, 2020). While previously philanthropic field members mainly consisted of resource-providing organizations (e.g., grantmaking foundations, corporate philanthropy,…) allocating resources and resource-seeking organizations (e.g., nonprofit organizations, social-purpose initiatives…) asking for these resources, there now exist various platform-based intermediaries connecting these two groups and carrying these resources along the philanthropic chain (Bernholz et al., 2010; Hinings et al., 2018; Salamon, 2014).

More than enabling the exchange of goods and services, social-mission platforms facilitates the connection and involvement in social change of stakeholders such as philanthropic organizations and public bodies, but also for-profit businesses and citizens (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016a). Platforms assemble information repositories which gather and make visible the clear needs of those seeking resources, the giving opportunities for those willing to provide resources as well as giving patterns between the two (Bernholz, 2016). Beyond allowing resources (e.g., money, time, skills and ideas) to be channeled from individuals and organizations keen on providing them toward resource-seeking organizations, these platforms enable various stakeholders to collectively identify societal problems and develop innovative solutions (Messeni Petruzzelli et al., 2019; Presenza et al., 2019). Platforms' repositories are believed, among others, to enable resource-seeking and -providing organizations to spend less energy, time and money on fundraising and volunteer recruitment as well as on calls for proposals and grantee selections.

Moreover, through platforms, any stakeholders of society can tailor the nature of its involvement to its own capacities (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016a). Doing so, social-mission platforms implicitly question philanthropic organizations' modus operandi and are said to have the potential to overcome long-lasting philanthropic failures,

among others lack of collaboration, of transparency, and increased marketization of public good (A. Powell et al., 2019; Reich, 2018; Reich et al., 2016).

Although it is said in philanthropy studies that social-mission platforms, along with other technologies, are expected to shift philanthropy from its current top-down, power-driven, foundation-led and controlled-by-the-few approach toward a more open, networked, community-led, participatory and heterogeneous (both in its participants and resources) form (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016a), research on social-mission platforms is still young. Little is known on how a social-mission setting influences platforms' organizing process and resulting organizational configuration. Much as other digital platforms, social-mission platforms decide on organizing elements to build and manage their network of stakeholders (Kretschmer et al., 2020). Contrary to other digital platforms, social-mission platforms' shared value creation must aim to address social causes. This difference places social-mission platforms in a more varied and complex multisectoral setting where stakeholders required to address social and environmental issues are highly heterogeneous and pursue widely different interest (e.g., contrast between for-profit businesses and nonprofit organizations) (Logue & Grimes, 2020; Messeni Petruzzelli et al., 2019).

Nascent research on platforms in a social-mission setting has underlined that this heterogeneity increases the saliency of their choices regarding organizing elements. Regarding platforms' orientation, researchers have underlined that social-mission platforms need to reach intersectional alignment and project an image that appropriately speaks to each stakeholder even though they each have their own assessment of what image is appropriate (Presenza et al., 2019). In this regard, Logue and Grimes (2020) introduce the concept of "multivocal identity claims" to refer to how social-mission platforms appropriately create their image. The authors point out that the difficulty for social-mission platforms is to find the right balance between a clearly-enough defined image and a not-too-rigid one to avoid either drifting away from their social mission or excluding too many stakeholders which would limit growth.

In the same vein, social-mission platforms appear quite cautious regarding openness and neutrality. As they rely on the collaboration of stakeholders from different societal sectors to tackle social and environmental issues, the failure of this collaboration can threaten platforms' very existence (Messeni Petruzzelli et al., 2019). While a too open platform risks attracting stakeholders whose contributions do not align with platforms' social value creation, a more closed platform might

generate a more homogeneous and easier to coordinate group of stakeholders but also exclude stakeholders which are significant for addressing societal issues (Logue & Grimes, 2020). Not forgetting that, due to network effects, the more a platform is used, the higher its perceived value (de Reuver et al., 2018). As divergent interests may lead to mission drift and eventually platforms' failure, social-mission platforms tend to position themselves on the more interventionist end of the spectrum. They develop various stakeholder management mechanisms (such as, scripts for action, exchange of practices, kits, workshops) and adopt a mentoring role vis-à-vis their stakeholders in order to develop shared interests and values around their social mission (Logue & Grimes, 2020; Presenza et al., 2019).

More specifically, extant research highlights the role of platform organizations in stimulating relationships with third parties committed to social causes (philanthropic foundations, public authorities) (Presenza et al., 2019). These third parties are used by platform organizations to gain in legitimacy: they ensure that projects and organizations displayed on the digital interface are valuable and reliable (Logue & Grimes, 2020). It appears that in a social-mission setting, the (in)direct linkages that platform organizations create take on a certain importance not only for stakeholders but for platforms themselves. Finally, researchers have so far not considered the significance of technology reliance for platforms in a social-mission setting.

Besides these succinct insights, research is quite silent on social-mission platforms' organizing process and organizational configuration. Considering how the phenomenon of platforms is rapidly evolving and how platform-enabled intermediaries can contribute to overcome philanthropic failures, social-mission platforms definitely require further scholarly attention. Much remains to be known to better grasp their diversity and develop a more thorough understanding of how they organize to build and manage a network of stakeholders. Without a greater scrutiny of this diversity and sorting of this unordered phenomenon, debate around social-mission platforms risks falling under the spell of fashion and be polarized between opposing stereotypes (Liu et al., 2021; Vallas & Schor, 2020).

Based on the literature, we identify two shortcomings that hamper a deep understanding of the various organizational configurations of social-mission platforms. First, current research is mostly conceptual. Most authors agree that more empirical research is needed (Messeni Petruzzelli et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2020), especially comparative case studies including both successes and failures (de Reuver et al., 2018; Logue & Grimes, 2020). Second, research has so far had a

tendency to study platforms as isolated islands and to avoid accounting for their institutional embeddedness. Yet, as long been argued by configurational researchers (Miller, 1986; Mintzberg, 1980) and institutional theorists (Hinings et al., 2018; Scott, 1987), organizational configurations are influenced and constrained by their external environments. It is indeed already mentioned in platform literature that the social, economic and political environment in which platforms operate shapes the organizational choices they make (de Reuver et al., 2018). And this might be even more true for social-mission platforms. As shown by Wiepking and colleagues (2021), philanthropic behaviors are shaped by the institutional context in which they occur – that is, formal (legal framework, fundraising training) and informal norms (social norms encouraging and valuing giving) which define and constrain philanthropic choices. Additionally, when context is accounted for, social-mission platforms – and more largely philanthropic evolutions – are frequently US or UK-based (Carnie, 2017). Empirical comparative research thus needs to be contextualized and European examples of philanthropic evolutions need to be distinguished from their Anglo-Saxon counterparts.

Accordingly, our research aims to build a typology of social-mission platforms based on organizational configurations and accounting for their institutional embeddedness. This aim is guided by the following questions: *What different types of social-mission platforms exist? How do these types build and manage their network of stakeholders in order to address societal issues?* In the sections that follow we first describe the institutional environment of Belgian philanthropy in which we studied social-mission platforms. Next, we build on the five organizing elements (orientation, technological reliance, access, stakeholders' management and interactions) identified through our review of the literature to further specify the organizational choices social-mission platforms adopt. We then show how these organizing elements form specific organizational configurations of social-mission platforms. We eventually derive a typology and discuss the theoretical and empirical implications of the three emerging types.

3   Research setting

To explore the variety of social-mission platforms and understand how different types organize to build and manage their network of stakeholders while accounting for their institutional embeddedness, we studied multiple cases of social-mission platforms emerging and developing at the fringes of the Belgian field of philanthropy. The Belgian philanthropic context proved to be an ideal setting to study social-mission platforms and their organizational configurations, as it

witnessed in the space of just a few years the emergence of various platforms positioning themselves as intermediaries and aiming to harness the power of new technologies to serve as connecting points, to offer operational supports and to involve and boost communities around social causes (Dessein, 2017; Hinings et al., 2018).

These various social-mission platforms and the objectives they pursued emerged in response to specific characteristics of philanthropy – that is, a lack of collaborations and of transparency and an increased marketization of public good – and of the Belgian philanthropic context – that is, an increasing neoliberal trend in social policy and a relatively weak culture of philanthropy with diversified and fragmented philanthropic organizations (Bekkers, 2016; Hoolwerf & Schuyt, 2017; Jung et al., 2016; Xhauflair et al., 2018).

On one hand, while Belgium has a strong, long-standing Welfare state, the country did not escape the global neoliberal trend (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Mosley, 2020; Suykens et al., 2020). Even though public subsidies so far remain stable and continue to constitute the main source of revenues of Belgian resource-seeking organizations (subsidies account for 61,4% of resource-seeking organizations' financing mix in 2019) (Dethier et al., 2021), they are now increasingly allocated to specific projects rather than to organizations' overall capacity building (Donorinfo, 2018). In addition, the latest reform (in 2019) of the Belgian legal framework regulating philanthropic organizations softened their specificities and brought them closer to for-profit businesses. Philanthropic organizations are now allowed to undertake economic activities to the same extent than for-profit businesses, provided that they do not distribute their profit. Before the reform, economic activities were considered as only accessory for philanthropic organizations (Vanwelde, 2020).

This reform and the change in public subsidies allocation have two implications. First, resource-seeking organizations are considered as service-providers and compete with other resource-seeking organizations or enterprises for government contracts (Vanwelde, 2020). Second, alongside funding come increased requests for outcome reports and impact measurement (Fondation Roi Baudouin, 2019).

Overall, this further stimulates the marketization of the public good and raises several concerns for the independence and diversity of resource-seeking organizations (Maier et al., 2016; Suykens et al., 2020). As obtaining subsidies requires more managerial skills, resource-seeking organizations might be incited to

drift away from their genuine social mission and values, in order to better fit funders' requests, or to further marketize themselves and generate their own commercial revenues. Moreover, as projects are linked to subsidies, their sustainability is uncertain. Resource-seeking organizations may not have the necessary resources to pursue them once funding comes to an end (Vanwelde, 2020). As a result, even though public subsidies remain stable, resource-seeking organizations tend to say that obtaining these subsidies is more difficult and many (mainly small) organizations look for complementary – not only financial but also structural – support (Mosley, 2020).

On the other hand, contrary to Anglo-Saxon countries, Belgium does not have a strong and dynamic philanthropic culture (Carnie, 2017; Hoolwerf & Schuyt, 2017; Wiepking et al., 2021). This lack of dynamism manifests at two levels: amount of donations and collaborations among philanthropic organizations. First, donations from individuals and resource-providing organizations are on average stagnating. While they increased after the 2008 financial and economic crisis, they decreased between 2017 and 2019. Overall, the proportion of donation in resource-seeking organizations' financing mix accounts for 10,8% in 2019 (Dethier et al., 2021) Similarly, one Belgian citizen out of three is said to regard philanthropy as essential (Fondation Roi Baudouin, 2020) and 8% of Belgian citizens volunteer in philanthropic organizations (Hustinx & Dudal, 2020). Belgian resource-seeking organizations indicate several obstacles in raising private funds. Among them, they mention the increased competition with other organizations due to the marketization of the public good and the lack of fiscal incentives for donations (Dethier et al., 2021). Although this is progressively changing[5], Belgian fiscal framework for organizational philanthropy remains one of the least favorable in Europe (European Foundation Center, 2014).

Finally, although new technologies have extensively developed during the last decade and introduced new fundraising practices, (Belgian) resource-seeking organizations would have a limited knowledge and use of these technologies (Bernholz et al., 2010; Grant, 2016). Only some of them would make their (online) visibility and transparency a priority (Fondation Roi Baudouin, 2021). This prevents them from securing existing donors' involvement and from gaining new ones, as the emergence of new technologies comes along with an increased request

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[5] The Belgian government increased fiscal incentives for small individual donors in 2020 (see website of Belgium's federal service of finances
https://finances.belgium.be/fr/particuliers/avantages_fiscaux/dons#q3)

from donors for information (Becker, 2018; Donorinfo, 2018). Although resource-seeking organizations say they were well-aware of new technologies' advantages to help them in their fundraising and day-to-day work, they also report that the cost of implementing these technologies could be high in terms of time, money and skills (Viviers et al., 2020).

Second, besides competition among resource-seeking organizations, collaboration is low among resource-providing organizations and between resource-seeking and resource-providing organizations (Jung et al., 2016). Mernier & Xhauflair (2017) estimate that only 20% of all identified Belgian philanthropic foundations are publicly visible, interact with each other and collectively organize within dedicated networks. Among others, this lack of collaboration among resource-providing organizations can be linked to the high degree of diversity among these organizations. While some Belgian philanthropic organizations aim to be very professional and have long thought about their strategies, others give less importance to strategies and mostly associate philanthropic action with charity (Mernier, 2017). This diversification allows for pluralism and demonstrate a breadth of opinions but does not facilitate collaborations.

Furthermore, beyond being lowly fiscally incentivized, Belgian philanthropy is also vaguely regulated. As philanthropic foundations are allowed to simply state a broad goal upon their creation and are not all required to systematically disclose their full financial information, it is a challenge to appraise exactly what they do, what their budget is and how it is allocated. Additionally, Belgium has no legal framework for corporate philanthropy. Even though companies increasingly develop social responsibility programs, sponsorships and skill-based volunteering, their support to social causes risk flying under the radar and opportunities to foster multi-stakeholder interactions may be missed (Mernier & Xhauflair, 2017; Vandenbulke, 2016). Consequently, resource-providers and -seekers do not always optimally meet. This lack of collaboration is a recurring subject within the field and was recently at the core of several field-configuring events and projects (for instance, Event 4 *Transformative philanthropy* organized by The Transformative Foundation or The YouthPower Foundation's collective impact project, Documents 3 to 5).

Acknowledging the difficulty for resource-seeking and resource-providing organizations – but also various other stakeholders of society (e.g., for-profit businesses) to meet and work together, the need to build resource-seeking organizations' operational capacities and give them access to new technologies, as well as the low involvement of citizens in social actions, social-mission platforms

emerged in Belgium against this backdrop (Xhauflair et al., 2018). As these social-mission platforms are still an emerging phenomenon in Belgium, there is no taken-for-granted template for them to follow yet. Therefore, we expected, on one hand, to uncover a wide range of organizational configurations and, on the other hand, to be able to appraise the effect of the Belgian philanthropic context on their development; hence providing examples of social-mission platforms that differ from those in the Anglo-Saxon philanthropic context.

4   Methods

To explore the different types of social-mission platforms and understand how they build and manage their network of stakeholders, we opted for a qualitative case-based and configurational approach. A comparative case-study design was chosen because it is particularly suited in early stages of research on new and rapidly developing phenomena about which theory as well as empirical evidence are lacking (Gehman et al., 2018). Case study research enables theory-building as it allows researchers to deeply apprehend a phenomenon within the rich context in which it occurs and to compare several cases of this phenomenon within a same context (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991). Through a logic of replication, each case is to be understood as a "distinctive experiment" (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007a, p. 25). Comparing each one to the next highlights their similarities and differences and serves to replicate, contrast or extend emerging ideas. As such, comparison enables to distinguish between findings that are idiosyncratic to a single case and findings that are revealed in several cases, while also accounting for their common specific institutional embeddedness (Eisenhardt, 1989).

In addition, a configurational approach – that is, an analytical approach that combines and configures elements to sort phenomena into similar and distinctive groups – has been extensively associated with typology development (Mair, Battilana, & Cardenas, 2012; Short, Payne, & Ketchen, 2008). In this paper, we mainly rely on earlier scholars of configurations (e.g., Mintzberg, 1980, Miller, 1986, 1996), as their core objective is to "identify and differentiate important types of organizational phenomena" (Miller, 2018, p. 455). However, we are well aware of the latest development in configurational research and of neo-configurational perspectives relying on set-theoretic methods and qualitative comparative analysis (Fiss, 2007; Misangyi et al., 2017).

We find the use of a configurational approach particularly suitable as it allows us to pursue goals of description, explanation and prediction (Short et al., 2008). As touched upon, configurational research reflects a holistic understanding of the phenomenon of interest – in our case, platform organizations – emphasizing their internal and external consistency (Mintzberg, 1980). This allows us to provide a multidimensional description of social-mission platforms and of the various organizing elements they combine. Elements being complementary and tending to fall into coherent patterns, the variety of possible configurations is limited. As such, it allows us to explain how each element relates to the next and how all chosen elements form a cohesive system (Miller, 2018).

Configurational variety is also limited by the environment in which organizations exist, as environmental features only make feasible some configurations (Miller, 1986). This allows us to explain why some social-mission platforms are more successful than others within a given context –in our case Belgian philanthropy. Subsequently, building a typology of archetypal social-mission platforms – that is, configurations of platforms that are context specific – allows us to predict, on one hand, the elements supposedly composing a configuration when one of them has been adopted, and on the other hand, which configuration will lead to success or failure under particular circumstances (Miller, 1996). In the remainder of this section, we explain how cases were selected as well as how data were collected and analyzed.

4.1   *Sampling strategy and cases*

Our review of platform literature shed light on five organizing elements (orientation, technological reliance, access, stakeholders' management and interactions) significant in platforms' organizational configurations – and subsequently in social-mission platforms. We used these five organizing elements as anchors to capture social-mission platforms diversity. This approach implies that cases were selected because they were particularly suitable for illuminating one or several of these elements as well as the relationship between them. Each case was chosen because it allowed replication of insights derived from other already investigated cases, because it extended emerging ideas, because it revealed an unusual and contrasting configuration, or because it eliminated alternative explanations (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007a). This sample strategy allowed us to generate richer and potentially more generalizable findings.

For the sake of comparison and context control, platform cases needed to fulfill three common features in order to be selected. First, they had a philanthropic purpose; that is, to gather private resources in order to address a social and/or environmental issue (Jung et al., 2016). Second, they are transaction platforms, as they allow the exchange of resources between multiple groups of stakeholders (Acquier et al., 2017). Third, they operate in Belgium, either at a national scale or at a more local scale (Brussels-centered or Wallonia-centered) (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991).

These three common features set aside, our sample is heterogeneous in several ways, as we searched for contrasting patterns. First, it contains social-mission platforms allowing for the exchange of various resources. Four cases are crowdfunding platforms (users giving their money to social causes), two cases are crowdtiming platforms (users volunteering their time to social causes), one case is a crowdsourcing platform (users sharing their ideas with social-purpose project initiators), two cases mix crowdfunding and crowdsourcing, and one case mix crowdtiming and crowdsourcing.

Second, our sample displays social-mission platforms with various legal forms and sources of funding. Half cases have a nonprofit legal form, and the other half has a for-profit legal form. Four cases get their initial funding from investments funds or shares, three cases obtained public subsidies or philanthropic resources, and three cases have no source of funding.

Third, as the social-mission platform is an emerging phenomenon, cases vary in their stages of development. The most established and old cases were created in 2014 and employ a team up to 10 workers. The youngest case was created in 2018 and is in a nascent phase. It is worth noting that new platforms have been created after our data collection took place. Fourth, some platforms are now successful while others (2 out of 10) failed during our research process and do not exist anymore. These failure cases have been valuable in refining our findings. We followed their creation; documented challenges they faced and linked these challenges to their organizational configurations and the Belgian philanthropy context.

Cases were identified following several steps. First, as the first and third authors are familiar with the Belgian philanthropy context, we had access to incumbent philanthropic organizations who pointed out to us social-mission platforms they had spotted. Second, as part of our research process, the first and third authors

attended two public events on philanthropy in Belgium at which platform founders were speakers and we established personal contact with them. Third, we browsed the Internet and national media (press and radio) and searched for articles and podcasts featuring social-mission platforms. Finally, as our research moved along, we also identified cases through a snowball technique. We asked interviewees to recommend relevant platforms operating in a social mission setting in Belgium. As such, while some cases were selected at an early stage of our research process, others were added later on. According to Eisenhardt (1989), this flexibility in the data collection is one of the key advantage of a case-study approach and proves to be particularly relevant when studying rapidly and currently evolving phenomenon such as social-mission platforms.

This strategy resulted in a sample of 10 cases. It should be noted that our sample does not intend to be representative of social-mission platforms, as cases selection has undeniably been influenced by convenience and access. The choice of cases partly depended on the interest of platform founders or managers in our study as well as the time they were ready to devote to it and the information available. We summarize the principal characteristics of the 10 cases in Table 2.2. in the dissertation' introduction. To ensure anonymity of social-mission platforms, we use code names to refer to them and do not disclose their real names nor the names of their founders and managers.

4.2   Data collection

Between March 2017 and November 2019, we collected data from three sources: semi-structured interviews, events observations (Events 1, 7 and 9), and archival documents. Additionally, a focus group gathering five out of ten cases was organized in October 2017 and a public presentation of our initial insights was organized in October 2018 and attended by six out of ten cases (Event 3). These two events allowed us to collectively reflect on, refine and confirm our analysis. These multiple sources of data and recursive cycling between collection and analysis phases enabled us to triangulate and validate our insights (Rouse & Spencer, 2016) Data are presented in Table 2.3. in introduction and a zoom is made on data mobilized within this Chapter II in Table 2.3.2. below.

Semi-structured interviews. Our main source of data consists of 15 interviews with platform founders or managers. We favored organization leaders as we believed they were highly involved in and knowledgeable of the creation and management of the platform. For five cases we were able to conduct a follow-up

interview, sometimes with the same person and sometimes with another founder or manager. All interviews were conducted by the first author and in French (except for one in English). And all were recorded and transcribed in the language in which they were conducted. They were all translated in English afterwards, as it is the language common to the three authors.

For each interview, we developed a guideline with a list of themes and open-ended questions. This guideline (see Appendix 1) was informed by public materials previously searched and read to gain general background information on each platform as well as by our broad understanding of philanthropy and platform literature. Questions addressed the following issues: why have you created the platform, who can get access to your platform and how, what happens once a stakeholder has accessed your platform, have you experienced challenges while creating or managing your platform, do you organize activities besides the platform with your stakeholders? After each interview, we systematically contacted our interviewees by email to ask additional information, clarify issues that were unclear after transcription and send them a transcript of the interview that they could read and modify if necessary.

After interviews and during transcription, notes were taken, and analytical insights were later discussed with the other authors. Overall, interviews allowed us to get a snapshot of organizational diversity. Although we conducted follow-up interviews with half of our sampling, our understanding of the development process of social-mission platforms overtime is limited to two years (2017-2019). Still, this limited longitudinal perspective was useful to better ground our insights and have a first glimpse at the phenomenon's evolution.

Events observation. Two of the three authors attended four events, either as active participants for three events – participating in the same way other attendees did – or as visitors for one event – simply observing. Three events consisted of public conferences organized by incumbent philanthropic organizations on and around philanthropic themes, including social-mission platforms. Two of our cases actively presented their social-mission platforms at the first conference, one of our cases took part to the second conference in the audience. During the third event – which is the public presentation of the study on social-mission platforms organized by the two incumbents – two of our cases presented their platforms on stage and four of our cases attended in the audience. These public conferences allowed us to see how platform founders presented their organization and digital interface in front of an audience of potential stakeholders. For cases we had already met with during

an interview, this presentation deepened our understanding of the platform. For others, it allowed us to discover new social-mission platforms that could complete our sampling. The fourth event is an annual meeting organized by one of our cases for its financial and non-financial partners to meet. Unfortunately, we were not able to attend this kind of meeting for other cases. We decided to take this observation opportunity for this particular case as it allowed us to observe *in situ* how the platform managed its network of stakeholders and corroborate information obtained during interview. During and after each event, field notes were systematically taken and discussed by the two authors.

Archival documents. Whenever possible, we analyzed publicly available documents related to social-mission platforms we studied. These documents consisted of media releases (newspapers and radio podcasts), publications on social media (Facebook and LinkedIn), annual reports written by platforms when available and legal documents. We also regularly monitored the website of each platform. Information covered by these documents and websites often exceeded the focus of our research, still it enabled us to develop a broad understanding of each platform and of the Belgian context. These documents were instrumental in tracing back platforms' history and evolution as well as in better capturing platforms' external image. This was helpful in designing our interview guides but also in further interpreting data collected during interviews and observations. We also used these documents to retrieve factual information (e.g., legal status, amount of funds raised). Documents and their code are presented in Table 2.4. in appendices.

Table 2.3.2. – Data used for Chapter II

Events observations					
#1	Philanthropy works! (Antwerp)	Public	Active participation	Biz4Good Time2Give	27/04/2017
#3	Philanthropy & Platforms	Public	Active participation	Money&More SkillUp AllDonors Time2Give SolyNet LinkedUp	08/10/2018
#7	YouthProject	Public	Visitor	SolyNet	03/05/2019
#9	Stakeholders' meeting	Private	Active participation	AllDonors	25/10/2019
Interviews					
#1	People Activator	Interview 1	Crowdfunding	Spotted by incumbent	25/09/2019
#2	Colibris Booster	Interview 1	Crowdsourcing	Spotted in press	05/09/2019
#3	Biz4Good	Interview 1	Crowdfunding	Spotted by incumbent	11/04/2017
#4		Interview 2			08/10/2019
#5	Money&More	Interview 1	Crowdfunding	Spotted on the Internet	20/03/2017
#6		Interview 2			11/09/2019
#7	SkillUp	Interview 1	Crowdtiming	Spotted on radio	28/03/2017
#8	AllDonors	Interview 1	Crowdfunding	Created by incumbent	20/08/2019
#9	Time2Give	Interview 1	Crowdtiming + sourcing	Spotted at an event	11/07/2017
#10		Interview 2			03/10/2019
#11	SolyNet	Interview 1	Crowdfunding + sourcing	Spotted at an event	09/09/2019
#12	GivingWhizz	Interview 1	Crowdfunding + sourcing	Spotted by incumbent	03/05/2017
#13		Interview 2			27/09/2019
#14	LinkedUp	Interview 1	Crowdtiming	Spotted on radio	03/03/2017
#15		Interview 2			20/11/2019
Focus group					
#1	Organized with the Nextdoor Bank		Animator	Biz4Good Money&More SkillUp GivingWhizz LinkedUp	09/10/2017

4.3   Data analysis

The development of our typology of social-mission platforms – and intrinsically our theory-building process – occurred via "recursive cycling among the case data, emerging theory, and later, extant literature" (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007a, p. 25). The five organizing elements we identify are simultaneously empirically grounded and theoretically informed. Indeed, we interrogated our data guided by the literature. In other words, we kept the organizing elements in mind when analyzing interviews, fieldnotes and documents but remained open to identify other elements. As such, the analysis grid we present hereunder and used to explore cases and develop our typology emerged from our research process as a whole.

This recursive approach was particularly relevant as extant literature mentions platforms' organizing elements but in a fragmented way and does not examine all of them to the same extent. Therefore, our empirical analysis enabled us to sharpen each element. Rather than relying on existing dimensions to define elements – which were unevenly developed or ignored by extant literature – we chose to allow dimensions to emerge from our analysis. This enhanced the appropriateness of our analysis grid, as it was constructed within the particular context of social-mission platforms (Mair et al., 2012). Our analysis followed Eisenhardt's (1989) technique and unfolded in three steps: (1) a within-case analysis, (2) a cross-case analysis to identify similarities and differences between cases' organizing elements and (3) configuring elements to generate archetypes and theoretical insights. Table 5 below provides a summary of our analysis grid.

Within-case analysis. We triangulated data from interviews, observations and archives and wrote descriptive monograph for each case. These write-ups closely considered each social-mission platform as a stand-alone entity. Monographs were built around two themes: on one hand, the various goals the platforms intended to fulfill, and on the other hand, the type of interactions that existed between the stakeholders and the platform and between stakeholders themselves. This allowed us to understand the timeline of each platform's creation and evolution, to thoroughly detail how each platform is organized and what are its specificities, and hence to unveil each unique organizing pattern. Through these unique patterns, the five organizing elements (orientation, technological reliance, access, stakeholder's management and interactions) showed.

This allowed us to expand elements that have so far been ignored by existing studies and to confirm those that were already quite developed in literature. An example of the former is *technological reliance of digital interface* for which we uncover a twofold dimension. While some social-mission platforms (e.g., SkillUp and SolyNet) limit themselves to a *generic digital interface* on which all their stakeholders meet, others (e.g., GivingWhizz and Time2Give) make use of numerous information and communication technologies (big data, location-based data and other user-generated contents) to *customize their digital interface* to their stakeholders' needs and requests.

An example of the latter is *stakeholder's access to platform,* which is defined by the already known dimensions *open, semi-open and closed.* Our analysis shows that these types of access differ according to who grants access, which stakeholders can join the platform and criteria for membership. A closed access entails that platform organizations decide on who can join the interface in collaboration with third parties which are experts in specific social and environment issues. Only stakeholders with a specific social mission – that is, aligning on platforms' own social mission – can join. Criteria upon which access is granted are quite specific and revolve around the centrality of stakeholders' social impact. Stakeholders need the explicit approval of platform organizations in order to join.

In platforms with a semi-open access, platform organizations decide on who can join the interface. All stakeholders can join, as these platforms regard social impact as going beyond the mere nonprofit sector and to concern all actors of society, no matter whether social impact is their primary goal or not. As such, criteria are large and limited to stakeholders' available human and financial resources to use the interface.

Open access platforms are platforms where stakeholders can decide on their own whether they want to join the interface or not. The process is a self-selected one. Only stakeholders with a social mission can join the interface; yet platform organizations have a very large definition of what is a social mission and do not specifically seek for stakeholders whose mission align on their own. There are no criteria to meet. Platform organizations choose to exclude undesired stakeholders a posteriori rather than to approve desired ones a priori.

More than confirming already documented elements and dimensions, our within-case analysis enabled us to fine-tune our understanding of these elements. While literature already differentiates between *mission-driven and market-driven orientation*, our analysis clearly highlights three differentiation features: (1) the type of *legal form* platform organizations adopt, (2) the source of their *initial funding* and (3) the *side* of the platform monetized. Platforms with a mission-driven orientation have a nonprofit legal form, get their initial funding from subsidies or philanthropic resources or even founders' own money, and choose to monetize third parties (such as some of their financial partners) which enable them to give a free access to their digital interface. If they have to monetize demand-side participants (that is, social-purpose organizations seeking for resources), then the asked amount is reduced to a minimum. On the opposite, platforms with a market-driven orientation have a for-profit legal form, get their initial funding from investment funds or loans, and choose to monetize their supply-side participants and/or demand-side participants.

Cross-case analysis. Once all cases were analyzed individually, we searched for cross-case patterns by comparing the organizing elements and their dimensions adopted by our 10 social-mission platforms. First, we selected groups of two or three cases that were very different but that were seemingly similar for one specific organizing element. This juxtaposition led us to a more sophisticated understanding of this specific element. For instance, while we had initially the impression that *stakeholders' management* varied along a binary dimension (either interventionist or noninterventionist, as portrayed in literature), we realized that some cases conceive their intervention differently – that is, either centralized (e.g., AllDonors) or decentralized (e.g., People Activator). As a result, the organizing element *management of stakeholders' action and interaction* has three dimensions (centralized interventionist, decentralized interventionist, noninterventionist).

Platforms with a *centralized interventionist approach* extensively intervene on their interface, developing multiple stakeholder management mechanisms. They monitor action and interaction from stakeholders' entry until their exit, offer broad knowledge on digital platforms, online fundraising, online community building, online communication, philanthropic practices, but also specific guidelines and best-practice examples on how to optimally use the interface, and personal follow-ups on each project and campaign' evolutions. Platforms with a *noninterventionist approach* do not intervene at all and are consistent with digital platforms supposed neutrality. They solely provide the digital interface and consider that what occurs

on this interface and how stakeholders interact is not their responsibility. Platforms with a *decentralized interventionist approach* cede some control to stakeholders after training them. They recognize that merely providing a digital interface is not enough for it to be used appropriately. Appropriate use needs to be stimulated. However, they still want stakeholders to be autonomous in their use of the digital interface. Therefore, they provide training and consulting beforehand to stakeholders on how to act and interact appropriately. Afterwards, stakeholders are responsible for the success of their interactions.

Second, we selected groups of cases that were quite similar on several organizing elements but that differ on one element. For instance, some platforms (SolyNet, AllDonors, Colibris Booster and LinkedUp) had all a mission-driven orientation and a generic interface but did not promote the same *type of interactions* among stakeholders. This juxtaposition allowed us to break simplistic patterns: all platform's goal was to promote interactions, but the type of interactions promoted differ. As such, we find three types of interactions: *ecosystem-like interactions, community-centered interactions, and one-on-one interactions*. The former is the densest pattern of interactions while the latter is the thinnest.

In *ecosystem-like interactions*, platform organizations build multiple relationships around their digital interface: online and offline connections between supply-side participants and demand-side participants, with various third parties, as well as within sides themselves. Conversely, platforms with *one-on-one pattern of interactions* limit themselves to the focal online connection between supply- and demand-side participants. No extra connection with third parties is fostered. With a *community-centered pattern*, interactions are centered around a specific community or project. Within these communities and projects, stakeholders can be multiple: resource-seeking and resource-providing participants, but also third parties such has experts and other financial and non-financial supporters. No or few interactions are created between separate communities or projects.

Finally, comparing cases illustrated the interrelation of some organizing elements and allowed us to highlight the complementarity of certain elements (e.g., closed access/interventionist approach v. open access/noninterventionist approach). This first comparison thus raised to our attention the importance of internal consistency and pushed us to further understand how and why some elements interrelated the way they did (Miller, 1996; Mintzberg, 1980).

Combining elements to form archetypes. Our final analytical step therefore followed Mintzberg (1980, p. 323) who views organizational configurations as "the combination of groups of elements into ideal or pure types" and Meyer and colleagues (1993, p. 1175) who view them as "multidimensional constellations of conceptually distinct characteristics that commonly occur together". We grouped together the social-mission platforms which displayed a similar and complementary combination of organizing elements. Three distinctive combinations emerged that formed three archetypal organizational configurations of social-mission platforms. We labeled these archetypes: the *ecosystem-building platform, the meeting-space platform,* and *the community-designing platform*.

The three combinations revealed to us that some cases displayed all the organizing elements of one configuration but one (e.g., Money&More), did not fit in any of the archetypes (e.g., Biz4Good) or, on the contrary, were fitting perfectly into two distinct archetypes (e.g., Time2Give). Investigating these outliers and the challenges their particular configuration raised concretely showed us the relationship between an organization, its configuration, and the environment in which it existed. In other words, this third analytical step highlighted the influence of the Belgian philanthropy context, which is consistent with a configurational approach where configurations need to be both internally and externally consistent (Miller, 1986; Scott, 1987). Our findings section further details the insights of our analysis.

Table 5 – Summary of organizing elements

Organizing elements	Dimensions			Features
Orientation of platform organization	Mission-driven orientation		Market-driven orientation	Legal form Source of initial funding Side monetized
Technology reliance of digital interface	Generic digital interface		Customized digital interface	Same interface Numerous information and communication technologies to build personal interface
Stakeholders' access to platform	Closed	Semi-open	Open	Who grants access Which stakeholders can join Criteria for membership
Management of stakeholders' action and interaction	Centralized interventionist approach	Non-interventionist approach	Decentralized interventionist approach	Extent to which management mechanisms are provided Who is responsible for stakeholders' management
Type of interactions	Ecosystem-like interactions	One-on-one interactions	Community-centered interactions	Direction of interactions Online or/and offline

5 Findings

Findings are organized as follows: first, we describe the three emerging archetypes: the ecosystem-building platform, the meeting-space platform, and the community-designing platform; second, we show that while most platforms correspond to one of these archetypes, a few do not and tend to either disappear or evolve into one of the established archetypes.

5.1 Archetypal organizational configurations of social-mission platforms

5.1.1 The ecosystem-building platform

(Illustrative cases: SolyNet, AllDonors and (Money&More))

The first archetype is the ecosystem-building platform. This type puts a strong emphasis on building *ecosystem-like interactions* between and within various groups of societal stakeholders. An ecosystem-building platform goes beyond the one-on-one focal connection created on the digital interface between a social-purpose organization seeking support and a citizen willing to provide support. The pattern of interactions promoted is multilateral, occurs online and offline as well as inside and outside platform's boundaries.

On the interface, resource-seeking and resource-providing participants can virtually meet. Before allowing for a resource-seeking participant to be displayed on the interface, platform organizations partner with experts to assess its sustainability. Platform organizations connect resource-seeking participants to additional financial and non-financial supporters to help them raise more resources and obtain advice on their projects. Platform organizations create offline connections within resource-seeking participants in order to create solidarity and synergies between them, as well as within resource-providing participants and within other financial and non-financial supporters for them to share knowledge and best practices.

For instance, AllDonors annually organizes an event gathering its financial and non-financial partners (Event 9, *Stakeholders' meeting*). The reasoning behind the ecosystem-building platform is that social issues are too complex and multidimensional to be addressed in silos.

> *"In everything we do, we collaborate. […] We partner with financial and non-financial experts. This reassures donors. They know they can support projects on our platform with their eyes closed, because projects are screened for their financial transparency as well as for their social impact. […] We gather these partners annually so that they can share their best practices. We also connect them with various experts so that they can go in depth into various subject of interest to them. […] During our workshops, we try to encourage solidarity between social-purpose projects, so that they can get inspired by one another."* (AllDonors, Interview 1)

To ensure that ecosystem-like interactions properly develop, the ecosystem-building platform adopts a *centralized interventionist approach* and opts for a *closed access*. The ecosystem-building platform carefully manages all its stakeholders (resource-seekers and -providers as well as third parties), as it intervenes in multiple aspects of their action and interaction.

This interventionist approach is made possible by means of the strict screening and selection process at platform's entry. Stakeholders of the ecosystem-building platform forms thus a quite homogeneous group whose common feature is to have a clear and strong social impact. Sharing common social values and interests, stakeholders are easier to manage.

Eventually, the risk for the ecosystem-building platform to drift away from its social mission is low.

> *"We have a 'coaching' approach with social-purpose organizations seeking resources on the platform. We never leave them alone. […] We help them elaborate an online fundraising strategy. We give them communication tools. We help them build their community. And so on…"* (Money&More, Interview 1)

> *"As a platform, we are not able to screen and select all projects on our own. For instance, our team does not have the skills to assess a project in the environment or health sector. That is why we partner with philanthropic organizations. They bring expertise in order to select projects and vouch for them. This is collaborative and this makes complete sense, but it also has a limit: we cannot accept all projects on our platform."* (AllDonors, Interview 1)

The ecosystem-building platform adopts a *generic digital interface*. While it recognizes the added value of new technologies, it does not heavily rely on them to foster interactions. The role of the digital interface is to facilitate the flux of information between resource-seekers and -providers, which increases transparency in how philanthropic organizations are managed and funds are allocated and, eventually, strengthens stakeholders' trust and involvement.

To be able to gather various groups of stakeholders around its platforms and make them interact, the ecosystem-building platforms believes it needs to show *a mission-driven orientation*. This type of platform chooses for a nonprofit legal form (nonprofit organization or philanthropic foundation), its initial funding comes from public subsidies or philanthropic resources, and it monetizes its third parties to provide a free-of-charge platform or monetizes social-purpose organizations seeking support but only to a minimum.

The ecosystem-building platform's argument for its mission-driven orientation is twofold. First, relying on public subsidies or philanthropic resources is necessary as their goal is not to have a large number of organizations displayed on their platform – as would be expected from general digital platforms and network effects – but to display only organizations which core mission is to have a positive impact on society. Not enough of these impactful organizations exist to make the platform sustainable with a market-driven orientation. Second, calling on public and philanthropic bodies enables the platform to integrate these in its ecosystem.

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They give credibility to ecosystem-building platforms as they play a role in the collaborative screening and selection process, in the financial and non-financial support of social-purpose organizations, and the decisions related to the evolution of the platform itself.

> *"[AllDonors] being a collaborative project, it brings together several philanthropic actors. The main actors of the platform are philanthropic organizations expert in their fields. These are foundations, philanthropic funds and organizations that have established a method to select quality projects in their area of expertise. The objectivity behind their selection makes it possible to propose projects in a totally impartial manner, based on their potential for social impact. These experts actively participate in the [AllDonors] community by presenting you with the promising projects they support. They also finance the day-to-day administration of the platform."* (AllDonors, website)

A representative example of an ecosystem-building platform is SolyNet and is summarized in Table 6.1. below. SolyNet is a nonprofit organization founded in 2014 with the initial mission to enable social-purpose organizations to raise funds. Since its creation, it has been financially supported by Belgian and European public bodies. This support allows SolyNet to charge social-purpose organizations the minimum amount to access the platform. While SolyNet realizes it is *"lucky, since public funding for digital social economy or platform economy is quite rare"*, it also stresses that it deserves to be financially supported as it is *"more than a platform, more than an intermediary"* and does *"socio-cultural work including a lot of activities with social-purpose organizations"* (Interview 1). SolyNet believes that this way of operating is not possible with a market-driven orientation:

> *"Our platform is subsidized but we do not have any other choice. There are not enough social-purpose organizations that are going to launch a crowdfunding campaign. […] And in addition, we need qualitative projects. This means that we need time to coach them and we are not going to coach anyone that has an idea and wants to do crowdfunding. No, we try to find worthy social entrepreneurs."* (SolyNet, Interview 1])

As an ecosystem-building platform, SolyNet considers itself as a link in a chain of multiple stakeholders addressing social and environmental issues. Essentially, SolyNet relies on a triangle relationship. The platform makes social-purpose organizations visible and accessible on its digital interface. Individual citizens have

therefore the opportunity to get involved in these organizations. And through a match-funding approach, private and public funding bodies can complete citizens' support. This triangle relationship provides a mutual guarantee of quality to each stakeholder. First, social-purpose organizations are collaboratively screened and selected. SolyNet calls on its financial and non-financial partners (e.g., philanthropic foundations, social entrepreneurship incubators, public bodies) – which have expertise on some aspects of social issues – to assess sustainability of social-purpose organizations. Once social-purpose organizations are displayed on SolyNet's digital interface, they have access to a multifaceted coaching:

> *"When we do a partnership with a philanthropic foundation or a social entrepreneurship incubator, we serve as a guarantee of quality to them. And they serve as a guarantee of quality to us. We follow and coach each organization on the platform. […] We do workshops with project initiators to teach them about crowdfunding. We always try to help them find funding solutions, via subsidies, through our political contacts, or via sponsoring. We help them find new channels to broadcast their projects. Our support is personalized. […] So, partners know organizations are not alone in their crowdfunding campaign. And on the other side, partners help organizations with their business model, some ethical issues or their financial plan. So, we know these are sound projects. Subsequently, a successful campaign can serve as a positive guarantee for a bank loan. This is a beautiful synergy."* (SolyNet, Interview 1)

As such, citizens are sure to support sound organizations. With their support, they acknowledge the relevance of the value proposition of these organizations. Consequently, private and public funding bodies completing citizens' support know they allocate their resources to an attractive project with great chances to succeed. This helps funding bodies spend their funds in a more efficient and less scattered way. And in turn, this can motivate citizen to give more as they see their initial contribution increased.

Additionally, more than connecting social-purpose organizations with financial and non-financial supporters, SolyNet enables them to integrate a useful and supportive network of other social-purpose organizations:

> *"When a social-purpose organization comes to us, our goal is of course to help it raise money and communicate around its projects, but above all we help it integrate a network. We contact other organizations currently or previously displayed on the platform and we ask them to help, either by making a donation, by providing rewards for the campaigns or by giving advice if both organizations work in the same sector. Our platform is collaborative. We try to build a strong network by creating synergies and solidarity between social-purpose organizations."* (SolyNet, Interview 1)

SolyNet follows the same network approach with its financial and non-financial partners. The platform regularly organizes face-to-face events around specific themes related to crowdfunding, philanthropic practices, and social issues, so that they can share ideas, knowledge and best-practices examples.

Likewise, SolyNet has built an alliance with other social-mission platforms operating with a similar ecosystem-building approach. SolyNet believes these gatherings helps create and convey shared values among all these connected social actors in order to speak with one voice and jointly address societal issues.

Table 6.1. – The archetype "the ecosystem-building platform"

Organizing elements	The ecosystem-building platform
Orientation of platform organization	Mission-driven orientation
Technological reliance of digital interface	Generic digital interface
Stakeholders' access to platform and its digital interface	Closed access
Management of stakeholders' action and interaction	Centralized interventionist approach
Type of interactions promoted between stakeholders	Ecosystem-like interactions
Representative figure	
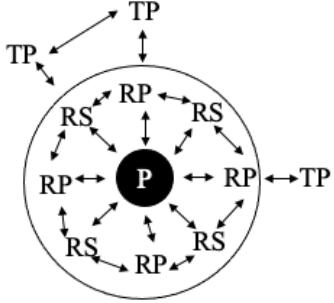
Note: RP = Resource-providers; RS = Resource-seekers; TP = Third parties; P = Platform organization

5.1.2   The meeting-space platform

(Illustrative cases: Colibris Booster, SkillUp and LinkedUp and (Time2Give))

The second archetype is the meeting-space platform. This type puts a strong emphasis on the *open access* to its digital interface. Considering the complexity of social issues, every action and resource is necessary and useful to tackle them. Therefore, any organization (or even project) seeking for support and any individual citizen or organization willing to provide this support is welcome. The meeting-space platform considers counterproductive to restrict social impact to a certain kind of societal stakeholders (such as wealthy philanthropists, nonprofit organizations, volunteers…).

Self-selection is applied and access will not be denied as long as members aim to create social impact, as defined in its broadest sense.

> *"We want to let access completely open and free to all social-purpose initiatives. All ideas are welcome, as long as they have a collective goal, as they have something to do with general interest."* (Colibris Booster, Document 3)

> *"Every nonprofit organization is welcome. Of course, if one organization uses a racist language, we won't allow it. […] But I don't have time to check every organization which subscribes to the platform."* (LinkedUp, Interview 1)

Open access generates a wide set of heterogeneous stakeholders interacting on the digital interface. As such, the meeting-space platform adopts a *noninterventionist approach* and limits itself to promoting *one-on-one interactions.* The platform only provides a *generic digital interface* thanks to which resource-seekers and resource-providers can meet and interact. In the end, the support exchanged (e.g., IT development, legal help, administrative support, brainstorming…) is intended to help build the capacities of social-purpose organizations in order for them to entirely focus on their social mission. As such, the meeting-space platform opts for a position of neutrality as it judges that social-purpose organizations and their supporters are best qualified to decide on the most appropriate type of support they respectively seek and are able to provide. As the founder of Colibris Booster states in a newspaper interview: *"once people are connected together, our job is done"* (Colibris Booster, Document 3).

> *"We are just a tool, like a hammer, nothing more. […] We do not replace coaching or expertise. We are just a connecting point. […] We are a digital support, an intermediary."* (Colibris Booster, Interview 1)

> *"We cannot be responsible for everything happening on the platform. We cannot be behind every user and check if what they do is appropriate".* (LinkedUp, Interview 1)

Along the same lines, as the meeting-space platform's goal is to be the connecting point between two sets of actors – social-purpose organizations lacking support and citizens and organizations willing to provide this support –, it does not foster extra connections with third parties nor try to create synergies among similar social-purpose organizations. This kind of extra connections is not forbidden, they can

happen if the two sets of actors desire them and proactively look for them. They usually regard themselves as *"social-mission Tinder"* (Colibris Booster, Document 3 and Time2Give, Document 4).

To be as accessible as possible and because it does not provide anything more than a digital interface, the meeting-space platform is usually free of charge for social-purpose organizations as well as for supporters. To operate, it usually relies on volunteer work. Overall, founder(s) of a meeting-space aim to provide a valuable tool for addressing social issues. The meeting-space platform has a *mission-driven orientation*.

> *"We did not want to be in contradiction with our values. This is why we chose for a nonprofit legal form rather than a for-profit one. We thought that the best way to discuss with nonprofit organizations is by being a nonprofit organization ourselves. All of this is very coherent.* […] *Plus, our goal is not to make money, so we had no reason to choose for a for-profit form."* (LinkedUp, Interview 1)

> *"We've built the platform on our own money and we are running it voluntarily. We've searched for subsidies for three years now."* (Colibris Booster, Interview 1)

A representative example of a meeting-space platform is SkillUp and is summarized in Table 6.2. below. Originally, SkillUp is the idea of a group of four friends who spotted a matching problem between social-purpose organizations needing support but not finding it and citizens willing to support a social cause but not finding the right opportunity. SkillUp aims to *"build bridges between two separated worlds"* (SkillUp, Document 5).

> *"This is such a pity! There are a lot of skills and a lot of people developing skills at work. And on the other side, there are a lot of social-purpose organizations that could occasionally need these skills. Why not put the two together and make a platform?* […] *The idea is that, thanks to citizens' help, social-purpose organizations are more effective and can spend more time in the field. They can focus on their social mission."* (SkillUp, Interview 1)

In 2016, these four friends started looking for public or philanthropic funding in order to develop their meeting-space platform. Unfortunately, fundraising for a digital platform proved at the time to be more difficult than expected. They realized that *"the platform was just the tool"* not their core idea (Interview 1). So, they first *"started without the platform by simply identifying missions* [them and their friends] *could do to help social-purpose organizations"* (Interview 1). Later on, one of the four friends took a course to learn how to build a website and developed from scratch the SkillUp platform.

Founders of SkillUp believe that their platform is nothing revolutionary: "*before us, citizens were already helping social-purpose organizations* (SkillUp, Focus Group). But they are convinced that relying on new technologies and providing a meeting-space platform help resource-seekers and -providers to meet more easily. As such, more social-purpose organizations can get support and more citizens can get involved; it has a *"leverage effect"* (SkillUp, Document 1).

> *"For social-purpose organizations, this is very easy to get access to our platform. They do not need to fill in many forms or paperwork.* […] *And for citizens, it is also very easy, in a few clicks they can meet social-purpose organizations.* […] *Citizens can help social-purpose organizations whenever they have time and by doing exactly what they do at work, they already have the skills."* (SkillUp, Interview 1)

Eventually, the four friends stopped looking for financial support. Their platform survives on its own without generating too many expenses but without further developing either. It seems to rather stagnate.

Table 6.2. – The archetype "the meeting-space platform"

Organizing elements	The meeting-space platform
Orientation of platform organization	Mission-driven orientation
Technological reliance of digital interface	Generic digital interface
Stakeholders' access to platform and its digital interface	Open access
Management of stakeholders' action and interaction	Noninterventionist approach
Type of interactions promoted between stakeholders	One-on-one interactions
Representative figure	RP → (P) ← RS RP → P ← RS RP → ← RS
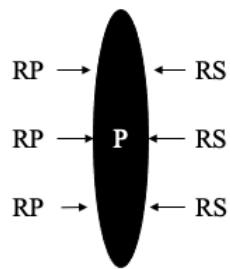
Note: RP = Resource-providers; RS = Resource-seekers; P = Platform organization

5.1.3 The community-designing platform

(Illustrative cases: GivingWhizz, Time2Give and People Activator)

The third type is the community-designing platform. This type puts a strong emphasis on the *customizability* of a digital interface. As each stakeholder of society willing to address a societal issue is different (own identity, strengths and weaknesses, specific work context and particular donors or volunteers target), a one-size-fits-all platform-based solution to stimulate social engagement and collaborations around societal issues is not believed to be ideal.

Therefore, the community-designing platform builds on the untapped potential of new technologies for social impact and highlights the importance of developing digital interface tailored to each stakeholder.

Rather than hosting all resource-seekers, -providers and third parties on a common digital interface regardless of their social missions, the community-designing platform creates multiple and distinct digital interfaces for specific communities.

> *"We never come and provide a fully developed tool. The development of a platform depends on what we are asked to do and on what we feel it would be interesting to do. This is an appropriate co-construction."* (Time2Give, Interview 2)

> *"Have something really specific in mind? Let us know! We're happy to integrate with a current process or create features as needed."* (People Activator, Document 1)

For instance, a social-purpose organization willing to raise funds will have its own interface to communicate around its social mission and interact with its potential donors. This interface is completely independent from the interface of another social-purpose organization also seeking for resources. The idea is that the more appropriate the digital interface, the greater the involvement around a specific social cause. For this third type, the platform is neither the core of an ecosystem nor a meeting space, but rather a technological means to design and boost communities. Accordingly, the community-designing platform promotes a *community-centered pattern of interactions*.

> *"Communities supporting social causes can be really strong, powerful. I want to boost these communities to help nonprofit organizations raise funds and communicate around their social mission. […] The idea is to use the platform to do something good for ourselves, for a community we want to belong to, and for society as a whole."* (People Activator, Interview 1)

Building customized digital interfaces to address social issues requires a certain expertise in social engagement, fundraising and volunteering as well as in web development. Developing expertise requires resources. Hence, the community-designing platform chooses for a *market-driven orientation* that allows it to charge for created digital interfaces as well as to open its capital to private investors. Doing so, the community-designing platform also wishes to prove that a for-profit business with a social mission can be successful without depending on public subsidies or philanthropic resources.

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To highlight their social mission, community-designing platforms usually adopt labels such B-Corp (People Activator, Document 1) or special addition to their legal status such as the mention of "à finalité sociale" (meaning "with a social purpose" (Time2Give, Document 3 and GivingWhizz, Document 4). Furthermore, the community-designing platform argues that being a for-profit business enables it to create a greater social impact, as it can become profitable, grow bigger and faster.

> *"The business model we have developed is built around the premise that a company associated with making the world a better place has a competitive advantage in the hunt for customers and talent. As this is how we pitch [our platform] to our customers, we decided we should not only walk but run the talk in building a sustainable and inclusive social business ourselves."* (People Activator, Document 8)

The community-designing platform applies this same last idea to stakeholders' access to its customized interfaces. Social impact goes beyond the nonprofit sector and the public sphere and rather concerns all stakeholders of society, including for-profit businesses. As such, access to a community-designing platform is not closed and restricted to organizations with a core social mission – as is the case for the ecosystem-building platform. A wide range of organizations can ask for access. Given its market-driven orientation, if the community-designing platform restricted its access only to nonprofit organizations, it would limit its growth and jeopardize its sustainability. Nevertheless, it is not completely open either – as is the case for the meeting-space platform. The community-designing platform's access is therefore *semi-open*. To gain access to a customized interface, stakeholders need to have the financial resources to pay for the interface as well as the human resources to manage the interface.

> *"We have one filter which is our common sense. […] We believe we have a responsibility or an opportunity to step a foot into for-profit businesses and to get them involved around social issues. So, if we have the opportunity to do so, we should. […] Plus, if we decide to only work with organizations with specific social mission, we will limit our growth as well as the social impact we can create."* (People Activator, Interview 1)

Indeed, the community-designing platform adopts a *decentralized interventionist approach* to stakeholders' management. The community-designing platform's objective is to build the most appropriate digital interface for a particular stakeholder, depending on its identity, strengths and weaknesses, as well as the

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context in which it evolves. Once this is done, in order for the interface to be successful, appropriate actions and interactions need to develop on it. The appropriateness of these actions and interactions is the responsibility of this particular stakeholder for which the interface has been created. As such, besides creating the interface, the community-designing platform also provides consultancy and training in order for this stakeholder to appropriately engage, boost and expand its own community. In the end, it needs to be autonomous in the use and management of its digital interface.

> *"If it's just a tool, our added value is static. If you have a pen and sheet and nobody writes with it, it is not going to write itself. Same for our platform. If you put it out there and then go away, nothing will happen.* […] *So, we do some consultancy, we give a lot of trainings.* […] *But eventually, we are not going to do it ourselves. Schools have a big responsibility to make projects successful, to co-manage platforms, same for municipalities, same for companies. They have to do the steps, we facilitate. They have to be independent."* (Time2Give, Interview 2)

A representative example of a community-designing platform is GivingWhizz and is summarized in Table 6.3. below. Created in 2014, GivingWhizz was initially conceived as a generic crowdfunding platform with the broad goal of *"giving a new lease of life to fundraising by using technological tools"* (Interview 1). Soon after, GivingWhizz was asked to develop made-to-measure platforms for specific organizations. The founders then realized that there was a market demand for this type of customized digital interface. As a consequence, they shifted their business toward that purpose and their offer now exceeds crowdfunding to also include crowdsourcing:

> *"We now say we are a B2B2C2C. We, the first B, start from the strategic objectives of an organization, our client. This is the second B. Then, this client has a network of volunteers, citizens who are involved around the social cause our client address. These volunteers are the first C. We are going to build a specific tool to enable these volunteers to raise money from their own family and friends. This is the last C."* (GivingWhizz, Interview 2)

From the beginning GivingWhizz adopted a for-profit legal form and searched for investors to grow its capital. Founders' objective was twofold: to be able *"to make a good place for* [themselves] *on a flourishing market"* and to give a *"professional*

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image" (Interview 1) of themselves in order not to be limited in the type of organizations they can work with. Although GivingWhizz was initially developing customized interfaces for social-purpose organizations, it has progressively chosen to work with a wider range of stakeholders:

> *"The definition of social impact is broader than merely the nonprofit sector. Public authorities are now thinking about their relationship with their citizens. Companies are getting involved in CSR's actions, more than ever.* […] *We work with organizations that appeal us. We do not have specific criteria. If we had specific criteria, then there are many projects that we wouldn't have done and so many things that we wouldn't have tried."* (GivingWhizz, Interview 2)

As such, they have built platforms for Belgian hospitals, for-profit businesses in the food sector, media companies, and so on. The only condition is for these platforms to serve a social mission. GivingWhizz believes that its way of operating generates more social impact:

> *"There is a different reasoning behind offering a generic platform versus offering various tools and platforms that adapt to each organization. To us, each organization is different. That's why we do not have a generic platform. When you look at the organizations we work with, they are all so different. So, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. We need to analyze an organization's context, its strengths and weaknesses and then develop a tool that is appropriate. In the end, results are much greater."* (GivingWhizz, Interview 2)

Furthermore, on generic platforms – such as the ecosystem-building type or the meeting-space type – crowdfunding, -timing, or -sourcing is usually a *"one-shot activity"* (Interview 2). Social-purpose organizations are displayed on the interface of the platform for a period of time, they raise a specific amount of money, recruit a number of volunteers or collect ideas and other resources for a particular project, and then leave the interface. GivingWhizz has a completely different view and conceives its crowdfunding or -sourcing has a *"long-term, year-long, recurrent strategy"* (Interview 2). The customized interfaces they built are meant to stay and to be self-reliant. GivingWhizz explains it has a *"train the trainer policy"* (Interview 2). In each organization for which they create an interface, there is an employee who works part or full time on managing this interface.

GivingWhizz teaches this employee how to build and boost a community around the platform, *"but it does not do it for them"* (Interview 2).

It is of course in GivingWhizz's best interest that the customized platforms are a success, as they are representative of its social value. They rely on a waterfall effect: the social impact they create is larger than their actual creation of digital interfaces.

> *"This train the trainer policy is a much greater strike force, it is much more scalable. We are not limited to our team of 11 people. As we work with big organizations, we have a bigger social impact."* (GivingWhizz, Interview 2)

Table 6.3. – The archetype "the community-designing platform"

Organizing elements	The community-designing platform
Orientation of platform organization	Market-driven orientation
Technological reliance of digital interface	Customized digital interface
Stakeholders' access to platform and its digital interface	Semi-open access
Management of stakeholders' action and interaction	Decentralized interventionist approach
Type of interactions promoted between stakeholders	Community-centered interactions
Representative figure	
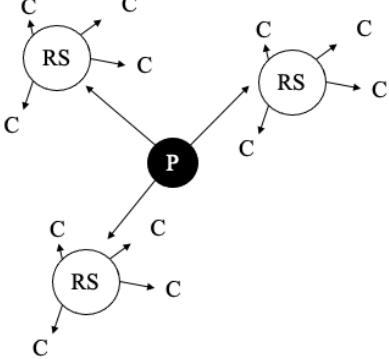
Note: RS = Resource-seekers; P = Platform organization; C = Community

5.2 Outlier organizational configurations

The three archetypes presented above depict ideal and coherent platform's organizational configurations to which most cases studied can be relatively easily connected. However, the empirical reality is more complex than this typology and shows that platforms can combine organizing elements of two configurations, can fail to check all the elements of one configuration or can evolve from one configuration to another. The outlier organizational configurations outlined below are useful to document such complexity and also to demonstrate the challenges that outlier social-mission platforms face as compared to platforms that fit more neatly into one of the established archetypes.

5.2.1 Combining organizing elements of two archetypal configurations

A representative example of an in-between configuration is Biz4Good which is at the intersection of the meeting-space platform and the community-designing platform, as summarized by Table 7 below. Similar to the meeting-space archetype, Biz4Good aimed to be a connecting point and promoted *one-on-one interactions* between social-purpose organizations seeking for support, on one hand, and for-profit businesses willing to provide this support, on the other hand. Biz4Good chose to especially focus on for-profit businesses as resource-providers for two reasons closely related to the Belgian philanthropic context. First, Belgian social-purpose organizations are dependent on public subsidies for more than half of their budget. As mentioned, this dependence can jeopardize their sustainability, as their financial resources may fluctuate according to political context. Second, Belgium has no regulation framework for for-profit businesses willing to address social issues. For-profit businesses are thus not incentivized to undertake actions positively impacting society and often do not know what kind of actions to undertake in the first place.

Therefore, the objective of Biz4Good was, on one side, to offer a space where social-purpose organizations could seek support from a pool of for-profit businesses, and on the other side, to make this space tailored to each for-profit business and, at the same time, the simplest to manage. Therefore, it would suitably fit any business process, could be autonomously used without former training and easily shared with customers. In this sense, Biz4Good combined the *customizability* of the community-designing archetype with the *noninterventionist approach* of the meeting-space archetype.

As customized tools required expertise and workload to be developed, they were not free of charge. Biz4Good asked for-profit businesses for a fee. However, once the tool was created and installed, Biz4Good did not take any percentage on donations made by for-profit businesses to social-purpose organizations. Accordingly, Biz4Good adopted a *market-driven orientation*: it had a for-profit legal form and relied on private investors. Similar to the community-designing archetype, Biz4Good wanted to prove that it was possible to carry out a social mission without depending on public subsidies or philanthropic resources, and even become a profitable business.

> *"I want to use a for-profit business as a means to create a positive impact. I want to be independent and not rely on any subsidy or donation. Because with subsidies, we are always dependent on political decisions which we do not control."* (Biz4Good, Focus Group)

Subsequently, as tools provided by Biz4Good were not free, their access was neither open (as in the meeting-space archetype) nor closed (as in the ecosystem-building archetype), but *semi-open*. Like the community-designing platform, Biz4Good emphasized the importance of having an inclusive vision of social impact. Furthermore, Biz4Good needed its tools to be used by a large number of for-profit businesses to reach financial viability.

Adopting organizing elements of two different organizational configurations proved difficult to hold and Biz4Good eventually failed. This failure can partly be explained by its lack of internal consistency. As a meeting-space platform only provides a generic digital interface on which resource-seekers and -providers can meet and interact, it is usually neutral and free of charge. As not providing any additional training, consultancy or workshops, this archetype is close to merely a technological piece. It is therefore difficult for it to adopt a market-driven orientation as few of its aspects can be monetized. On the opposite, the community-designing platform is able to adopt a market-driven orientation since it combines it with customized digital interfaces and a decentralized management relying on training and consultancy.

Providing customized but off-the-shelf tools (since it was remaining neutral), Biz4Good was perceived as not bringing enough value compared to the amount of its fee.

> *"We put a lot of pressure on ourselves because we wanted to prove that another model was possible. So, yes, it was a lot of pressure because it made more complex our message towards for-profit businesses and social-purpose organizations."* (Biz4Good, Interview 2)

Another explanation for the failure of Biz4Good is the Belgian philanthropic context in which it was embedded. As mentioned, Belgium has a strong Welfare state and a weak philanthropic culture. For-profit businesses usually consider the reason they pay high taxes is for the State to take care of public purposes. This means for-profit businesses may be reluctant to additionally contribute to philanthropic actions.

> *"We were never profitable. We built so many tools, tried so many solutions to bring value to the market. But it is clear that while companies are willing to have a positive impact on society, they are not willing to pay service providers to create tools that facilitate collaborative philanthropy and social impact."* (Biz4Good, Interview 2)

Moreover, as for-profit businesses' philanthropic action is weakly regulated in Belgium, there still can be some mistrust regarding business for social good. Biz4Good, with its market-driven orientation, had a quite controversial image and had to face criticisms accusing it to facilitate greenwashing. For instance, after presenting the platform at the event *Philanthropy works!* (Event 1, 2017) organized by The Big Foundation on the future of philanthropy, the founders of Biz4Good received criticisms from the audience, judging the platform could absolutely not be considered as part of philanthropy.

> *"The biggest problem was that it was an extremely political job. You spent more time justifying yourself than actually selling your product. It was extremely political because you are always in-between having a social impact versus facilitating greenwashing.* […] *If you want to address social issue, maybe you still need to be subsidized."* (Biz4Good, Interview 2)

In retrospect, Biz4Good believed its concept could have been a success if it was implemented in another philanthropic context or if it had chosen for a mission-driven orientation relying on public subsidies or philanthropic resources.

Table 7 – Biz4Good's organizational configuration

Organizing elements	The meeting-space platform	The community-designing platform
Orientation		Market-driven orientation
Technological reliance		Customized digital interface
Stakeholders' access		Semi-open access
Management of stakeholders	Noninterventionist approach	
Type of interactions	One-on-one interactions	

5.2.2 Displaying all but one organizing element of an archetype

This outlier organizational configuration can be exemplified by the social-mission platform Money&More which fits in the ecosystem-building archetype except for one organizing element, the orientation of its platform organization. Money&More chose *a market-driven orientation rather than a mission-driven orientation*. While the archetypal ecosystem-building platform has a nonprofit legal form, relies on public subsidies or philanthropic resources, and usually offers a free platform, Money&More has a for-profit legal form and monetizes resource-seeking organizations. This choice for a market-driven orientation was forced by the founder's difficulty to find public subsidies or philanthropic partners to financially support its platform.

Consequently, Money&More's organizational configuration lacks internal consistency. Within the ecosystem-building archetype, it appears that a mission-driven orientation is coherently tied to a centralized interventionist approach of stakeholders' management, a closed access, and an ecosystem-like pattern of interactions. Sharing common values and interests, platforms' partners meet and interact on and around the platform, notably by being involved in the screening and selection of social-purpose organizations as well as in their financial and non-financial support. As such, a highly collaborative dynamic emerges. As Money&More is not able to rely on such public and philanthropic partners, it has to take a percentage on successful crowdfunding campaigns and charge for the workshops it provides to reach financial viability. Yet, as Money&More only grants access to its interface after a screening and selection process, the number of these organizations is limited.

On the other hand, a market-driven orientation may displease some potential partners which then prefer to be associated to other platforms with a more mission-driven image, further preventing Money&More from creating a more collaborative dynamic around its digital interface.

> *"We are less appealing to some partners than other platforms which have a purely social or philanthropic image. If these platforms lose money, that's no big deal, philanthropic foundations still support them. Their message is clear: we are not here to make money. But we have a more market-driven image, and some partners close their doors on us, because they are looking for a more socially oriented platform."* (Money&More, Interview 2)

In the same vein, several ecosystem-building platforms also started an alliance to collaborate among them (e.g., referring potential partners to one another, exchanging social-purpose organizations to be displayed on their interface). Money&More was not invited to be part of this alliance, as it is not considered as "pure" enough. This eventually threatens the very existence of Money&More. Its founders are now reconsidering their platform's organizational configuration. They think about giving the platform a mission-driven orientation in order to become more attractive to partners they currently do not manage to convince; hence tending toward more internal consistency. However, even if they change the platform's orientation, Belgium remains small for ecosystem-building platforms: some partners targeted by Money&More are already associated to other platforms.

> *"We are currently having doubt about the platform: do we close it and stop everything, or do we keep going? We do not have any financial support; we make do with what we earn, but this is not enough. […] Our business model is very complicated as we need a lot of projects to be profitable. But in Belgium, there are not enough projects and there are too many platforms like ours."* (Money&More, Interview 2)

Money&More is also trying to generate additional sources of revenues by developing customized digital interfaces. This would bring the platform closer to the community-designing archetype. This strategy has not proven successful yet, because there is a strong competition with other community-designing platforms which already occupy a prominent place on this particular market of customized digital interfaces.

5.2.3 Evolving from one archetypal configuration toward another

While Money&More is currently thinking about evolving toward another organizational configuration, Time2Give successfully did so. It has transited from a meeting-space platform to a community-designing platform. Created in 2017 with a *mission-driven orientation* (nonprofit legal form, voluntary work and free platform), Time2Give aims to offer a space for social-purpose organizations looking for volunteers and citizens willing to volunteer to meet and interact. Interactions promoted follow thus a *one-on-one pattern*. As Time2Give wants its space to be as accessible as possible, its digital interface is *generic* and has an *open access*. On this space, Time2Give adopts a *neutral position* and does not intervene in volunteering-seekers and -providers interactions, leaving them to decide on the best exchange.

This meeting-space platform is a first step in a more complex strategy pursued by founders of Time2Give. Their ultimate goal is to get all stakeholders of society – including nonprofit organizations, for-profit businesses, schools, municipalities – involved in tackling social issues. To reach this goal, the one-on-one pattern of interactions on which relies the meeting-space platform is not sufficient.

> *"The traditional one volunteer/one organization is a concept of the 20th century. It is not enough to enact high behavioral change. We want to connect all the stakeholders, companies, schools, neighborhoods, cities, nonprofits, and create an environment of volunteering to really tackle social challenges."* (Time2Give, Interview 1)

Consequently, founders of Time2Give started to build specific communities within which schools, municipalities or for-profit businesses are connected to social-purpose organizations and address a particular social mission.

> *"When we create a specific and locally-based platform, such as for a particular city, we notice that social cohesion is more dynamic and that collaboration between citizens and social-purpose organizations increases."* (Time2Give, Document 5)

To develop, these communities require customized tools as well as ad-hoc training and consultancy to learn to properly manage these tools. As such, Time2Give adopts a *community-centered pattern of interactions* and a *decentralized interventionist approach*. As mentioned, developing customized tools requires expertise. Hence, Time2Give started looking for public subsidies or philanthropic

resources to hire web developers and thematic experts. Yet, like Money&More, it soon realized that funding for digital platforms was scarce. Furthermore, founders wanted the platform to become their full-time job. It thus needed to become financially viable.

> *"We needed funding to hire ourselves but also five employees, web developers and educational experts to work with schools. But at the time subsidies for platform economy did not exist. Maybe now it does, but at the time it didn't. We also contacted philanthropic foundations, but we were out of their scope. Digital is not a social purpose per se. So, the only way for us to get funding was to get investments. So, we transformed our platform into a cooperative and raised funds in the form of cooperative shares".* (Time2Give, Interview 2)

The Belgian institutional context and its lack of support for digital platforms pushed Time2Give from a mission-driven orientation to a *market-driven orientation*. It changed its nonprofit legal form for a cooperative and raised more than 200.000 euros in cooperative shares (Time2Give, Document 6). Following this change, some philanthropic organizations voiced serious doubts as to the social nature of Time2Give's social mission. While the platform charges schools, municipalities, for-profit businesses and social-purpose organizations for its customized tools, it has kept its initial generic meeting-space platform which remains open and free for social-purpose organizations and volunteers. Time2Give is therefore an example of a social-mission platform embodying two distinctive organizational configurations.

In sum, these three outlier organizational configurations show the significance of internal and external consistency.

6 Discussion and conclusion

Building on a case-based and configurational approach, we unveil how different types of social-mission platforms build and manage their network of stakeholders in order to address societal issues. Our typology has implications for research on social-mission platforms as well as for practices in and around collectively addressing social and environmental challenges through digital platforms. Overall, our comparative study offers an empirically-grounded description of social-mission platforms, their organizing elements, and archetypal organizational configurations. We reveal similarities and differences among the ten cases we compare and start to explain why they differ in their configurations as well as why certain configurations are successful while others lead to failure. As such, we contribute to enrich our understanding of how digital platforms relate to societal issues.

6.1 Implications for research

Our typology is a first step in better sorting the multiple social-mission platforms that have recently emerged. We do so (1) by identifying five organizing elements relevant to platform organizing process through our review of the literature as well as by refining these elements in the context of social-mission platforms through our empirical analysis, (2) by combining these organizing elements within coherent archetypes that correspond to three different ways of building and managing a network of stakeholders, (3) by considering the possible evolutions from one archetype to another in the context of a dynamic perspective and accounting for platforms' institutional embeddedness.

First, our framework of five organizing elements contribute to developing and structuring extant literature on social-mission platforms' organizing process. On one hand, consistent with Logue & Grimes (2020), we further show that intersectional alignment of social-mission platforms' identity is crucial in avoiding mission drift as well as the exclusion of important stakeholders to social change. Social-mission platforms which adopt a market-driven orientation complement their for-profit legal status with labels and mentions emphasizing their social mission in order to project an attractive image to various stakeholders (both nonprofit organizations and for-profit businesses).

Conversely, social-mission platforms which fail to project a "multivocal identity", also fail to attract their targeted stakeholders (e.g., Money&More). We also confirm that securing relationship with third parties play a significant role in social-mission platforms' legitimacy, as exemplified by the ecosystem-building and community-designing types.

On the other hand, we enrich current studies (Presenza et al., 2019) assuming that social-mission platforms tend to be rather interventionist in order to remain open and inclusive to various stakeholders. We paradoxically show that social-mission platforms with an open access are those adopting a position of neutrality (e.g., the meeting-space type), while the most interventionist platforms further chose for a closed access (e.g., the ecosystem-building type). We also point out that social-mission platforms' intervention varies in degrees: some being more centralized while others are decentralized (e.g., the community designing type). Finally, we underline the so-far ignored importance of interface's technological reliance in the context of social-mission platforms, as customized spaces allow community-designing platforms to include heterogeneous stakeholders while still securing quality of collaborations.

Second, consistent with configurational approach (Miller, 1986; Mintzberg, 1980) as well as with existing conceptual and empirical typologies of platform organizations (Muñoz & Cohen, 2017; Zhang et al., 2020), our three archetypes and the outlier cases highlight the importance of internal consistency when structuring social-mission platforms. Unpacking organizing elements help us shed light on how some elements complement each other while others contradict with each other. Therefore, the particular combination of certain elements makes certain configurations more stable. An organizational configuration which comprises a set of highly complementary organizing elements appears more likely to be implemented and sustained, as revealed by our examples of successful social-mission platforms (SolyNet or GivingWhizz, for instance).

On the opposite, an organizational configuration with contradictory organizing elements is less likely to be adopted as it proves difficult to maintain. We further uncover that some contradictory combinations create more internal tensions than others. An example like Biz4Good attempting to combine a market-driven orientation with a noninterventionist approach and customized tools ended up impossible to sustain while an example like Money&More adopting a market-driven orientation rather than a mission-driven one appears to still survive even though it does not thrive.

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Third, studying ten social-mission platforms all embedded in the particular institutional context of Belgian philanthropy (Barman, 2017; Wiepking et al., 2021), we can state that external consistency is as crucial as internal consistency (Hinings et al., 2018; Scott, 1987). Social-mission platforms' choice for one configuration or another appears contingent on the characteristics of the institutional context within which they operate. In other words, the institutional environment in which platforms emerge tend to select the feasible organizational configurations (Miller, 1986). Our analysis shows that while social-mission platforms need to organize in a way that is perceived as appropriate by the stakeholders that directly participate in the platforms, they also need to be regarded as legitimate by broader audiences in order to survive. And some configurations appear to result in higher levels of legitimacy – and subsequently resources – than others. For instance, Biz4Good eventually failed, facing accusations of greenwashing from people at large and from some philanthropic organizations due to its market-driven orientation and its noninterventionist approach.

Beyond appearing to be not ready to fully support for-profit businesses' inclusion in social change, the Belgian context, its strong Welfare State and weak philanthropic culture also appear to lack financial support for platforms. This lack of funding made it more difficult for social-mission platforms to adopt a mission-driven orientation and offer a free platform. This rather forced many of them to transition to a market approach and paying platform in order to succeed (e.g., Time2Give). This externally constrained choice further determined other organizing elements, as platforms sought for internal consistency. Documenting social-mission platforms' transition from one type to another, we show that all elements usually change together, as piecemeal changes threaten elements' complementarity (Miller, 1986).

Finally, emphasizing the role of a European context enriches the understanding of social-mission platforms that have mainly been theorized based on well-known Anglo-Saxon examples.

6.2   Future research avenues on social-mission platforms

As any research, our own has limits, but these definitely open up opportunities to conduct future research. Building on the nascent literature on and around social-mission platforms, our typology intends to play a particular role in a programmatic research effort (Bernholz, 2016; Liu et al., 2021; Logue & Grimes, 2020; Messeni Petruzzelli et al., 2019; Presenza et al., 2019). First, our typology relies on a small number of cases and does not pretend to be exhaustive but rather illustrative of important relationships. While a multiple-case perspective allows us to develop more deeply grounded and generalizable insights, it does not provide us with the depth of knowledge we would have had by following exclusively a single case study over our whole research process. More cases should be compared to those analyzed here in order to reinforce the described archetypal configurations as well as maybe unveil others.

Second, even though we show certain patterns of how some social-mission platforms manage to evolve from one configuration to another, our aim was rather to document the content of diversity than to detail this process. Therefore, research with a stronger longitudinal design is needed to better shed light on aspects of social-mission platform dynamics and document which conditions enable or limit platforms' evolution. Moreover, a longitudinal research method would also better highlight the respective outcomes of each organizational configurations. Configurations being dynamic, they are best studied over time (Miller, 1996). As social-mission platforms to foster multi-stakeholder interactions is still a quite new and evolving phenomenon, we do not have yet the benefit of hindsight.

Moreover, while our choice to focus on interviewing platform organizations' founders and managers offers a rich inside perspective, we do not account for the viewpoints of platforms' stakeholders. Assessing social-mission platforms' outcomes will require to bring in these various stakeholders and their divergent interests into the analysis.

So far, we can only infer some possible outcomes from our data. For instance, the core value of the ecosystem-building archetype lies in the multiple relationships the platform organization creates on and around its digital interface. However, the societal stakeholders this archetype tries to federate and coordinate are exclusively those that align on its social mission. Indeed, platforms belonging to the ecosystem-building archetype have a closed access and a centralized interventionist approach to their stakeholders' management. Through their screen and selection process and

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their direct intervention in stakeholders' action and interaction, platforms reduce heterogeneity in their membership, increase the successfulness of collaborations and avoid mission drift. Yet, they may also exclude significant societal stakeholders for social change.

In this sense, it could be argued that ecosystem-building platforms only strengthen the existing, limited philanthropic community rather than truly breaking its silos. In terms of outcomes, they might end up simply maintaining status quo. They might also run counter to their initial objectives of collaboration, as they further exclude from societal action stakeholders whose core mission is not to have a positive impact on society (e.g., for-profit businesses).

On the opposite, the community-designing archetype and its semi-open access aims to be as inclusive as possible and to work with all societal stakeholders (including for-profit businesses of all kinds). Platforms belonging to this archetype have a quite heterogeneous membership which may eventually hampers collaborations and lead to mission drift. To secure stakeholders' engagement and remain true to their social mission, these platforms rely on a decentralized interventionist approach and on highly customizable digital interfaces. As such, they do not need to put too much effort in their managing of stakeholders' action and interaction, and they avoid stakeholders with too divergent interests to be in the same digital space.

Yet, while inclusiveness is reached – that is, all stakeholders are included in addressing social challenges – collaboration between these stakeholders is not actually effective. As each stakeholder evolves within its own community, they remain quite separated. In terms of outcomes, rather than breaking silos, community-designing platforms may recreate others within which each stakeholder is only connected to its own, limited community.

Finally, a more longitudinal research design would enable to show how social-mission platforms might collaborate or compete with each other, whether some archetypes collaborate more with others or not as well as whether they collaborate or compete with incumbent philanthropic organizations (Kretschmer et al., 2020). Since the first economic perspective, competition between platforms has been the subject of many studies which focus on platforms' price and network effects (Gawer, 2014; Liu et al., 2021). However, with the current and increasing emergence of platforms to address social issues, the specificities of competition between social-mission platforms should be investigated.

In our data, we already begin to see that while platforms belonging to the ecosystem-building archetype tend to form alliances among them, they are also quite critical regarding platforms belonging to the community-designing archetype. The former accusing the latter of having no social added value as they are merely *"IT tool builders"* (SolyNet, Interview 1). As ecosystem-building and community-designing platforms may sometimes target the same stakeholders, they can end up competing against one another to secure these stakeholders' engagement. This type of competition is rather unexpected in a social mission setting where collaboration should be everyone's ultimate goal.

Moreover, further studies should explore the effect of social-mission platforms' entry within the philanthropic field, and respectively how philanthropic incumbents respond to their entry. What unique challenges would particular organizational configurations of platforms pose in their relationship with established traditional philanthropic organizations? Will social-mission platforms replace some members of the philanthropic field? Will they disrupt the existing power relations within the field? Or expand field boundaries? How can social-mission platforms seek to gain incumbents' support in order to legitimize their entry into the philanthropic field? Conversely, will incumbents facilitate platforms' entry by, for instance, endorsing and using them or hinder their entry by, for instance, lobbying for regulations limiting their creation and development? Will some incumbents create their own social-mission platforms and diversify their philanthropic activities? All these questions are still poorly understood when it comes to social-mission platforms (Bernholz, 2016; Kretschmer et al., 2020).

Along the same lines, while we chose to observe social-mission platforms in relation to the Belgian philanthropic context, these platforms also relate to other fields, such as corporate social responsibility and social policy governance. Studying the relationship between social-mission platforms and members of these fields would provide a more comprehensive understanding of social-mission platforms and their network's building and management.

Third, our cross-sectional analysis allows us to control for the institutional context, as all ten platforms are observed at one point in time and exposed to the same environment of Belgian philanthropy. While we are able to study more platforms at the same time (where they are now and where they come from), to examine a context that has not yet been the focus of research on social-mission platforms and to start perceiving the effects of this context on platforms' organizational configurations, we cannot fully assess the influence of the institutional context on

our archetypes, and we cannot generalize our typology at an international level. To do so, a cross-country comparative research is needed. Research on (social-mission) platforms start to develop in various contexts (Kretschmer et al., 2020; Logue & Grimes, 2020; Presenza et al., 2019; Reischauer & Mair, 2018a).

Yet, not all studies take into account the institutional context and its specificities nor has there been much effort to systematically cumulate the disparate results. Therefore, what we know about digital platforms in general and social-mission platforms in particular either occurs in a social and political void or is idiosyncratic to one context (Thomas et al., 2014; Vallas & Schor, 2020).

However, the organizational configurations of social-mission platforms we find and appear sustainable in Belgium might not be found or be possible to maintain elsewhere, as the regulatory environment regarding philanthropic matters might differ and as platforms' organizing process might be contingent on other external factors. As already mentioned by configurational researchers (Miller, 1996), the way organizing elements arrange in coherent patterns and the variety and plasticity of these patterns depend on the environment in which they exist. When environments are uncertain and changing (such as Belgian philanthropy), elements may be loosely coupled and configurations prone to transition (as documented by some of our cases). Cross-country comparisons could focus on countries within continents or compare countries across continents (typically European platforms with US-based ones).

6.3   Implications for practice

Our findings have also empirical implications. First, our typology provides valuable insights for philanthropic organizations seeking and providing resources and for citizens who may not be aware of the full scope and recent evolutions of platform philanthropy and thus keep relying on traditional methods to seek or to give support. Therefore, the three archetypes we highlight can help them find their way in the wide diversity of existing social-mission platforms and better appraise which type of social-mission platform to use depending on the nature of the support they need or want to give as well as how they wish to seek or provide it.

Second, our findings, and especially the organizing elements we unpack, can be useful for future platform founders and managers as well as allow current one to reflect on how their platform is organized. They can look for the most adequate organizational configuration depending on the objectives they want to pursue with their platform. They can also better evaluate the consequences of adopting one or another organizing element and pay further attention to their platform's internal and external consistency. As we start documenting, each configuration of organizing elements is likely to lead to a different outcome.

Finally, our typology can be valuable for policy-makers for whom social-mission platforms may pose unique regulatory challenges. It has already been shown in academic literature (Messeni Petruzzelli et al., 2019) that institutional endorsement is crucial in promoting platforms and more specifically social-mission platforms. They are more likely to succeed in institutional context that actively support their development. The organizational configurations we identify may thus guide policy-makers in better assessing how certain financial and legal incentives might empower certain configurations and not others, and subsequently develop informed policies, rather than trying to fit these platforms and their particularities in existing regulatory boxes.

While at the beginning of our fieldwork in 2017 many platform founders complained they could not find financial support to help them build and develop their platform, three years later the first open call for projects focused on platforms in social-mission setting was launched by an incumbent philanthropic organization (The Big Foundation, Document 1). And public bodies started to investigate platform cooperativism in order to evaluate how to best support its development (Vrielynck & Boulanger, 2018). This kind of change in the Belgian institutional context shows the interactive relations between organizational configurations and

their institutional context. While the context influences the organizational choices of platforms, the emergence of specific configurations may also shape the context (Mintzberg, 1980). And in turn, this change in context will definitely further affect social-mission platforms' creation and evolution in Belgium.

For instance, among our ten platforms, the meeting-space platforms appear the least sustainable as they either failed (as LinkedUp), are stagnating (as SkillUp) or are considering evolving toward another configuration (as Colibris Booster), as they do not find the resources to sustain their development. At the end of our research, we also observed the emergence of more platforms similar in their configuration to Biz4Good and some managed to attract stakeholders and funding (e.g., AdvertRaising). Therefore, it would seem that the increased interest from public bodies and philanthropic organizations for social-mission platforms could be a promising avenue for these configurations. This brings us back to the need for longitudinal research on social-mission platforms, as their appropriateness and resulting success seem related to their organizational poisedness (Johnson & Powell, 2017).

OPENING THE GATES OR CLOSING THE FORTRESS? EXPLORING THE DIVERGENT TYPES OF BOUNDARY WORK AMONG INCUMBENT ORGANIZATIONS IN THE BELGIAN PHILANTHROPY FIELD

1   Introduction

Boundaries are central to field structuration dynamics (Lamont & Molnár, 2002). As they define who belongs to a focal field, what belonging means, which social position field members occupy and which resources they access, they distinguish, on one hand, between the "inside" of a field and its "outside", and on the other hand, among the various populations making up a field membership (Lawrence, 1999). In other words, they define inner behaviors and outward image. Field membership comprises core, incumbent organizations – identifying strongly with a focal field and aiming to maintain their powerful social position – as well as peripheral organizations (either long-lasting challengers or newcomers) – identifying weakly with the field and entering and exiting it depending on available resources (Zietsma et al., 2017).

As boundaries create hierarchical stratification – privileging some groups of actors over others – they become the object of strategic considerations (Lawrence, 2004). Field members undertake various forms of boundary work, including specific actors while excluding others, and thereby shape field dynamics (Gieryn, 1983; Hampel et al., 2017). More than dichotomous patterns of integration and differentiation, researchers have shown that boundary work is fluid and never-ending, as fields' emergence, development and maintenance rely on a strategic tension between permeability and impermeability (Lindberg et al., 2017). As a result, extant research has shown how seemingly opposite strategies may coexist. Within a field, incumbent organizations may defend their boundaries against peripheral organizations' or newcomers' attempts to breach them (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). A same population may successively conduct divergent work, first extending its field boundaries and later contracting them (Grodal, 2018). A same population may also simultaneously conduct divergent works, trying to

bolster one type of boundary in order to protect its resources while negotiating another to induce collaboration with outsiders (Langley et al., 2019).

While these studies have been instrumental in showing the complex, dynamic and iterative nature of boundary work performed by populations with diverging interests, they have tended to neglect the possible heterogeneity of boundary work within a given population (Hampel et al., 2017). Facing the arrival of newcomers, some incumbent organizations may view them as a threat while others see them as an opportunity, which eventually leads to the coexistence of isolating and connecting boundary work strategies within a given population. The present research paper aims to fill this gap and examine such in-population heterogeneity, how opposing strategies interact and ultimately impact the field's symbolic and social boundaries as well as the overall configuration of the field.

Furthermore, we suggest that fragmented issue fields are particularly relevant sites to achieve this objective. Indeed, boundaries are not *a priori* given, and the type of boundary work undertaken by field members and its likelihood to succeed depends on fields' nature and conditions. While exchange-based and established fields – highly structured, organized around a technology, an industry or a market and comprising an ordered set of actors – have strong and taken-for-granted boundaries, issue-based and fragmented fields – lowly structured, formed around an emerging issue and comprising a heterogeneous and disorganized set of actors – have weaker and more contested boundaries (Zietsma et al., 2017). Therefore, within the latter, organizations may agree to advance a given issue but disagree on how to do so and therefore undertake various strategies regarding their field boundaries (Furnari, 2018). Accordingly, we ask the following research questions: *how do incumbent organizations within a given population diverge in the ways in which they define symbolic and social boundaries of an issue field, and how do these strategies interact to shape these boundaries?*

To address these questions and document interorganizational interactions among field incumbents, we draw on a variant of grounded theory (Gioia et al., 2012; Glaser & Strauss, 2008) and apply an inside-out research approach (Evered & Louis, 1981; Hehenberger et al., 2019) with the first author being closely involved in our empirical setting and the second author remaining an outside observer. More specifically, we study boundary work performed by incumbent organizations within the fragmented issue field of philanthropy in Belgium. We focus on a particular episode of contention within the field which has been precipitated by the

arrival of platform-based newcomers. Philanthropy's meanings and practices being essentially contested (Daly, 2012) and Belgium displaying slow philanthropic dynamics (Mernier, 2017; Vandenbulke, 2016), the Belgian field of organizational philanthropy has an issue-based nature and fragmented condition.

Our findings show that within incumbent population an affiliating strategy and a discriminating strategy opposed themselves. Affiliators flexibilized boundaries to include newcomers while discriminators strengthened them to exclude newcomers. While both strategies first coexisted, the affiliating strategy eventually prevailed over the discriminating strategy with discriminators softening their reinforcement of the fields' symbolic boundary and partially extending the field's social boundary. Exploring each strategy and their interaction, we contribute to literature on field configurations and boundary work. We theorize first how given fields yield in-population heterogeneity in boundary work strategies, and then how, in the other sense, diverse boundary work strategies interact to shape field boundaries.

The paper is structured as follows. The first and next section introduces our theoretical background which builds and combines literature on field configurations and boundary work. The second section extensively describes our methods and research setting. Our findings are developed in the third section, explaining first the affiliating and discriminating strategies individually and then exploring their interaction. In the final section, we discuss our findings in the light of literature reviewed and mention some limitations and future research avenues.

2   Theoretical background

2.1   *Fields, boundaries and membership*

Institutional theory defines a field as "a community of organizations that partakes of a common meaning system and whose participants interact more frequently and fatefully with one another than with actors outside the field" (Scott, 1995, p. 56). Distinguishing between "inside" and "outside" actors implies the notion of boundaries, which is central to fields' structuration dynamics (Zietsma et al., 2017). Boundaries are "distinction[s] that establish categories of objects, people or activities" (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010, p. 191). They are thus crucial to understand how groups of organizations form and how they differentiate themselves from others. Boundaries also serve to regulate within-group interactions between organizations, as they take each other into account and understand their

responsibilities vis-à-vis each other as well as the group (Bucher et al., 2016; Lamont & Molnár, 2002)

When discussing fields, scholars distinguish between two types of boundaries: symbolic boundaries and social boundaries. Symbolic boundaries are defined at the abstract and inter-subjective level. They build on the conceptual, central and distinctive characteristics created, maintained and sometimes contested by field members to categorize themselves as similar to one another and different from non-members (Lamont & Molnár, 2002). These characteristics define what it means to belong to the field – that is, the shared meanings on which field members come to agree as well as communicate, enact and reciprocate through their interactions (Lawrence, 1999; Leibel et al., 2018). Shared meanings are further encoded in practices – that is, "activities that are both recurring and meaningful in the eyes of some social group" (Furnari, 2014, p. 442).

Shared meanings and practices help field members know who they are and what they can do. In other words, they guide field members' appropriate ways of behaving within the field and reduce ambiguity (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2009). Conveying these shared meanings and practices, field members strengthen their involvement in a common enterprise and develop the field's collective identity – which outwardly portrays the field and enables outsiders to understand and recognize the field (Furnari, 2016; Weber, Heinze, & Desoucey, 2008).When organizations fit the field's characteristics, they are eligible to field membership which gives them access to a social position within the field and to its inherent material (e.g., monetary) and nonmaterial (e.g., symbolic, cultural) resources (Grodal, 2018). As such, when symbolic boundaries are widely agreed on, they become constraining and enforce the field's patterns of interaction – that is, its social boundaries.

Social boundaries take on a more concrete aspect and are "objectified forms of social differences" (Lamont & Molnár, 2002, p. 168). They involve the social positions within a field and the unequal access to and distribution of its resources (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). Fields are hierarchically stratified, meaning that not all actors are equal (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Wacquant, 1989). Organizations in the field take up particular social positions which, depending on the shared meanings and practices of the field, give them access to more or less resources (Lawrence, 1999). Such access to field resources will shape the interactions among

field members and their capacity to strategically advance their interests (Lawrence, 2004; Wooten & Hoffman, 2017).

Symbolic and social boundaries jointly define field membership. Directly linked to the notion of boundaries, that of membership is equally central to understand field dynamics (Lawrence, 1999). Depending on the state of boundaries, populations making up field membership can be more or less varied (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017). A field population is typically defined as "a collection or aggregate of organizations that are alike in some respect" (Zietsma et al., 2017, p. 396). As each population participate in different fields, each identifies differently to these fields (Lawrence, 2004).

Populations who identify strongly with a focal field are the field's core, incumbent organizations. These populations' activities are centered on the focal field and aim at maintaining or enhancing their social position. They are usually portrayed as solid and uniform groups whose identity strongly ensues from the field's symbolic boundary (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012; Greenwood et al., 2002). On the other hand, populations who identify weakly with a focal field are the field's peripheral actors, whether long-lasting challengers or newcomers. These populations' activities are centered on other related fields from which they draw their identity. Within the focal field, they usually embody loosely connected groups, do not entirely adhere to its shared meanings and practices, tend to consider their field-related activities as not significant and enter or exit the field depending on available resources (Grodal, 2018; Leblebici et al., 1991).

The state of field boundaries, and inherently its membership, depends on the conditions and nature of the field (Zietsma et al., 2017). Regarding fields' conditions, scholars distinguish, among others, between established fields versus fragmented fields (Furnari, 2018; Hinings et al., 2017). Established fields display a high level of structuration and comprise a homogeneous and restricted set of actors interacting according to a strict and distinct hierarchical order (Bucher et al., 2016; Lawrence, 2004). Being formally and widely recognized, core, incumbent actors enjoy legitimacy and power within the field, which they use to enforce and reproduce the taken-for-granted meanings and practices regulating the field (Lawrence, 1999). Therefore, established fields have strong symbolic and social boundaries.

On the contrary, fragmented fields have less elaborated institutional infrastructure and comprise a heterogeneous and disorganized set of actors with often unclear status hierarchy (W. Powell & Sandholtz, 2012; Rao et al., 2000). Fields are usually said to be fragmented upon their emergence (Maguire et al., 2004) or become fragmented upon episodes of contestation and stigmatization following an exogenous shocks (Greenwood et al., 2011) or the entry of new actors advocating for different ideas about appropriate actions (Grodal, 2018; Mair & Hehenberger, 2014; Siltaoja et al., 2020). Therefore, fragmented fields have weaker and more contested symbolic and social boundaries, which provide space for innovation and enable newcomers to claim membership (Zietsma et al., 2017).

Scholars further distinguish fields according to their nature: exchange fields versus issue fields (Zietsma et al., 2017). While an exchange field forms around a common technology, industry or market and focuses on exchange relationships among a population of organizational actors that constitute a "recognized area of institutional life" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 148), an issue field forms around an issue which becomes the center of debate involving various populations of actors with their own collective identities and competing interests and embedded in their own institutional infrastructure (Hoffman, 1999). The type of populations debating around an issue, the extent to which each identifies more or less strongly with the field, and thereby the structural dynamics of the field vary according to the issue at stake (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017). As such, issue fields are usually more fragmented as they lack the structure of relatively clearly defined interactions and social positions are in flux (Zietsma et al., 2017).

Lack of identifiable interaction patterns generates ambiguity for field members, who navigate among multiple interpretations of what belonging to the field means (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2009). New issues emerge when some actors frame matters as "unsettled and important" – that is, requiring discussion and action (Furnari, 2018). As such, issues are socially constructed: each actor has its own interpretation of the issue depending on its interests and objectives (Leibel et al., 2018). Such varying interpretations expose the issue field to ideas from other fields and enhance the field's "permeability" (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996, p. 1030). Issue fields are therefore increasingly seen as "linked arenas" rather than "disconnected islands" (Furnari, 2016, p. 553) and scholars highlight their "interstitial" and "bridging" nature (Furnari, 2014; Zietsma et al., 2017).

In response to emerging issues, symbolic and social boundaries in issue fields are rather open to generate collaborations and innovations. Boundaries in issue fields need not to be too rigid as enabling newcomers to participate help form a critical mass – that is, "a level of support high enough to put pressure on field actors to act upon the issue" (Furnari, 2018) and legitimize the issue for the field to keep forming around it (Grodal, 2018; B. H. Lee, Hiatt, & Lounsbury, 2017). Without this critical mass, issue fields remain transitory. Once the issue at stake has been debated and negotiated by actors and new systems of meanings and practices have emerged in response, these meanings and practices are transposed within populations' respective field, interactions cease and the field dissolves (Furnari, 2014). Yet, over time, negotiations may endure, interactions consolidate, and alliances form among actors who eventually develop their own collective identity (Hehenberger et al., 2019). Issue fields can therefore become more structured and settled, forming stronger symbolic and social boundaries. Doing so, they are expected to evolve into exchange fields (Zietsma et al., 2017).

2.2   Boundary work

Research on fields' conditions and nature highlights that field boundaries are not *a priori* given (Lindberg et al., 2017). Because they privilege some groups of actors over others by associating specific types and amounts of resources with specific social positions, field boundaries are the object of strategic considerations and are typically portrayed as the outcome of struggles between field actors and with outsiders (Lamont & Molnár, 2002; Lawrence, 2004). Field actors undertake various types of "boundary work" to shape field boundaries and advance their interests with regard to both other field members and outsiders (Gieryn, 1983; Hampel et al., 2017). The potential for actors to engage in these struggles and undertake boundary work depends, among others, on the conditions and nature of the field in which they are embedded (Bucher et al., 2016; Lawrence, 1999). Struggles usually take place in fields that are little structured upon emergence (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2009) or that become disputed when a new issue emerges contesting or stigmatizing an established field (Mair & Hehenberger, 2014; Siltaoja et al., 2020) or when previously separated populations collaborate to generate new meanings and practices (Furnari, 2014; Hoffman, 1999).

Research on boundary work has recently been the object of an increased attention (Cartel et al., 2019; Grodal, 2018; Hampel et al., 2017; Lindberg et al., 2017). A fine-grained understanding of boundary work is important as different types of

work influence field dynamics by including specific actors and inducing collaboration among them while excluding others. These patterns of inclusion and exclusion, or "integration and differentiation" (Langley et al., 2019, p. 710), eventually impact meanings, practices and power relations within the field. As various populations are differently positioned within a field and identify differently with a field, they also differ in their relationship to boundaries and in the boundary work they undertake (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010).

Challengers, newcomers and outsiders – that is, excluded or less privileged groups occupying a lower social position and having access to less resources – likely follow patterns of integration and use boundaries to promote collaboration with other groups. Their broad aim is to endogenously change the field's system of privileges. They can blur, contest, breach, break or disrupt boundaries in order to expand the field, grow its membership, and eventually get greater control over new or existing areas (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005). They can also downplay boundaries in order to connect and construct coalitions with incumbent organizations or outside developments and thereby gain access to a higher social position and modify resources' distribution in their favor (Langley et al., 2019; Lawrence, 2004). When strategically attempting to change boundaries, these groups are usually portrayed as social movements (Benford & Snow, 2000; Rao et al., 2000), as institutional entrepreneurs (Maguire et al., 2004) or innovators (Hargadon & Douglas, 2001).

Strategies developed by challenger populations and newcomers are likely to be perceived as a threat by incumbent populations who benefit from the field's symbolic and social boundaries and will directly be impacted by any change in existing boundaries (Maguire & Hardy, 2009; Zietsma et al., 2017). Therefore, incumbent populations will likely rely on their powerful position in the field to follow patterns of differentiation. Their broad aim is to ensure field stability by defending the field's status quo, reproducing the system that privileges them as well as protecting their autonomy and control over resources (Langley et al., 2019).

They can defend, reinforce, bolster or close boundaries by sharpening the field's collective identity and heighten field members awareness of boundaries (Lindberg et al., 2017). They can also establish, construct, create or restore (new) boundaries in order to contract the field and better define themselves as distinct along central characteristics. They make the field's symbolic boundary stronger and enduring. Characteristics that organizational actors need to comply with in order to claim membership are specific, highly formalized and clearly observable. As surveillance

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and awareness of membership is extensive, it will be more difficult for organizational actors to negotiate and signal their membership at face value in order to access field's resources. Distinction between field members and non-members is sharp and prevents the entry of disparate new actors (Lawrence, 2004). While shared meanings and practices underpin a field's symbolic boundary, a strong symbolic boundary in turn helps enforce and maintain these shared meanings and practices, which further implements a strong social boundary (Grodal, 2018).

However, scholars have shown that boundaries cannot be too rigid at the risk of completely isolating the field from its broader environment and preventing its adaptation to changes in this environment (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005). If field members' meanings and practices become too narrowly defined, the field may become isolated and lose its external legitimacy and support. This may lead to entropy and create pressure for change by outsiders (Dover & Lawrence, 2010; Zucker, 1988). Aggressive struggles between insiders and outsiders may cause radical shifts in the field (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). On the other hand, a too weak symbolic boundary implies that field's characteristics are multiple and ambiguous (Lawrence, 2004).Various organizational actors – distant from or even at odds with field's meanings and practices – can claim field membership, develop alternative understandings of the field, its principles of categorization and hierarchy of social positions in order to get access to its resources (Zietsma et al., 2017).

As a consequence, there appears to be a strategic tension inherent in field boundaries between differentiation and integration (Langley et al., 2019). While a certain degree of impermeability may help the field form and settle, a certain degree of permeability is useful to enable collaborative engagement with outsiders, allow incremental changes and help the field remain connected with its broader environment (Lok & De Rond, 2013; Mikes, 2011). Therefore, in between the extreme positions of differentiation and integration, scholars increasingly highlight "the fluidity of boundaries and the never-ending work done in relation to those boundaries" (Lindberg et al., 2017, p. 82).

Seemingly opposite strategies may coexist, feed each other and have various outcomes. For example, a conservative strategy designed by incumbent populations to defend a boundary is likely to be countered with a strategy designed by challenger populations to disrupt that same boundary (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). Also, a same population can successively undertake different kinds of boundary work by first enlarging its field boundaries and later contracting them (Grodal,

2018). Finally, actors within a same population may simultaneously undertake opposing types of work on different boundaries (Langley et al., 2019). This is the case in "interstitial" (Furnari, 2014) or "experimental" (Cartel et al., 2019; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010) spaces.

To build these spaces, field members – usually from incumbent populations – rely on what Langley and colleagues term (2019) "configurational boundary work" which combines patterns of differentiation and integration. Boundaries are (temporarily) reshaped to make them porous for some actors and hermetic for others. Previously separated groups of actors are brought together as incumbents span boundaries and create bridges in order to connect with challengers, newcomers and outsiders advocating for innovative and alternative practices, while other groups are prevented from joining which ensures reproduction of power relationships. Within specific spaces, new practices can be experimented and later diffused to the whole field in order to potentially induce incremental changes. In case the experimentation fails, connection with newcomers may appear inconsequential, as the formal field boundaries have been kept intact (Zietsma et al., 2017).

As a result, newcomers are not necessarily perceived as a threat – rather, they may be seen as an opportunity to bring connections with the broader environment and introduce innovations in the field (Wry et al., 2011). Similarly, incumbent populations are not necessarily status quo defenders, they can themselves act as institutional entrepreneurs and be progressive forces who negotiate boundaries with challengers, newcomers or outsiders. Doing so they endogenously bring change into their field. They appear to be more likely to do so when changes end up reinforcing their already privileged position (Gawer & Phillips, 2013; Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006; Greenwood et al., 2002). As such, innovative practices introduced at the fringes of the field may be adopted and legitimized by incumbent organizations (Leblebici et al., 1991) or incumbents may coopt newcomers and re-frame an initially radical change into a more incremental one (van Wijk et al., 2013).

Whatever the outcome – incumbents defending and maintaining their field boundaries, newcomers managing to challenge the institutionalized practices or both groups reaching a compromise – struggles over boundaries are usually portrayed as temporary (Hensmans, 2003). They last until ambiguity within the field lowers – that is, the field either decay because its boundaries become too

blurred or (re-)settle because one interpretation of the issue at stake becomes dominant and provides clarity of meanings and practices (Hehenberger et al., 2019; Leibel et al., 2018) as well as prompts elaboration of institutional infrastructures (Furnari, 2014; Zietsma et al., 2017).

Yet, researchers have recently shown that a third path is possible and that ambiguity may become persistent (Chliova, Mair, & Vernis, 2020). This is likely to occur within fragmented issue field, when previously unconnected or loosely-connected populations interact, various newcomers opportunistically pursue affiliation and resource providers integrate the coexistence of divergent frames.

Although studies show the complex, dynamic and iterative nature of boundary work performed by populations with diverging interests, they have tended to neglect the possible heterogeneity of boundary work within a given population (Hampel et al., 2017). For example, Zietsma & Lawrence (2010) examined the interplay between boundary work and practice work undertaken by different incumbent and challenger populations in the British Columbia forestry field (forestry companies, environmentalists and government officials), yet they did not consider the possible differences among organizations within a same population. Similarly, Grodal (2018) showed how, in the emerging field of nanotechnology, various core (futurist and government officials) and peripheral populations (service providers, entrepreneurs and scientists) strategically manipulated the field's symbolic and social boundaries. While she emphasized the possibility for core populations to shift their boundary work strategies over time, her study depicted both incumbents and challengers as relatively homogeneous populations of actors converging to erode or strengthen the field boundaries.

Yet, as incumbents may have different strategies with regard to the structuration of their field, they may also diverge with regard to field boundaries (see Chapter I). Within a same population, given organizations may view potential newcomers as a threat while others see them as an opportunity, therefore leading to different boundary work strategies. Surprisingly, little work has examined such heterogeneity within populations and the resulting coexistence of isolating and connecting strategies. Little is known regarding how these strategies interact and ultimately impact the field's symbolic and social boundaries and the overall configuration of the field.

In this regard, we suggest that fragmented issue fields offer particularly relevant sites. Indeed, within fragmented issue fields, symbolic and social boundaries are prone to permeability and likely to be disputed both by different populations and within each population (Zietsma et al., 2017). The co-existence of multiple and divergent interpretations of the issue at stake and frames of actions creates a highly dynamic environment characterized by ambiguous boundaries (Langley et al., 2019; Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005). Although actors may agree to advance a given issue, they are likely to disagree on how to do so (Furnari, 2018), leading them to embrace heterogeneous and disorganized boundary work strategies (Hoffman, 1999; Rao et al., 2000). On one hand, organizations may be tempted to follow an "affiliation" strategy, connecting the field to its broader environment in order to attract newcomers and form a critical mass around the issue. On the other hand, organizations may want to remain cautious not to open the field too broadly and to retain certain control over it, thereby opting for a "discriminating" strategy (Furnari, 2018; B. H. Lee et al., 2017).

In brief, both the conditions underlying the diversity of boundary work within a given population, and the interactions between these strategies, are understudied while particularly salient within fragmented issue fields. Accordingly, we ask the following research questions: *how do incumbent organizations within a given population diverge in the ways in which they define symbolic and social boundaries of an issue field, and how do these definition strategies interact to shape these boundaries?*

3   Methods

To address our research question, we apply a particular inside-out research approach, rely on a qualitative data collection and a variant of grounded theory, and examine the boundary work performed by incumbent organizations within the field of philanthropy in Belgium. Belgian philanthropy can be characterized as a fragmented issue field. More specifically, we focus on a particular episode of contention within the field which has been precipitated by the arrival of platform-based newcomers. Hereunder we depict our empirical context, describe our methodological approach, and specify our involvement in Belgian philanthropy.

3.1 Empirical context

Philanthropy can be characterized as an issue field (Zietsma et al., 2017), since it involves diverse populations of actors around the issue of orienting "private resources – treasure, time and talent – for public purposes" (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016b, p. 7). Some of these actors are more central to the field, such as resource-providing organizations (e.g., foundations) (Hwang & Powell, 2009; Jung et al., 2018; Mernier, 2017), while others are more aloof and connected to other related fields, such as corporate social responsibility and corporate philanthropy departments (Gautier & Pache, 2015; Reinecke & Ansari, 2016). As what counts as private resources and public purposes vary widely over time and across culture, political and economic context (Barman, 2017), each population of actors gravitating more or less closer to philanthropy has its own interpretation of the issue at stake. Therefore, meanings and practices of philanthropy are regularly debated, which makes it an "essentially contested and concept" (Daly, 2012) and which makes the field's symbolic and social boundaries complicated to discern and open to contestation (von Schnurbein et al., 2021).

Furthermore, in Belgium, the field of philanthropy is fragmented, as it comprises few elaborated and coherent meaning, operational and relational mechanisms that enable field members to develop a collective identity, regulate inner behaviors and interactions and portray a recognizable outward image of the field (Hinings et al., 2017; Leibel et al., 2018; Wiepking et al., 2021). This fragmentation is to be related to the flexibility of the legal framework regulating the field, to the strong Welfare state tradition of the country and to its weak philanthropic culture (Mernier, 2017; Vandenbulke, 2016).

As explained below, the fragmented condition of the Belgian field of philanthropy was judged problematic by many of its members who advocated for a renewal. Among these members were notably the field incumbents – that is, the resource-providing organizations who possess the private resources to be allocated to public purposes and the collective interest organizations who have the instrumental role to outwardly represent the field to its broader environment. Given the issue-based and fragmented characteristics of Belgian philanthropy and its incumbents' call for renewal, the field offered a particularly relevant setting to explore different types of boundary work processes by incumbent organizations.

Recently, following the development of new technologies, technology-enabled intermediaries emerged at the fringes of the field of philanthropy (Bernholz, 2016). Among these intermediaries were social-mission platforms, such as crowdfunding, -timing and – sourcing platforms (Logue & Grimes, 2020). These platform-based newcomers emerged in the wake of common diagnosed failures in how private resources are used for public purposes. Notably, academics and practitioners point out the lack of collaboration between philanthropic organizations and other stakeholders (public bodies, for-profit businesses) concerned with a given societal issues (Barth, Cruz Ferreira, & Miguel, 2018; Ferraro et al., 2015; The Participatory Grantmaking Collective, 2020), the lack of (online) transparency in how financial means are allocated and used by resource-providing and -seeking organizations (Becker, 2018; A. Powell et al., 2019), as well as the increased marketization of public good by public bodies and philanthropic organizations giving priority to performance management and impact measurement (Ashoka, 2020; Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Mosley, 2020). Social-mission platforms thus positioned themselves as the missing intermediary mechanisms to connect the various societal stakeholders, to provide them with operational support and to involve and boost communities around social causes (Bernholz et al., 2010).

Belgium did not escape this technological trend. Yet, although social-mission platforms offered new ways of carrying private resources along the philanthropic chain from resource-providing organizations and individuals to resource-seeking organizations addressing societal issues, these platform-based newcomers did not specifically challenge traditional philanthropy and have for most of them not claimed field membership. Newcomers arose in a disparate, uncoordinated and isolated manner and were more akin to "free electrons" (Bernholz, 2016; Xhauflair et al., 2018). Still, they were framed as having the potential to renew philanthropy (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016a).

Among the various social-mission platforms emerging in Belgium, a few examples included: Money&More which goal was to promote social-purpose projects by enabling them to find various types of supports; Time2Give which was a volunteer matching platform connecting citizens but also corporations and schools with social-purpose organizations to fulfill volunteering missions; and SolyNet which was a social crowdfunding platform enabling project leaders to find the financial support they needed by raising money from citizens but also from public and private funders through matchfunding techniques.

Interestingly, in the face of these platform-based newcomers, the Belgian population of incumbent organizations did not present a united front. Among incumbents, we observed two opposing strategies regarding newcomers: an affiliating strategy and a discriminating counterstrategy. While newcomers hardly tried to access the field's resources, affiliators – recognizing newcomers' added value to renew philanthropy – proactively attempted to include them into the field. Examples of incumbents adopting an affiliating strategy included: The Big Foundation and The Nextdoor Bank which commissioned the University Chair in Philanthropy and Social Investment (to which the first author belongs) to conduct a study on newcomers and organized dedicated events; or The Citizenship Foundation which closely collaborated with SolyNet in the framework of its support-giving programs.

This proactive affiliation gave rise to a counter discriminating strategy on the part of other incumbents reluctant to open the field's boundaries. Discriminators included, for example, The Volunteering Center which refused to collaborate with Time2Give and SkillUp or The Family Foundation and The YouthPower Foundation which explicitly questioned newcomers' practices. The following timeline describes some key events demarcating the emergence of and interactions between these strategies from 2016 to 2021.

Figure 4 – Timeline of events and affiliating and discriminating strategies

Before 2016	No philanthropic resources for newcomers.			
October 2016	Study by two incumbents (The Big Foundation and The Nextdoor Bank) on newcomer's potential to renew philanthropy, which *initiated their affiliating strategy*.			
January 2017	**Start of our fieldwork**			
April-May 2017	Events *Philanthropy works!* (Events 1 and 2) with dedicated sessions on newcomers. First contestations of newcomers by *incumbents developing a discriminating strategy*.	*AFFILIATING STRATEGY*	*DISCRIMINATING STRATEGY*	
October 2017	Focus group co-organized by The Nextdoor Bank and the University Chair to gather newcomers, who initially did not know each other. Afterwards, several of them met again.			
End 2017	The Big Foundation contacted platform-based newcomers (e.g., Biz4Good and GivingWhizz) to help them develop.			
Beginning 2018	The Big Foundation created a fund to host a newcomer (HelpPooling) for the first time. Two newcomers met via The Big Foundation and formed Time2Give.			
May 2018	The Big Foundation asked The Volunteering Center to collaborate with Time2Give, but The Volunteering Center refused.			
October 2018	Event *Philanthropy & Platforms* (Event 3) to present the study on newcomers. Contestations of newcomers by discriminators.			
March 2019	Event *Philanthropy & Society* (Event 6) organized by The Association on philanthropy, its evolution and challenges, and gathering several incumbents.			
May 2019	Event *YouthProject* (Event 7) organized by The Citizenship Foundation and after which it initiated matchfunding with SolyNet.			
June 2019	First call for project dedicated to newcomers by The Big Foundation (renewed in 2020). The Volunteering Center hoped some newcomers would not get financial resources through this call.			
January 2020	New coordinator at The Association who wanted to know more about newcomers.			*SOFTENING OF DISCRIMINATORS*
Beginning 2020	The YouthPower Foundation met with AdvertRaising.			
April 2020	The Citizenship and The Big foundations financially supported SolyNet. The Volunteering Center displayed several newcomers on its Facebook Page.			
December 2020	The Transformative Foundation financially supported AdvertRaising.			
2020-2021	New edition of event *Philanthropy works!* displaying newcomers (The Big Foundation, Document 23), but cancelled due to Covid-19.			

3.2 Data collection

Our research field started in October 2016 with two incumbent organizations (The Big Foundation and the Nextdoor Bank) commissioning the first author to conduct a study on social-mission platforms created by young people. These incumbent organizations assumed that youth creating these platforms were bringing innovative practices in philanthropy. Before commissioning the study, The Big Foundation had already identified some of these social-mission platforms. The objective of the study was to meet with the founders of the identified platforms as well as to find others in order to better understand who they were and what their platform's objectives and specificities were regarding philanthropy. Given the first author's position as a PhD researcher within the University Chair in Philanthropy and Social Investment and her conduct of the commissioned study, she occupied a particular insider-outsider position. This position gave data collection and analysis a particular direction. Through the study, she was deeply embedded into the research field, and got access to insiders' meetings (The Nextdoor Bank, Document 2) and the very first thoughts of incumbent organizations regarding platform-based newcomers (Langley & Klag, 2019).

In the framework of the commissioned study, we met with seven founders of social-mission platforms between March and July 2017. In October 2017, we also conducted a focus group co-organized with The Nextdoor Bank and gathering six of these social-mission platforms. Finally, in October 2018, we published a report (Xhauflair et al., 2018) presenting the results of the study and gave an outline of these results during a public event (Event 3) co-organized by The Nextdoor Bank and The Big Foundation and gathering various members of the field of philanthropy. During this event, founders of platforms presented their project on stage and others attended in the audience.

As we met with platform-based newcomers during this study and as these newcomers became increasingly visible through publication and events related to the study and to philanthropy at large, we progressively saw the individual responses of incumbent organizations regarding these newcomers. We started to witness two groups forming: the affiliators and the discriminators. Affiliators were the incumbent organizations who first commissioned the study and others (e.g., The Citizenship Foundation) who followed their lead in welcoming social-mission platforms into philanthropy. Discriminators were incumbent organizations who directly questioned newcomers, were reluctant to welcome them and explicitly

separated social-mission platforms from philanthropy. In order to further document these two groups, their understanding of the philanthropic field, their discourses and actions regarding newcomers' emergence, we rely on three qualitative data sources (interviews, observations, documents) (Rouse & Spencer, 2016). Table 2.3.3. summarizes our data collection for this chapter.

We leveraged the insider position of the first author to access and collect data within incumbent philanthropic organizations rather easily and directly. Our main source of data are semi-structured interviews with incumbent organizations as well as with newcomers. We refer to each interviewee with a code name in order to preserve their anonymity. All interviews were taped and transcribed. On average, they lasted 90 minutes, with the longest lasting more than 120 minutes and the shortest lasting 45 minutes. Between 2018 and 2019, we conducted a first wave of 17 interviews with 14 incumbent organizations. These incumbents comprised 11 resource-providing organizations and 3 collective interest organizations. Within some organizations, we conducted two or three interviews with different people. Philanthropy being not only related to money giving, but also to time and skills giving (Jung et al., 2016), we met with collective organizations extending beyond grantmaking and including volunteering and consultancy.

For this first wave of interviews, incumbent organizations were identified through a snowball technique. We interviewed the incumbent organizations who commissioned the study on social-mission platforms as well as the philanthropic organizations who attended the event organized in October 2018. At the end of each interview, we asked who else we could meet to have a similar discussion regarding the philanthropic field and newcomers. More specifically, incumbent organizations were asked about how they understood and defined philanthropy, who (according to them) the actors of the Belgian philanthropic field were, how they conducted their philanthropic actions and what challenges they encountered doing so, what recent evolutions they witnessed in the field, and whether they had seen the arrival of social-mission platforms as well as what their opinion was about these platforms. This snowball technique and these interviews allowed us to identify field membership, pinpoint the main events in philanthropy's evolution and regarding the arrival of newcomers, and further distinguish affiliators and discriminators, their discourses, contestations and actions.

Moreover, the first author's insider access allowed us to collect backstage information, which gave more nuances to data collected. Incumbent organizations usually directed us toward others who shared their opinions on the field and newcomers. For example, The Transformative Foundation advised us to meet with The Family Foundation and both proved to be discriminating toward newcomers.

Overlapping with this wave of interviews, in 2019 we conducted interviews with 7 newcomers who were directly involved with incumbent organizations. Three out of these seven newcomers had already been met during the commissioned study and were part of the focus group organized in October 2017. The four others were identified through interviews with incumbent organizations. Interviews with newcomers aimed to complement incumbents' point of view, to better understand newcomer's role in incumbents' affiliating and discriminating strategies, and to start assessing strategies' outcomes, as newcomers reacted by affiliating themselves to or distancing themselves from philanthropy.

In addition, meeting with newcomers was useful to document their relationship to philanthropy before some incumbent organizations took a proactive interest in them. Around 2016 and before, some newcomers attempted to access the field's financial resources through applications to calls for proposals, but in vain. No resource-providing organizations offered material or nonmaterial resources to newcomers at the time. Newcomers' initial interaction with the field and its members was thus brief and unsuccessful. Most of all, newcomers' goal was not to challenge and negotiate philanthropic meanings and practices with incumbent organizations. Newcomers did not try to access field's resources again until some incumbent organizations proactively affiliated them to philanthropy and extended their support mechanisms to include newcomers, which was an ongoing process at the end of our fieldwork.

Between 2020 and 2021, we conducted a follow-up wave of 7 interviews with 7 incumbent organizations. These follow-up interviews allowed us to obtain an up-to-date picture of the field and of the interactions among incumbents as well as between incumbents and newcomers. Our objective was to confirm, fine-tune and deepen our analysis based on the first wave of interviews. We contacted 7 (out of 14) incumbent organizations who were the most involved with newcomers during 2018 and 2019. Six organizations (4 resource-providing organizations and 2 collective interest organizations) answered positively to our request to conduct a follow-up interview. To these six interviews, we added one interview with a

collective interest organization with which we did not meet during our first wave of interviews, but which was brought to our attention during the second wave of interviews.

As the arrival of social-mission platforms is an ongoing phenomenon, we interviewed incumbents and newcomers at the time events and interactions occurred in the field. While this allows us to avoid retrospective bias to which interviews can be subjected (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010), this also prevents us, to a certain extent, from taking much distance from our research phenomenon in order to assess the longer-term effects of platform-based newcomers' arrival into the Belgian field of philanthropy.

We complemented interview data with observations during five events organized by incumbent organizations between 2017 and 2019. These observations allowed us to be more deeply involved in Belgian philanthropy and to gain a more fine-grained understanding of the emerging phenomenon we studied. Events observations are of particular importance when conducting field-level analysis, as previous research have shown that "by paying attention to such events, a researcher can easily witness a field in action" (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017, p. 60). In other words, events materialize the social construction of the field as they offer stakeholders a space to debate their shared meanings and practices which are essential for a field to form and evolve (Lampel & Meyer, 2008; Leibel et al., 2018; Schüssler, Rüling, & Wittneben, 2014). Indeed, we used events as windows to directly observe interactions among field members and between field members and newcomers (Garud, 2008; Mair & Hehenberger, 2014).

Shortly after each event we recorded our observations, impressions, and information from informal talks through detailed field notes. As we paid specific attention to incumbents' behaviors toward newcomers, to the comments and questions they issued regarding newcomers, as well as the topics they discussed among them, we refined our understanding of field membership and reflected on as well as added to insights obtain during interviews. One event was organized by a collective interest organization and gathering incumbent organizations to discuss the state of philanthropy (Event 6), its evolutions and challenges. During four events, newcomers were either active participants presenting their projects on stage or passive visitors. During two out of five events, the first author played an active role. During an event organized in 2017 by the Big Foundation (Event 1), she presented preliminary insights of the commissioned study. And during the event

co-organized in October 2018 by The Big Foundation and The Nextdoor Bank (Event 3), she presented the study as a whole.

The first author's involvement in these two events, as well as in the co-organization of the focus group with the Nextdoor Bank, played a particular role in the analyzing and theorizing process, as it undoubtedly helped create interorganizational interactions between and among incumbents and newcomers as well as boundaries of the field. The publication and presentation of the commissioned study may have served to insert labels in incumbent philanthropic actors' discourses and influenced their opinion. As such, while the insider position had its benefits in terms of data collection, it also had its limitations. These limitations are further addressed at the end of the dissertation.

Finally, we included three types of archival documents in our data collection. First, we aggregated minutes from meetings with The Big Foundation and The Nextdoor Bank (Document 2) during the conduct of the commissioned study and emails exchanged with various incumbents and newcomers from 2017 to 2021. Second, for each of the five events attended, we obtained supporting data such as programs, reports and lists of participants. Third, we collected publicly available documents and information from websites and social medias of both incumbents and newcomers interviewed as well as publications issued by incumbents (such as annual reports and analyses on and around philanthropy). Archival documents helped us triangulate findings which emerged from analysis of interviews and observations (Rouse & Spencer, 2016). Table 2.4. in appendices lists documents and their code.

Table 2.3.3. – Data used for Chapter III

Events observations				
#1	Philanthropy works! (Antwerp)	Public	Active participation	27/04/2017
#3	Philanthropy & Platforms	Public	Active participation	08/10/2018
#4	Transformative philanthropy	Public	Visitor	10/12/2018
#6	Philanthropy & Society	Public	Visitor	28/03/2019
#7	YouthProject	Public	Visitor	03/05/2019
Interviews with incumbents				
#1	The Big Foundation	Resource-provider	Interview 1	19/11/2018
#2			Interview 2	23/11/2018
#3			Interview 3	26/11/2018
#4			Interview 4	23/10/2020
#5	The Transformative Foundation	Resource-provider	Interview 1	17/12/2018
#6			Interview 2	19/01/2019
#7			Interview 3	19/03/2021
#8	The Family Foundation	Resource-provider	Interview 1	21/01/2019
#9	Well-Being Coop	Resource-provider	Interview 1	12/02/2019
#10	The YouthPower Foundation	Resource-provider	Interview 1	15/11/2018
#11			Interview 2	29/03/2021
#12	The Job4All Foundation	Resource-provider	Interview 1	20/08/2019
#13	The Citizenship Foundation	Resource-provider	Interview 1	17/07/2019
#14			Interview 2	23/04/2021
#15	The Oldest Fund	Resource-provider	Interview 1	21/03/2019
#16	Holism&Harmony	Resource-provider	Interview 1	20/11/2019
#17	GlobalizAid	Resource-provider	Interview 1	30/09/2019
#18	The Nextdoor Bank	Resource-provider	Interview 1	07/11/2018
#19	The Association	Collective interest organization	Interview 1	07/12/2018
#20			Interview 2	25/03/2021
#21	The Volunteering Center	Collective interest organizations	Interview 1	07/08/2019
#22			Interview 2	07/04/2021
#23	Fund4Impact	Collective interest organization	Interview 1	14/11/2018
#24	The Fundraising Center	Collective interest organization	Interview 1	02/04/2021
Interviews with newcomers				
#1	Biz4Good	Social-mission platform	Interview 2	08/10/2019
#2	Time2Give	Social-mission platform	Interview 2	03/10/2019
#3	SolyNet	Social-mission platform	Interview 1	09/09/2019
#4	HelpPooling	Social-mission platform	Interview 1	15/11/2019
#5	GivingWhizz	Social-mission platform	Interview 2	27/09/2019
#6	Colibris Booster	Social-mission platform	Interview 1	05/09/2019
#7	People Activator	Social-mission platform	Interview 1	25/09/2019
Focus group				
#1	Organized with the Nextdoor Bank	Animator	Biz4Good, Money&More SkillUp, GivingWhizz LinkedUp, Smile&Pick	09/10/2017

3.3   Data analysis

We conducted a qualitative analysis following a grounded theory approach (Gioia et al., 2012; Glaser & Strauss, 2008) and an abductive reasoning (Sætre & Van de Ven, 2021; Timmermans & Tavory, 2012) with the aim of extending theory. Our analytic process was thus an iterative one: we went back and forth between our empirical data collection, our analysis and extant theoretical constructs. Furthermore, in order to reduce potential insider bias, both authors coded the data. As the second author is not linked to the University Chair in Philanthropy and Social Investment nor to the commissioned study, he can be regarded as a more neutral observer. Contrasting coding from an insider-oriented perspective and from an outsider perspective helped validate and theorize the findings. We proceeded in four steps.

In step one, we started by openly coding all the data (semi-structured interviews, events observations and archival documents) for each incumbent organization. During this open coding, we sorted out data into large and meaningful analytic categories to help us subsequently compare each organization's discourses and actions. These analytic categories were for example *"definition of philanthropy"*, *"interaction with newcomers"*, *"interaction among incumbents"*. Out of this open coding, first order codes emerged within each category which allowed us to see how incumbents' actions regarding the field and newcomers grouped together or differentiated from one another. Subsequently, we categorized incumbent organizations into two groups, as displaying either an inclusive, affiliating strategy or an exclusive, discriminating strategy. We then fine-tuned our first order codes: for each first order code emerging within one strategy, we looked for its counterpart in the other strategy.

For example, the "affiliating" first order codes *"putting a philanthropic label on newcomers"* or *"acting as intermediary between newcomers and other partners"* were echoed by the "discriminating" codes *"putting a label on newcomers outside philanthropy"* and *"refusing direct collaboration with newcomers"*. Analyzing incumbent organization's actions individually and then comparing them allowed us to remain close to the data while looking for parallels between the affiliation and discrimination strategies. These patterns allowed us to identify the dialectical and

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disputed nature of boundary work among incumbent organizations (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010).

In step two, we grouped first order codes into second order codes, using axial coding. We compared how incumbent organizations from each strategy can be distinguished from each other along analytical categories. For example, both affiliators and discriminators defined philanthropy, but they did it differently. As such, a second order code for affiliators is *"maintaining some plasticity in the definition of philanthropy"*. In reaction, a second order code for discriminators is *"reclaiming a precise definition of philanthropy"*. As such, second order codes showed evidence of boundary work undertaken by incumbent organizations (Gieryn, 1983; Langley et al., 2019).

By grouping first order codes into second order codes, we identified two levels of boundary work. Incumbent organizations either undertake direct actions at the field level, such as *"connecting newcomers as field members"*, or undertake indirect actions at their organizational level – which further indirectly impacts field-level dynamics – such as *"claiming incumbent organizations' innovative potential"*. In addition, we coded data related to newcomers in the light of second order codes and specifically searched for newcomers' reactions to incumbents' boundary work.

In a third step of abstraction and based on second order codes, we sought how field boundaries were affected by affiliators and discriminators' boundary work (Kreiner, 2016). To do so, we went back and forth between our data analysis and extant literature on fields, boundaries and boundary work (Grodal, 2018; Lamont & Molnár, 2002; Zietsma et al., 2017). Boundary work undertaken by affiliators and discriminators affected both the field's symbolic and social boundaries. While affiliators *"flexibilized the symbolic boundary"* and *"aligned the social boundary"* on such flexible stance, discriminators counteracted by *"strengthening the symbolic boundary"* and *"maintaining the social boundary"*. Overall, Steps 1 to 3 allowed us to gain a fine-grained understanding of each strategy. Table 8.1. and 8.2. respectively show our coding process for the affiliating and the discriminating strategies.

Finally, in a fourth step, we coded the data around the interaction between the affiliating and discriminating strategies. Based on the data collected during our second wave of interviews, we started observing and analyzing the interaction between the two strategies and explored how they influenced each other. We coded each new interview using the first order codes of the affiliating and discriminating

strategies as a framework. While the affiliating strategy remained relatively stable, we observed that the discriminating strategy softened and gradually converged with the affiliating strategy. This evolution occurred to varying degrees. For certain issues, discriminators slightly adjusted their boundary work. For example, while discriminators first *"put a label on newcomers outside philanthropy"*, they later *"recognized the borderline identity of certain newcomers"*. Conversely, for other issues, discriminators completely adopted affiliators' boundary work. For example, while discriminators first *"refused direct collaborations with newcomers"*, they later *"acted as intermediaries between certain newcomers and other field members"*, exactly as affiliators did from the start.

Next, we grouped the new first order codes depicting discriminators' evolution into second order codes. Doing so, we followed the second order codes of the initial discriminating strategy to illustrate the evolution. For example, while discriminators first exclusively *"claimed incumbent organizations' innovative potential"*, they later *"recognized certain newcomers' inspirational potential"*. Finally, we analyzed how this evolution in discriminators' boundary work affected symbolic and social boundaries by going back and forth between our analysis and literature again. While the discriminating strategy initially strengthened the field's symbolic boundary and maintained its social boundary, discriminators later *"softened their symbolic boundary's reinforcement"* and *"partially extended the field's social boundary"*. Table 8.3. shows the coding process of this fourth analytic step.

In the next section we document and analyze the different strategies in order to better understand the different types of boundary work performed by incumbent organizations in an issue field and their combined influence on field boundaries. Quotes mostly from the first wave (2018-2019) of interviews are used to illustrate the affiliating and discriminating strategies, while quotes from the second wave (2020-2021) of interviews are used to illustrate the softening of the discriminating strategy. Illustrative figures are also included in the findings section.

Table 8.1. – Coding table of the affiliating strategy

First order codes	Second order codes	Abstract dimensions	
Favoring action over definitional debates on philanthropy	Maintaining some plasticity in the definition of philanthropy	*Field level*	Flexibilizing field's symbolic boundary
Welcoming diverse and complementary means to collectively contribute to general interest			
Putting a philanthropic label on newcomers	Legitimizing newcomers as field members		
Publicly endorsing newcomers			
Making newcomers a priority in their organizational strategy	Seeking inspiration through newcomers' involvement in their organization	*Organizational level*	
Aiming to integrate newcomers into their internal governance structure			
Acting as intermediary between newcomers and other partners	Connecting newcomers as field members	*Field level*	Aligning field's social boundary
Establishing connections among newcomers			
Using newcomers' tools			
Supporting newcomers through extending internal mechanisms	Developing newcomers' capacities through organizational support mechanisms	*Organizational level*	
Integrating newcomers as partners in their already existing projects			

Table 8.2. – Coding table of the discriminating strategy

First order codes	Second order codes	Abstract dimensions	
Collectively agreeing on a clear understanding of philanthropy	Reclaiming a precise definition of philanthropy	*Field level*	Strengthening field's symbolic boundary
Emphasizing the primacy of financial means to contribute to general interest			
Putting a label on newcomers outside philanthropy	Separating newcomers from philanthropic identity		
Questioning newcomers' philanthropic nature			
Differentiating themselves from newcomers	Claiming incumbent organizations' innovative potential	*Organizational level*	
Questioning newcomers' innovative nature			
Refusing direct collaboration with newcomers	Avoiding newcomers' social connections within philanthropy	*Field level*	Maintaining field's social boundary
Isolating newcomers from incumbent organizations' support			
Embracing more professional practices to undertake philanthropic actions	Developing incumbent organizations' capacities through shared practices and collaborations	*Organizational level*	
Developing collaborations among incumbent organizations to offer a collective philanthropic support			

Table 8.3. – Coding table of the softening discriminating strategy

First order codes / Affiliators	First order codes / Discriminators	Second order codes Discriminators	Abstract dimensions Discriminators	
Remaining open to definitional debate	Reconsidering their definition of philanthropy	Recognizing the evolving nature of philanthropy	*Field level*	Softening symbolic boundary's reinforcement
	Considering the potential complementarity between certain newcomers and incumbent organizations			
Creating a specific label for newcomers	Differentiating among newcomers	**Selectively endorsing newcomers**		
	Recognizing the borderline identity of certain newcomers			
Strengthening each other's philanthropic action	Aiming to integrate certain newcomers to their internal governance structure	Recognizing certain newcomers' inspirational potential	*Organizational level*	
	Identifying common ground with certain newcomers			
	Acting as intermediaries between certain newcomers and other field members	Selectively connecting newcomers with other field members	*Field level*	Partially extending the field's social boundary
	Accepting certain newcomers' connections to incumbent organizations' support			
Further specifying use of newcomers' tools	Using certain newcomers' tools	Selectively supporting newcomers	*Organizational level*	
	Providing certain newcomers with financial help			

4   Findings

"Today, our responsibility is different from what it once was when public funds were abundant. When there was enough money to subsidize a lot of societal missions, philanthropic organizations only worked at their own level. But today public governments cannot fulfill these missions anymore. And society has become more complex, societal challenges are more acute. Governments cannot face these challenges anymore. And so, what happens? Philanthropy goes aboard and takes on several roles and responsibilities."

(The YouthPower Foundation, Interview 1)

4.1   Incumbents' common diagnosis

Before exploring the different strategies of incumbents with regard to newcomers, it is worth noting that these actors converge on the general diagnosis of the field. Fearing to simply become a *"patch"* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 1) or a *"plaster"* (Holism&Harmony, Interview 1), covering the voids left by public governments, philanthropic resource-providing organizations felt the urge to reflect on the particular role of philanthropy in today's society and especially in Belgium. Doing so, incumbent organizations framed a common diagnosis, identifying three interrelated philanthropic failures which impaired effectiveness in addressing current social and environmental issues.

First, they acknowledged that philanthropic foundations were the *"least democratic"* (GlobalizAid, Interview 1) – and could even tend toward plutocracy – as they had no electors, no shareholders, and no general assembly to be accountable to. Consequently, they faced the risk of locking themselves in their *"ivory tower"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 1), in *"a sort of entre soi"* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2) and might lose touch with societal reality. Their philanthropic action might not always be appropriate and might not be endorsed by the communities which it was intended to help. Further, they might fail to renew themselves and *"create philanthropic tools better suited to society's needs"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 3). Incumbent organizations emphasized their need to stay close to the field actors they supported, to stay alert, connected and informed

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Second and along the same lines, incumbents stressed the need to break down the barriers separating the different philanthropic and societal actors. The individualistic position that many field members adopted out of *"fear of losing their anonymity"* (The YouthPower Foundation, Interview 1) or *"pride of supporting a project alone"* (Well-Being Coop, Interview 1) diminished the exchanges of best practices and the pooling of knowledge. As such, incumbents, thirdly and finally, recognized that "*one of the biggest challenges for philanthropy in Belgium was the professionalization of the sector*" (GlobalizAid, Interview 1). They argued that there were enough resources to meet current societal needs, but as philanthropy was not structured and professional enough, these needs kept failing to be fully satisfied (notes from Event 6 *Philanthropy & Society* in 2019). Incumbents increasingly expressed their willingness to change the popular image that as long as philanthropy came from the heart it should be embraced and, instead, to promote a culture of *"effective giving"* (Funds4Impact, Interview 1).

Overall, building on this diagnosis, incumbent organizations agreed that philanthropy needed to evolve. This necessity was a recurring subject during field-configuring events (Events 1 and 2 *Philanthropy works!* and Event 6 *Philanthropy & Society*) and in their discourses and that of philanthropy observers:

> *"In philanthropy, we should always have a proactive look on how the world evolves and on what others do. Doing so, we can have a much bigger impact. Yet, we rarely have that reflex in philanthropy. On the contrary, we have the reflex to quickly go with our heart and to do what we think rather than to 'analyze the market', as we could say."* (Philanthropy observer, Interview 3)

> *"I think everybody should play its part in making the field more efficient."* (The Family Foundation, Interview 1)

Although they framed a common diagnosis regarding philanthropy's need to evolve, incumbent organizations did not offer a unified response in the face of the emergence of platform-based newcomers. This divergence regarding newcomers within the population of incumbent organizations was to be related to their divergence in the solutions they believed should be articulated to overcome the failures they identified. In other words, while incumbent organizations shared a common diagnosis regarding philanthropy's evolution, they differed in the way in which they framed newcomers' actions and adopted specific strategies in this regard.

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A first group of incumbent organizations – the affiliators – argued that philanthropy struggled to renew itself because *"it went round in circles"* and *"had got stuck with the same actors endlessly discussing the same topics"* (The Nextdoor Bank, Document 2, in 2017). In October 2016, two incumbents – The Big Foundation and The Nextdoor Bank – asked us to conduct a study on platform-based newcomers in order to proactively identify them and thoroughly document their practices. During an event they organized to publicly present the results of this study (Event 3 *Philanthropy & Platforms*, in 2018), these two incumbents pleaded for *"erasing the lines drawn around philanthropy"* (The Nextdoor Bank) and for letting other actors with other ideas enter the field. They further considered newcomers and their digital platforms as *"the sentries of evolution"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 1).

For example, during its series of events (1 and 2) *Philanthropy works!*, The Big Foundation intended to explore how to *"integrate* [newcomers'] *amazing potential in order to better define philanthropic action, better grasp what social causes to support, and optimize strategies"* and *"how new technologies will impact philanthropy and how they can contribute to a new and better philanthropy"* (The Big Foundation, Document 21). It wondered *"how* [foundations] *will manage to integrate all the possibilities offered by digital platforms but also their constrains"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 1).

> *"Philanthropy needs to move and* [newcomers] *need to serve as goads. And a foundation like ours needs to be alert so that they find their place within our organization."* (The Big Foundation, Interview 3)

Affiliators believed that digital platforms provided by newcomers could, to a certain extent, compensate for philanthropy's failures. For example, relying on platforms was expected to give a more *"local anchor"* (The Citizenship Foundation, Interview 1) to projects supported by philanthropic resource-providing organizations, as citizens could also easily get involved. The strategy adopted by this first group of incumbents toward newcomers was therefore one of proactive affiliation. They expected that combining newcomers' advantages and theirs *"will make* [them] *much stronger"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 1).

On the contrary, a second group of incumbent organizations – the discriminators – was convinced that philanthropy did not need more diversified actors to renew itself, but rather wished for more clear-cut and distinctive contours of philanthropy. While discriminators asked for renewal, they also emphasized the importance of not equating philanthropy with everything and anything and the need to maintain

the good quality of philanthropic action. In this regard, they explained that they would rather *"develop their own tools and platforms than rely on possibly unstable external input"* (The Fundraising Center, Interview 1). By putting the renewal of philanthropy in the hands of newcomers, incumbents might risk losing control of their own action or diminish its coherency in case newcomers did not share their vision of society. They feared that a nondiscriminatory welcome of technology-enabled intermediaries might end up depreciating philanthropy rather than renewing it.

> *"I think it is important to keep insisting on the nobility of giving. If we're not careful enough, we will make giving banal and we will lose aspects of quality and sustainability.* […] *Our approach is rather 'end does not always justify means'. Innovating is ok, but let's be careful to first evaluate and appreciate the innovations."* (The Fundraising Center, Interview 1)

As a consequence, witnessing the affiliators' willingness to welcome newcomers into the philanthropic field, this second group of incumbents adopted a counterstrategy of discriminating newcomers from philanthropy and emphasizing incumbents' specific features. They argued that before conducting research on newcomers, the field in itself *"deserved the spotlight"* (The Family Foundation, Interview 1), as incumbent organizations themselves had already all the necessary ingredients to overcome philanthropy's failures.

As the two strategies simultaneously co-existed within the field and as newcomers appeared to be more than a temporary trend, interactions occurred between affiliators and discriminators. In the course of these interactions, discriminators tended to reconsider their strategy and revised it to recognize the relevance of certain newcomers regarding philanthropy's evolution and to selectively affiliate them to the field. Doing so, discriminators moved closer to affiliators' strategy. In the next section, we outline the affiliating and discriminating strategies regarding newcomers, their influence on the field's symbolic and social boundaries, as well as how the discriminating strategy became reconsidered.

4.2   The strategies of incumbent organizations and their influence on the field's symbolic and social boundaries

4.2.1   The affiliating strategy

Our analysis shows that affiliators wished to deliberately **maintain some plasticity in the definition of philanthropy** by promoting a flexible as well as inclusive definition. Affiliators favorably *welcomed diverse and complementary means to contribute to general interest*. For these actors, philanthropy was more than merely the philanthropist or the donor – that is, the person or organization who had financial resources to give. Philanthropy was understood as a *"common denominator"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 2) including all donors, beneficiaries of gifts – whatever the nature of this gift (money, time, skills) – and all intermediary organizations between a donor and its final beneficiaries. If the transaction between a donor and its beneficiary did not include a financial gift but only expertise or time, then it still counted as philanthropy.

Along the same lines, affiliators *favored actions over definitional debates on philanthropy*. They emphasized that while philanthropy was broadly and commonly understood as the use of private resources to serve general interest, what qualified as private resources or as general interest should be understood in a broad and pragmatic sense. In this regard, one affiliators stated that:

> *"The cornerstone as well as the constraint is general interest. Can you define general interest? It is impossible. And it is logical because it is a social construction. It is a notion filled with content by its time, its context, by society as a whole. […] Sometimes it is obvious that it fits in general interest and sometimes it is obvious it does not. But there are a lot of situations that are grey zones and where things are evolving."* (The Big Foundation, Interview 1)

Therefore, considering that the definition of philanthropy would always be contested, affiliators did not grant much importance to designing a precise and clear one. They preferred to concentrate on the actions they could pragmatically and concretely undertake. They argued that endless definitional debates wouldn't serve general interest: *"all the preachers of philanthropy need to calm down, the most important is to actually do something"* (The Nextdoor Bank, Interview1). Moreover, according to affiliators, defining what constituted philanthropy and what did not was counterproductive as it risked excluding actors and actions which

would not perfectly fit in the definition, but which could still serve general interest. The following quote illustrates affiliators' willingness to avoid opposition:

> *"What is the point of precisely defining philanthropy and differentiating it from social entrepreneurship or from what social-mission platforms do? In the end, we all want to serve general interest. [...] If we want to advance our society, it is in the interest of everybody to be as large as possible. As such, we avoid opposition, and we work together. Otherwise, we will remain stuck on definitional debates, even though it doesn't matter."* (The Big Foundation, Interview 4)

When asked to give a definition, affiliators rather chose a broad framing of philanthropy as *"a space of freedom in democratic societies"*, *"an action at the service of general interest"*, *"the will to do something good"* (The Big Foundation, Document 8).

Two central ideas lay behind this flexible and inclusive position: prioritizing ends before means and speaking all with one voice. In other words, all means were useful to address social and environmental issues, and everyone could contribute depending on the means they had at their disposal: for example, if they were wealthy, they could create a philanthropic foundation and make financial gift to resource-seeking organizations, and if they had a lot of time, they could start volunteering. Opposing the multiple and various philanthropic actors and means or excluding certain of them – by considering that some are more valuable than others – was regarded as *"anti-philanthropic"* (The Nextdoor Bank, Interview 1) as it would amount to a weakened philanthropic action and to a lower contribution to general interest. On the contrary, for philanthropy to be efficient, the multiple and various actions needed to complement and reinforce each other. Consistent with Cunningham's words (2016) described in the general introduction of this dissertation, they compared philanthropy to *"a millefeuille with all the layers coming on top of one another and each layer is a new interesting thing"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 1).

By maintaining some plasticity in the definition of philanthropy, affiliators aimed to build a global movement of philanthropic actors and actions. Consequently, they also projected an image of openness outside the field intended to attract other actors and actions into philanthropy. Therefore, when newcomers gravitated at the periphery of the field, affiliators were in a position to symbolically include them and legitimize them as field members, as these newcomers matched the

characteristics of the plastic collective identity they forged for philanthropy. For example, affiliators invited newcomers to participate to their events on and around philanthropy (Events 1 and 2 *Philanthropy works!* in 2017 and its cancelled version in 2020 (Document 23), and Event 7 *YouthProject* in 2019). Interestingly, some newcomers shared this inclusive position:

> *"Whatever the means, we all pursue the same objective. As long as we manage to involve people and as long as we maximize our social impact, be it via Facebook, by lobbying, by doing corporate social responsibility, I am happy."* (Biz4Good, Focus Group)

Affiliators **legitimized newcomers as field members** both discursively and actively. When they referred to newcomers, these actors *put a philanthropic label on them*. They indistinctly encompassed newcomers in the global movement of private resources used for general interest:

> *"[Newcomers] do not recognize themselves in our practices. But maybe that is a good sign, and they can give another meaning to philanthropy. That would be ideal."* (The Big Foundation, Interview 1)

> *"[SolyNet] is not a classic philanthropic foundation, but it is still a sort of philanthropist."* (The Citizenship Foundation, Interview 1)

Affiliators *publicly endorsed newcomers* as field members. This public endorsement was given in several forms. Affiliators identified newcomers, contacted them and invited them to talk about their project in front of an audience interested in philanthropy. This was striking in the events *Philanthropy works!* organized by The Big Foundation and titled in an explicit way, for example: "*Philanthropy 3.0: novelty and innovation*" (2017)*,* "*The new spaces of philanthropy*" (2017) or *"Youth boosting philanthropy"* (2020)*,* (The Big Foundation, Documents 21 and 22). Newcomers were also displayed on affiliators' websites and social media. For example, The Big Foundation mentioned Time2Give on its LinkedIn Page and HelpPooling on its website (Document 2) and The Citizenship Foundation shared SolyNet's activities on its Facebook Page. As such, affiliators put a spotlight on newcomers for other field members to see them.

In addition, affiliators provided newcomers with legitimacy by giving them a sort of "approved by incumbents" label in the form of awards, logos or fiscal attests. Armed with these, newcomers could later reach other philanthropic organizations

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and made their way further into the field. Newcomers saw their affiliation to incumbent organizations as a source of legitimacy:

> *"The most important is to receive the endorsement of* [The Big Foundation]. […] *I am super happy they give me their trust. Earning the trust of such an important institution in Belgium gives you a big confidence boost."* (HelpPooling, Interview 1)

> *"*[The Big Foundation] *helped us regarding fiscal attests. I first submitted a request to the Fiscal Administration, but they rejected it right away arguing that digital platforms like us cannot deliver fiscal attests."* (SolyNet, Interview 1)

> *"We don't always know how to help* [newcomers] *but sometimes simply giving them our logo is enough. They say it legitimizes them. Fortunately,* [newcomers] *have a good image of us."* (The Big Foundation, Interview 2)

Newcomers' symbolic affiliation to philanthropy by incumbent organizations was a forcible one. Most newcomers did not think of themselves as being related to philanthropy before being identified by affiliators, encompassed in the global movement of philanthropy and publicly endorsed. After such endorsement, some newcomers started to consider themselves as part of philanthropy:

> *"Before building this platform, I didn't even know* [The Big Foundation]. *All this was completely unknown to me. I had not imagined that my platform could be considered as philanthropy.* […] *To me, philanthropy was a synonym for extreme wealth.* [...] *Now, it is not reserved to the wealthiest anymore. Everybody can do philanthropy and we need to reclaim the word."* (Biz4Good, Focus Group)

> *"I discovered philanthropy when I was contacted to participate in the research. Now, I consider myself part of philanthropy."* (Smile&Pick, notes from Event 3 *Philanthropy & Platforms* in 2018)

At their organizational level, affiliators *made newcomers a priority in their organizational strategy and aimed to integrate them in their internal governance structures*. They **sought inspiration through newcomers' involvement in their organization**. Involving newcomers in their organization enabled affiliators to question their own philanthropic practices and subsequently to adapt their practices, make them evolve and broadly innovate. For example, The Citizenship Foundation

said it was thinking about creating an *"advisory board"* which would gather some newcomers in order to guide its actions (Interview 1).

The image of openness first induced by philanthropy's plastic definition, and further strengthened by the multiple forms of newcomers' legitimization at the field level, had implications at the organizational level. By showing newcomers that they could have a place in the field and that interaction with field members was possible, affiliators were able to further attract newcomers into their own organizations. Conversely, involving newcomers into their organizations allowed affiliators to further legitimize newcomers at the field level. If newcomers were a source of inspiration to renew incumbents' organizational practices, they could also be a source of inspiration for philanthropy as a whole.

Beyond being themselves inspired, affiliators explained that the idea was to also inspire other field members:

> *"We wanted to put the spotlight on* [newcomers]. *We wanted to show that there are other ways to serve general interest than creating a nonprofit or a foundation, that digital tools can play a role. I think it has been a shock for many in the audience, they probably thought: if we still want to be around in the future, we need to start thinking about digitalization."* (The Big Foundation, Interview 2)

Ultimately, by legitimizing more and more newcomers, affiliators increased the plasticity of the field's definition. While direct actions at the field level had implications at the organizational level, indirect actions at the organizational level also impacted direct actions at the field level. This mutual interaction of direct and indirect actions contributed to flexibilize the symbolic boundary of the field of philanthropy, as what constituted philanthropy – its central and distinctive characteristics – was made increasingly heterogeneous.

Beyond symbolically legitimizing newcomers, affiliators socially **connected them as field members**. Affiliators *used newcomers' tools*. For example, The Citizenship Foundation used SolyNet's platform to allow its beneficiaries to launch a crowdfunding campaign and GivingWhizz explained that its platform was used by *"ten or fifteen funds hosted within* [The Big Foundation]*"* (Interview 2). As they used newcomers' tools, they created a bilateral connection between them and newcomers at the field level. They also *acted as intermediary between newcomers and other incumbent organizations* of philanthropy or of related fields.

For example, The Big Foundation tried to connect The Volunteering Center with Time2Give and motivated them to collaborate. The Big Foundation also enabled HelpPooling to meet several social entrepreneurs and nonprofit organizations that could be interested in using its platform:

> *"Thanks to their huge network, I met many project leaders that helped me with the management of my platform and that now use it."* (HelpPooling, Interview 1)

Additional field-level bilateral connections were thus created. Lastly, they *established connections among newcomers*:

> *"We observe, we include, and we learn. We try to connect* [newcomers] *together. We connected the Flemish founder of* [Time2Give] *to another similar platform in Wallonia because we thought: wow, these two have to meet! That's the bridge building. This is a small connection but with a huge impact, obviously.* [Time2Give] *is now active everywhere in Belgium."* (The Big Foundation, Interview 4)

When we started our study, newcomers were more akin to free electrons than to an organized movement and did not know each other. As they increasingly became connected to field members and met each other, newcomers evolved from being free electrons gravitating outside the field towards forming a new community of philanthropic actors under the impulse of affiliators. For example, some newcomers met at events organized by affiliators. After the focus group co-organized by The Nextdoor Bank and the University Chair, several newcomers met again bilaterally and discussed their respective projects and possible collaborations (e.g., Biz4Good and GivingWhizz). Some of these newcomers eventually created a consortium to exchange best practices and challenges (at the initiative of SolyNet).

Like public endorsement, these social connections had an inspirational purpose. On one hand, they told other field members that newcomers' tools were useful, that it was worth using them and even more collaborating with newcomers. On the other hand, they strengthened the image of openness toward newcomers. As they materialized newcomers' affiliation, these connections further contributed to their legitimization. They were the social materialization of the symbolic plastic definition.

Affiliators brought this idea of organizing and structuring newcomers to their organizational level, as they **developed newcomers' capacities through their organizational support mechanisms**. When newcomers first created their platforms, they did not claim field membership and hardly tried to connect with incumbent organizations to access philanthropic resources, as there was actually no resource to access. At the time (2016 and before), no support mechanisms existed for platform-based technology with a social mission. As one of the newcomers told us:

> *"Two years ago, there was no call for proposals to support digitalization or digital social economy or platform economy. Now, there is some interest, but it stays low."* (SolyNet, Interview 1)

These mechanisms were of two types. First, as affiliators took an interest in newcomers and their innovations, they *extended their internal mechanisms* for them to fit newcomers' needs. For example, they launched a call for proposals dedicated to digital developments and innovations, gave newcomers fitting legal and fiscal advice or allowed them to create a new kind of hosted fund within their organization. All these financial and structural supports already existed but they were not always accessible or suitable for newcomers. Adapting their support mechanisms for newcomers, affiliators strengthened their access to the field's resources and identification as field members.

> *"I truly believe in the model of* [HelpPooling]. *So, I told them: listen, why don't you create a hosted fund within the foundation, this will help you develop the project. This is a first for us, we had never done this before."* (The Big Foundation, Interview 2)

Second, affiliators *integrated newcomers as partners in already existing projects*. Affiliators had projects that were already conceived and in which newcomers could play a part. For example, The Citizenship Foundation included SolyNet in its program on the digital divide. SolyNet gave advice to the foundation's interested beneficiary organizations on online and offline fundraising. As such, SolyNet had the opportunity to advertise its platform to a pool of new potential users. This was another way to develop newcomers' capacities when incumbent organizations were not in a position to support them financially or structurally.

As another newcomer explained regarding its partnership with an incumbent organization:

> "Once we have a partnership with [The Big Foundation], it gives us access to thousands of other nonprofit organizations. This is visibility, this is credibility. This is a solid support for us. […] And we can really be complementary." (Time2Give, Interview 2)

Ultimately, developing newcomers' capacities could reinforce incumbents' philanthropic practices. If newcomers were empowered, they could improve their tools and develop additional innovations which, in turn, could inspire incumbents at their organizational level. Affiliators admitted that developing newcomers' capacities might be more in their own interest than in newcomers' interest:

> "Our goal is not to coopt [newcomers]' innovations. No, our goal is to learn from them in order to help them. To change us in order to better help them. […] Actually, I'm not even sure these [newcomers] always need us. At some point, I think they do. So, this is the message I try to send: 'keep on coming to inspire us and eventually we will find the best way to help you'." (The Big Foundation, Interview 2)

> "Do we catch the most recent innovations? That's a challenge! The challenge is to make sure that innovators find their way to the foundation and come get us. […] Most of the innovations I get to support or boost come from people who told us about their project. Then, I create the right box for their innovation, so that it can be supported. […] But if these innovators do not see us, then we might miss opportunities for change. (The Big Foundation, Interview 3)

Empowered newcomers could also develop better and stronger connections among them and with other field members. Subsequently, incumbents could build on concrete successful stories and examples of newcomers to further their legitimization at the field level. For example, as The Big Foundation gave HelpPooling the opportunity to create a hosted fund, HelpPooling grew bigger, connecting with multiple partners and offering more varied tools to support its users. In turn, HelpPooling attempted to convey its founding principles of transparency and collaboration to The Big Foundation and said it *"knew that* [its] *message was heard even though changing such an institution was a long-term process"* (Interview 1).

At the end of our research, other incumbents stated that they were *"informed of initiatives such as* [HelpPooling]*"* (The YouthPower Foundation, Interview 2). HelpPooling became known within the field. Moreover, the availability of resources could create a healthy competition among newcomers and encourage others to keep innovating and to connect with philanthropic organizations (as we show hereunder with the example of AdvertRaising).

Social actions at the organizational level had an impact on social actions at the field level but also on symbolic actions. Connecting newcomers as field members and developing newcomers' capacities through organizational support mechanisms contributed to align the field's social boundary on the flexibilized symbolic boundary. As newcomers became recognized as field members, they accessed field resources and support opportunities. And conversely, the aligned social boundary allowed to continue flexibilizing the symbolic boundary. Indeed, the more various newcomers accessed field's resources, the more the distinctive characteristics of the field's collective identity became fuzzy.

Figure 5 – Analytic model of the affiliating strategy

Field level

Organizational level

Symbolic boundary

Favoring actions over definitional debates on philanthropy

Welcoming diverse and complementary means to collectively contribute to general interest

Maintaining some plasticity in the definition of philanthropy

Putting a philanthropic label on newcomers

Publicly endorsing newcomers

Legitimizing newcomers as field members

Making newcomers a priority in their org. strategy

Aiming to integrate newcomers to their governance structure

Seeking inspiration through involving newcomers in their organization

Flexibilizing the field's symbolic boundary

Social boundary

Acting as intermediary between newcomers and other partners

Establishing connections among newcomers

Using newcomers' tools

Connecting newcomers as field members

Supporting newcomers through extending internal mechanisms

Integrating newcomers as partners in projects

Developing newcomers' capacities through org. mechanisms

Aligning the field's social boundary on its symbolic boundary

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4.2.2   The discriminating strategy

The counterstrategy of discriminators opposed the plastic definition of philanthropy promoted by affiliators. Discriminators **reclaimed a precise definition of philanthropy.** Rejecting the idea of welcoming diverse and complementary means to contribute to the general interest, they *emphasized the primacy of financial means*. In other words, they considered *"money as one of the distinctive characteristics of philanthropy's definition"* (The Family Foundation, Interview 1) and thus tended to limit philanthropy to those who possessed a certain amount of wealth to distribute in order to serve general interest. They did not exclude financial gifts be accompanied with other means, such as donors' time or expertise. Yet, if no financial means were offered in the first place – regardless of the donation of other means – the contribution to general interest could not be considered as philanthropy, as argued by this incumbent:

> *"Philanthropy equals the idea of donating financial means. To call "philanthropy" a contribution to general interest, there has to be a financial dimension. Giving money has to be the first action and it can later come with other types of support. […] It is a semantic debate. To me, if there is no money, then it does not really count as philanthropy."* (Funds4Impact, Interview 1)

This semantic debate was taking place because several definitions of philanthropy co-existed, as each field member tended to come up with its own definition. Discriminators felt this debate was even heightened as newcomers became affiliated to philanthropy. Some discriminators even used another word than philanthropy (such as "generosity" (The Fundraising Center) or "social investment" (Well-Being Coop)) to describe giving of private resources to serve general interest. Given the already high heterogeneity, discriminators insisted on avoiding to further diversify the field and on having an open and joint debate on what philanthropy actually meant. They argued that field members should *collectively agree on a clear understanding of philanthropy*, which would rely on broadly shared distinctive characteristics. These would allow to undoubtedly distinguish philanthropy from other related concepts, such as social entrepreneurship or volunteering, which discriminators believed to form fields on their own. To do so, they began to gather within different groups to discuss philanthropy's meanings and practices, such as peer-learning groups created by individual foundations (e.g., The Transformative Foundation).

According to discriminators, a clearer understanding of philanthropy would enable philanthropic actors to be more efficient in their action, to better know what they could and should do and to eventually undertake philanthropic actions of better quality, as argued by this incumbent:

> *"What is volunteering compared to philanthropy? Is it a sub-section? I think Belgian philanthropy is not structured nor professional enough. And I think a clearer positioning could be more interesting. Otherwise, we all speak in beautiful words but most of us do not know what these words mean. By creating this fog, we lose so much energy!"* (The Family Foundation, Interview 1)

A clearer understanding would also enable field members to better interact with each other as they would recognize themselves in a common philanthropic identity. One incumbent explained that some collaborations failed because philanthropic actors had different visions of philanthropy:

> *"We could have a more strategic vision and agree on a certain number of things. […] We nearly collaborated with* [one foundation] *but we did not agree with its financing model. It was basically lying to donors. So, no, philanthropy is not doing everything and anything."* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 2)

While affiliators aimed to build a global movement of philanthropy by maintaining a flexible and inclusive definition encompassing any actor or action slightly related to serving general interest, discriminators rather attempted to build a movement within the field by strengthening the actions and interactions between incumbent organizations around a precise and discriminative definition. Therefore, discriminators did not pursue a counterstrategy in order to simply protect their collective identity. Like affiliators, discriminators believed philanthropy needed to evolve and sought to bring about a renewal of the field. However, they did not think this renewal would occur through the affiliation of newcomers to the field, but rather through enhancing the specific features of incumbent field members.

As discriminators reclaimed a precise definition of philanthropy and attempted to identify its distinctive characteristics to lower field's heterogeneity, they reacted to newcomers' legitimization as field members by affiliators by **separating these newcomers from the philanthropic identity**. They *questioned newcomers' philanthropic nature* by pointing out their features which they deemed in conflict

with philanthropy's characteristics. Discriminators questioned the for-profit orientation of many newcomers, noting that they did not have a nonprofit legal status and had objectives of financial viability and performance. According to them, this meant that newcomers served their own personal interest before serving the general interest:

> *"They are not a nonprofit and this is not innocent at all. They decided to make a living from their platform. I can understand that. But then they have to make money. […] We, on the other hand, are a nonprofit. It is obvious that we work to serve general interest and that we are not here to make money."* (The Volunteering Center, Interview 1)

While discriminators considered newcomers' for-profit legal status as incoherent regarding the social mission they wished to pursue, newcomers claimed that their business model choices might actually be more coherent. They explained that current philanthropic organizations were often pyromaniac firefighters, as the money they allocated to societal causes often originated from activities detrimental to these very causes.

> *"I believe it is more coherent to earn money by having a positive impact, than to earn money and have no positive impact. […] And those criticizing this approach often adopt themselves an approach of compensation. They have a classic job and besides it they give money to good causes."* (Biz4Good, Focus Group)

In addition, they argued that managing an independent and sustainable business might be more effective to address social and environmental issues than relying on uncertain subsidies. One newcomer put this argument forward after its model was criticized by one incumbent:

> *"There are always financial fluxes. If you are subsidized, then the money you receive also comes from somewhere. So, it is very hypocritical to react like* [The Volunteering Center] *and it is also a bit stupid, because in the end they do not really evolve in their practices."* (Time2Give, Interview 2)

Moreover, although newcomers' intention behind the creation of their platform was to empower all societal stakeholders (social-purpose, philanthropic organizations and for-profit businesses as well as citizens) to address social and environmental issues and serve general interest, as well as to connect together these various

stakeholders to make their individual actions more structured and professional, discriminators questioned the usefulness and effectiveness of these platforms. They argued that grand challenges would not be solved through micro-giving or micro-volunteering by citizens or one-shot projects by for-profit businesses. On the contrary, they claimed that only *"good old money-giving philanthropy"* (Funds4Impact, Interview 1) could successfully address social and environmental issues.

> *"Telling people that volunteering two days of their time will change the world is a lie. There is nothing more complicated and inefficient for a nonprofit organization than volunteers coming for one day and then leaving."* (The Volunteering Center, Interview 1)

Furthermore, instead of helping resource-seeking organizations, these platforms could be a *"burden"* (notes from Event 3 *Philanthropy & Platforms* in 2018). Discriminators highlighted the volatility of newcomers: *"they come and go, have success for a year and then completely vanish"* (The Fundraising Center, Interview 1). Getting involved with these newcomers and using their tools could therefore require a lot of time, effort, and sometimes even money, and still produce little results for organizations in terms of fundraising or volunteer recruitments. As newcomers were seen as not reliable, they did not enable the creation of a steady climate of trust between the various societal stakeholders.

Additionally, although newcomers' initial intention was to include everybody in philanthropic action, incumbents suspected they might actually unintentionally end up reinforcing some types of exclusion. If digital tools became increasingly the norm in philanthropic organizations, the digital divide would open up and citizens not comfortable with digital tools would risk being excluded from philanthropic action.

Finally, discriminators feared that newcomers would decrease the quality of philanthropic action. One of the main arguments for building a platform was that it was more dynamic and playful as it removed intermediaries. Citizens could directly choose the social or environmental issues to which they wished to contribute. Yet, discriminators considered that removing intermediaries meant also removing the expertise and professionalism of philanthropic organizations. Giving or volunteering on these platforms was perceived as responding to an egocentric behavior that generated very little or even no positive impact.

Discriminators therefore underlined the need to preserve aspects of control and evaluation in philanthropic action:

> *"Fundraising can be fun; it does not have to be very serious. But sometimes there is more fun and not enough funds. Many platforms play on the immediate pleasure for donors. I'm not saying donors' pleasure is not important. On the contrary, it can be an important drive, but boundaries need to be drawn. Otherwise, it becomes very superficial and gives rise to a downward spiral.* […] *It can become donors' personal shopping. It removes the intermediary, that is the professional nonprofit organization which is addressing social issues and supporting communities depending on their needs and not on donors' arbitrary subjectivity."* (The Fundraising Center, Interview 1)

> *"They reduce intermediaries and put in direct contact. But, in this approach, the evaluating and systemic aspect is lacking, they do not put things into perspective, there is no control."* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 1)

In this regard, discriminators suggested that newcomers could encourage *"greenwashing or ethic-washing"* (The Volunteering Center, Interview 2), as for-profit businesses could use these platforms to do a good deed in order to compensate for their harmful behaviors which remained unchanged. Indeed, one of the digital platforms interviewed in 2017 stopped its activities two years later, explaining their *"job was extremely political, always stuck between having a social impact and doing greenwashing"* (Biz4Good, Interview 2).

As newcomers' features did not match philanthropic distinctive characteristics, discriminators *put a label on newcomers outside philanthropy*. They looked for other concepts than philanthropy to qualify newcomers and reserved "philanthropy" to themselves. As this incumbent who associated newcomers with social entrepreneurship stated:

> *"[Time2Give] is a field actor. We could say it is social entrepreneurship rather than philanthropy.* […] *No, it is no philanthropy. The founder of this platform is a social entrepreneur, he simply decided to work for the common good rather than in the Big Fives."* (The YouthPower Foundation, Interview 1)

Discriminators' objective was not to make newcomers invisible or disappear. Newcomers could exist and could even thrive, but they could not be affiliated to philanthropy. Discriminators felt that if newcomers were affiliated to philanthropy, then they would *"become a bit schizophrenic"* (Funds4Impact, Interview 1), meaning that they risked not recognizing themselves anymore in the collective identity of the field. While reclaiming a precise definition of philanthropy enabled discriminators to separate newcomers from philanthropic identity, putting a label on newcomers outside philanthropy and questioning newcomers' philanthropic nature supported discriminators' claim to define the distinctive characteristics of philanthropy.

Interestingly, incumbent organizations of both strategies assigned a collective identity to newcomers, within philanthropy (affiliators) or outside of it (discriminators), regardless of the fact that newcomers themselves – being free electrons – had not yet come up with their own collective identity and might not agree with the affiliation incumbents assigned to them – be it philanthropic or not.

Beyond questioning newcomers' philanthropic nature, discriminators *differentiated themselves from newcomers*, by highlighting their own organizational features. Discriminators pointed out that they tried to understand the field and *"to have an overall and constant view of its ecosystem"* (Funds4Impact, Interview 1), to identify the actors and best practices at play.

> *"We try to understand the system, we try to tell who the actors are, the biggest and the smallest, what is at stake, where gaps, shortcomings and needs are, where duplications are, what the best practices are, what we should expand, replicate or consolidate."* (The YouthPower Foundation, Interview 1)

Doing so, they believed they had developed a considerable expertise. They also emphasized their long-term commitment to social and environmental causes they supported and underlined their selflessness. They had a nonprofit legal status, and they did not need to fulfill requirements of profitability to ensure their sustainability.

> *"We can brag about existing since 2002 and having a strong expertise. We have been here for a long time, working on and with the field."* (The Volunteering Center, Interview 1)

In the same vein, discriminators *questioned newcomers' innovative nature*. They argued that newcomers usually *"came all out on their idea without screening the landscape first"* (Well-Being Coop, Interview 1). As such, they were said to sometimes simply duplicate solutions that already existed without any added-value or to repeat previous mistakes. In this sense, newcomers would echo one of philanthropic failures identified by incumbents and hindering their professionalization: their tendency to undertake actions with their heart before thoroughly analyzing a situation. According to discriminators, newcomers were under the impression that they created something new simply because they relied on digital technologies. Yet, the so-called innovative solutions they came up with usually already existed and were existing and operating long before digital technologies. Simply changing the medium for a digital one did not make their idea revolutionary. On the contrary, in discriminators' words, *"it was a banality"* (The YouthPower Foundation, Interview 1).

For example, although The Volunteering Center and its Flemish counterpart had been organizing volunteer matching since their creation and running matching platforms for years, three new platforms (Time2Give, SkillUp, LinkedUp) were created by newcomers between 2015 and 2016 to match volunteers and resource-seeking organizations. These newcomers did not know each other until they met via affiliators and some of them did not even know The Volunteering Center and its Flemish counterpart.

> *"I have the feeling that what* [newcomers] *offer is no different from existing solutions. I have the feeling they leave fresh and joyful, believing they have a brand-new solution, and they don't learn the lessons from the mistakes we probably already made before. They will probably bang into the same walls than us.* […] *They think it is new, but it is simply the same well-worn ideas."* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 1)

> *"I have the feeling that today these matching platforms are put under the spotlight, that they are said to be part of a new trend. But I think the perception of this new trend is kind of distorted, because, when I was young, volunteering opportunities already existed, and people volunteered much more than today, but nobody talked about it. Today, there is actually less volunteering than before.* […] *We should be careful before saying that digitalization revolutionizes volunteering. Only the medium has changed."* (The Family Foundation, Interview 1)

Consequently, as newcomers' tools were said to be developed with no consideration toward the field, its actual state, actors and practices, *"they did not match the particular needs of social-purpose organizations"* (The Fundraising Center, Interview 1). Discriminators believed newcomers were marginal and would remain so:

> *"In Belgium, I'd say giving and volunteering are doing fine and rely on much more stable commitment from donors and volunteers. On that matter, I'm not sure we really need platforms. I'm a bit skeptical. All these are quite nice but not necessarily efficient."* (The Fundraising Center, Interview 1)

Unlike affiliators who involved newcomers in their organizations in order to seek inspiration from them and renew their own organizational practices, discriminators did not consider they had anything to learn from newcomers and rather **claimed their own innovative potential**. Discriminators believed that philanthropy's evolution rested on the development of *"made-to-measure tools managed, controlled and developed by establish actors themselves"* (The Fundraising Center, Interview 1) rather than on the reliance on newcomers.

Through reclaiming a precise definition of philanthropy, separating newcomers from philanthropic identity and claiming their own innovative potential, discriminators strengthened the field's symbolic boundary. The symbolic implications of the discriminating strategy arose from the mutual interaction between actions undertaken at the organizational level and at the field level. While separating newcomers from philanthropic identity enabled discriminators to differentiate from them and question their innovative potential – by highlighting how newcomers' solutions were either not suitable or already implemented –, discriminators' claim of their own innovative potential reversely supported newcomers' separation from philanthropy, as the field's renewal was to occur without newcomers.

In reaction to the affiliating strategy's multiple connections among newcomers and between newcomers and field members as well as in alignment with the discriminating strategy's symbolic separation of newcomers, discriminators **avoided newcomers' social connection within philanthropy**. On one hand, they *isolated newcomers from incumbent organizations' support*. Upon their emergence, newcomers tried a bit to access the field's financial resources but did not succeed. As newcomers' main feature was to build a digital platform that did

not directly address social or environmental issues, newcomers did not fit in discriminators' support mechanisms. A situation illustrated by the following quotes from one incumbent and one newcomer:

"We would collaborate with them if they fitted in one of our boxes, but we do not have millions of boxes." (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 1)

"We contacted some foundations, but we were out of their scope. We only do digital and digital is not a social cause in itself. We cannot really say our focus is on helping youth or disabled people. If you think about it, our platform displays many social or environmental issues. So, in a sense we do them all, but we also do none of them. It is kind of hybrid. So, it is difficult to reach foundations. They're not going to give us money, even though they find the project interesting." (Time2Give, Interview 2)

Contrary to affiliators who extended their support mechanisms to include newcomers and give them access to resources, when discriminators found a newcomer worth supporting, they provided it with resources outside of their internal mechanisms. Doing so, discriminators made sure that this support was not linked to the field' resources and that it did not create a connection between them and newcomers. For example, The Family Foundation eventually gave a financial support to Time2Give through a crowdlending platform rather than through its support-giving programs (Time2Give, Document 6). This same newcomer also won an award for its positive impact on society from the European Venture Philanthropy Association but was referred to as an impact-driven organization rather than as a philanthropic organization (Time2Give, Document 2).

Discriminators also *refused direct collaborations with newcomers*, even though it was sometimes requested and endorsed by incumbent organizations of the affiliators group. They built on their definition of philanthropy and their questioning of newcomers' philanthropic and innovative nature to refuse these collaborations. For example, The Volunteering Center refused to collaborate with two newcomers (Time2Give and SkillUp) even though one of them was explicitly endorsed by The Big Foundation, an incumbent belonging to the affiliators.

The Volunteering Center justified its refusal to collaborate as follows:

> *"We have different visions of society. What they promote is not the type of volunteering we stand up for. […] They were surprised we refused to collaborate with them, but they did not even come and discuss with us before building their platform. They did it all by themselves as they thought it should be done, and then they came and almost tried to sell the platform to us."* (The Volunteering Center, Interview 1)

Isolating newcomers from incumbent organizations' support and refusing direct collaborations with them further confirmed newcomers' separation from philanthropic identity, as they did not have access to the field's resources and connections.

Since discriminators did not regard newcomers as part of philanthropy and as having the potential to renew it, they put the emphasis on **developing their own capacities through shared practices and collaborations**. This was a reaction to the strategy of affiliators who rather developed newcomers' capacities and who were perceived to be reluctant to collaborate with incumbent field members (see Chapter I), as illustrated by this incumbent remembering its first arrival into philanthropy:

> *"When I first entered Belgian philanthropy, I was very surprised by its lack of transparency. I had to implement everything from scratch, a board, a general assembly, all the governance of a foundation. How does that work? And I had access to nothing. […] At that time, nobody gave me what I give now a lot more and much more easily: due diligences, eligibility criteria, key performance indicators, everything we created and implemented."* (The Family Foundation, Interview 1)

Therefore, discriminators *embraced more professional practices in the implementation of their philanthropic action*. They believed these practices were not only useful for them but also for the organizations they supported. For instance, instead of launching calls for proposals to which hundreds of organizations applied and only a few eventually received financial support, they did *"try to be more proactive in spotting the most interesting organizations"* (Funds4Impact, Interview 1). As such, resource-seeking organizations could devote time and energy to their genuine social mission rather than to funding applications. In a sense, they

responded to one of newcomers' criticisms regarding how private resources were allocated (see Chapter II), but without involving newcomers or using their tools.

Discriminators also *developed more collaborations among them in order to offer a collective philanthropic support*. They believed philanthropic organizations were *"too isolated, each working in its own silos"* (The YouthPower Foundation, Interview 1). This resulted in *"money waste, limited knowledge on efficient philanthropic actions and poor education of donors"* (notes from Event 6 *Philanthropy & Societ*y in 2019). They organized exchanges and created specific spaces to meet and overcome fears related to sharing:

> *"*[The Family Foundation] *took the initiative to create spaces to discuss and exchange around various practices adopted by foundations, in order to help, challenge and inspire each other"*. (The Family Foundation, Document 3, 2019)

Their goal was to concretely strengthen the interactions within the field and to decrease competition among resource-seeking organizations but also among resource-providing organizations. On one hand, the formers were said to compete for resources as they all *"knocked on the same philanthropists' doors"* (Holism&Harmony, Interview 1). On the other hand, *"foundations usually all ended up supporting the same organizations and projects but did not collaborate with each other"* (The Job4All Foundation, Interview 1). This was a lot of time and energy for both organizations which were required to produce and to analyze multiple impact measurement reports. As they shared the common objective of serving general interest, they believed their philanthropic action would have a more systemic impact if it was jointly carried out.

For example, several incumbents built a joint project within which they supported the same organizations and evaluated their progress in achieving collectively established objectives. One of these incumbents stressed the need for this type of projects in the following terms:

> *Stimulating exchanges also translates in the nascent collaborations among foundations and is one of our priorities. The* [collective impact project] *is the best example of what can be achieved with a collective dynamic. Let's hope this project inspires others because collaboration has become a real emergency to make the most of our resources and expertise and to best address societal issues.* (The YouthPower Foundation, Document 4)

As they developed their own capacities, discriminators emphasized their innovative potential. They further showed that they could bring about renewal in their organizational practices, and subsequently in philanthropy, without the involvement of newcomers. By weaving more tightly the web of connections among them, they formed a more close-knit community – which further forged their collective identity – and indirectly they further avoided newcomers' social connection to the field. Doing so, they sought to maintain a rigid social boundary.

Figure 6 – Analytic model of the discriminating strategy

Field level

Organizational level

Symbolic boundary

Collectively agreeing on a clear definition of philanthropy

Emphasizing primacy of financial means to contribute to general interest

Reclaiming a precise definition of philanthropy

Putting a label on newcomers outside philanthropy

Questioning newcomers' philanthropic nature

Separating newcomers from philanthropic identity

Differentiating themselves from newcomers

Questioning newcomers' innovative nature

Claiming incumbent organizations' innovative potential

Strengthening the field's symbolic boundary

Social boundary

Refusing direct collaboration with newcomers

Isolating newcomers from incumbent organizations' support

Avoiding newcomers' social connection within philanthropy

Embracing professional practices for philanthropic actions

Developing collaborations among incumbents to offer a collective support

Developing incumbents capacities through shared practices and collab.

Maintaining the field's social boundary

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Figure 7 – Integrated analytic model of the two strategies

Field level

Organizational level

Symbolic boundary

Maintaining plasticity in definition of philanthropy

Legitimizing newcomers as field members

Seeking inspiration through involving newcomers in their org.

Flexibilizing the field's symbolic boundary

Reclaiming a precise definition of philanthropy

Separating newcomers from philanthropic identity

Claiming incumbent organizations' innovative potential

Strengthening the field's symbolic boundary

Social boundary

Connecting newcomers as field members

Developing newcomers' capacities through org. mechanisms

Aligning the field's social boundary on its symbolic boundary

Avoiding newcomers' social connection within philanthropy

Developing incumbents capacities through shared practices and collab.

Maintaining the field's social boundary

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4.2.3   Strategies' interaction: softening of the discriminating strategy

Over time, interactions could be observed between the affiliators' strategy and the discriminators' response. While it is too early to draw firm conclusions on their definitive effects on the state of the field's symbolic and social boundaries, we observed that the strategies became more nuanced as they interacted. More specifically, we observed how discriminators softened their strategy under the influence of the affiliating strategy.

As mentioned, affiliators aligned the field's social boundary on its symbolic boundary by, among others, extending their support mechanisms to integrate newcomers. The emergence of these support mechanisms had a twofold effect. On one hand, supported newcomers were able to develop their capacities and became more visible. On the other hand, newcomers began to connect more proactively with incumbents to access the available resources. As a result, discriminators were increasingly confronted with newcomers and started to *differentiate among them*. While at first discriminators tended to put all newcomers under the same umbrella, separating them from philanthropic identity, they later better identified who newcomers were and what were the differences between them. For example, this incumbent compared two newcomers and argued why the former could not be associated with philanthropy, but the latter could:

> *"To me,* [Time2Give] *is not the same than* [AdvertRaising]. *You need to make a distinction. The former is a social entrepreneur, and the latter is a digital interface or a platform – whatever you call them – between all sorts of initiatives looking for financial support and all sorts of citizens wondering how they can be useful. And they created a tool to enable initiatives and citizens to meet.* […] *There is a distinction to make beyond their purposes. Purposes should not hide ways of working that are not of philanthropic nature. A social entrepreneur who needs to find their funding is different from an organization which provides funding."* (The YouthPower Foundation, Interview 2)

Doing so, they recognized that some newcomers came closer to the philanthropic identity than others. They *recognized the borderline identity of certain newcomers* and wondered how to properly label these newcomers, whether they should be associated with philanthropy or if another word would be more adequate:

> *"We did not use the word philanthropy when publicly presenting* [AdvertRaising]. *It is a complicated boundary… It is a start-up of a different kind. If we do not use the word philanthropy, then I don't know if there is a more suitable word than entrepreneurship in cases like these.* […] *Actually, we never tried to put a word on AdvertRaising. How do we consider them? Do we put them under the same umbrella as all our laureates? Or do they belong to a different category, more hybrid?"* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 3)

As discriminators recognized the borderline identity of certain newcomers and differentiated among them, they **selectively endorsed newcomers** as field members. The newcomers that were considered to potentially be part of philanthropy were those that incumbent organizations viewed as tools at the service of philanthropy – that is, newcomers that enabled others to obtain or provide philanthropic funding. These newcomers were usually the ones that diverged the least from existing philanthropic tools and that brought minor innovations. Examples of such platforms were crowdfunding or fundraising platforms (AdvertRaising, SolyNet).

On the other hand, newcomers that also tried to find financial support to develop their tools were perceived as risking to compete with organizations and projects they hosted on their platform, as these organizations and projects also sought funding. Because of this possible competition, these newcomers could not be part of philanthropy and access its resources. Eventually, some newcomers struggled to find the resources to support their platforms and ended up forced to consider changing their business model for a more market-oriented one, such as the following crowdsourcing platform:

> *"For three years, we have tried to find philanthropic resources to support the platform but did not find any. So now, we are thinking of charging users for some services. We need to be careful with the business model choices we make, because we do not want our platform to become a B2B project. We want to keep our initial social mission."* (Colibris Booster, Interview 1)

In the end, the social aspect of the affiliating strategy had a consequence on the symbolic aspect of the discriminating strategy. Discriminators started to reevaluate whether they considered newcomers as part of philanthropy after affiliators began to connect newcomers as field members and to develop newcomers' capacities. Affiliators' alignment work on the field's social boundary caused a shift in discriminator's work on the field's symbolic boundary.

Simultaneously, affiliators *created a specific label for newcomers*. While at first affiliators indistinctly put the label philanthropy on newcomers, they then started labeling newcomers as *"philanthropic entrepreneurship"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 4). By associating the philanthropic adjective to entrepreneurship, affiliators made an attempt to bridge the opposing strategies. They continued to legitimize newcomers as field members but started distinguishing them from incumbent organizations by giving them a distinct identity within the field. They made this identity close to social entrepreneurship, as this was the label discriminators usually used to separate newcomers from philanthropy. Doing so, they created a new group of actors within the field, which could ease discriminators acceptance of newcomers.

> *"They brought a breath of fresh air, they brought a new way of getting involved which will last and which is different than 'I worked my whole life, I accumulated wealth and I created a foundation' or 'I am a Next Gen, I inherited from my parents, and I created a foundation'. This is something else, this is 'I am a philanthropic entrepreneur, I am socially engaged but I also want to make a living'."* (The Big Foundation, Interview 4)

The selective endorsement of newcomers led discriminators to **recognize the evolving nature of philanthropy**. On one hand, they *reconsidered their definition of philanthropy*, as they attempted to appreciate the difference between certain newcomers and certain incumbents. If philanthropy was defined as the use of private resources – and more so financial resources – to serve general interest, then discriminators wondered what the difference was between, on one side, a social-mission platform looking for financial support to grow and, on the other side, a philanthropic foundation "*which have the legal status but not the financial means and will have to find its funding elsewhere*" (The YouthPower Foundation, Interview 2) to undertake its philanthropic actions.

On the other hand, while discriminators initially claimed their own potential to renew philanthropy, they started *considering the potential complementarity between certain newcomers and incumbent organizations*. As *"resources necessary to address current societal challenges were huge"*, discriminators acknowledged that social-mission platforms might stimulate *"micro-initiatives that addressed specific needs for specific groups of people"* (The YouthPower Foundation, Interview 2), and that *"digital tools made philanthropic action more inclusive"* (The Volunteering Center, Interview 2). Therefore, they recognized that newcomers could complement philanthropic actions undertaken by *"foundations which addressed other issues on a larger scale"* (The YouthPower Foundation, Interview 2) but they also highlighted that they would not supplant existing philanthropic organizations as it was important to maintain offline channels of philanthropic involvement. *"Digital tools included but they also excluded"* citizens who were not used to them (The Volunteering Center, Interview 2).

Concurrently, affiliators – who originally favored actions over definitional debates – stated that they remained open to discuss the definition of philanthropy. They appeared to adopt a very pragmatic approach to philanthropy's definition and to broaden or narrow it depending on the context or the audiences. They explained that their broad definition – encompassing diverse and complementary means – served *"to portray a simpler image of philanthropy toward public at large and the State"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 4) – that is, the field's broader environment. Within the field, they *"had no problem having a more precise or detailed discourse"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 4). This was consistent with their subsequent use of the label "philanthropic entrepreneurs" to distinctly identify newcomers. Their broad definition managed to attract newcomers toward philanthropy, although they initially did not associate with it. Once newcomers were affiliated to the field, they were given a more specific identity. As such, affiliators managed to welcome and legitimize newcomers as complementary field members although these were not endorsed by the whole population of incumbents. The complementary nature of newcomers first advocated by affiliators was only considered by discriminators afterwards.

Selectively endorsing newcomers led discriminators to **recognize certain newcomers' inspirational potential**. While they first questioned newcomers' innovative nature, they then *aimed to integrate certain newcomers to their internal governance structure*. Discriminators, as incumbents as a whole, granted importance to stay close to field actors they supported and to stay in touch with

society's evolutions. As newcomers appeared to offer new means for societal stakeholders – and especially (young) citizens – to get involved in philanthropic actions, discriminators wondered how they should give a place to newcomers within their philanthropic organization: *"Could it be in a more structural way? Should we let them in our decision-making body, in our board? Or should we create a more informal group within which we could interact on how the world evolves, assess needs and confirm methods?"* (The YouthPower Foundation, Interview 2).

Accordingly, discriminators began to *identify common ground with certain newcomers*. Social-mission platforms might bring ways of working that could contribute to overcome some incumbents' shortcomings. Discriminators started to believe that *"the potential for these platforms to enhance cooperation among philanthropic organizations was definitely exciting"* (email from The Association, April 2021). At the end of our research, incumbents were thinking about how they could better know social-mission platforms, but also how these platforms could better know incumbents, as well as how to learn to mutually strengthen their respective actions.

Within the affiliators group, this mutual strengthening was already taking place, as social interaction between them and newcomers was effective. Affiliators observed that resource-seeking organizations supported both by a philanthropic foundation and a social-mission platform *"became more legitimate in the eyes of other funders, such as public authorities"*. They also expected supported projects to be more *"sustainable"* as, thanks to social-mission platforms, they were *"more deeply rooted in their local communities"* than if they had only received a one-year support from a philanthropic foundation. Lastly, collaborations between philanthropic foundations and social-mission platforms allowed *"to reach more vulnerable groups of people"* with whom foundation already worked but who would otherwise be excluded from digital tools (The Citizenship Foundation, Interview 2).

For example, subsequently to its collaboration with The Citizenship Foundation, SolyNet reflected on how to organize part of its crowdfunding campaigns offline rather than undertaking them fully online, so that citizens who were less comfortable with digital tools could still participate.

As discriminators selectively endorsed newcomers, recognized the evolving nature of philanthropy as well as recognized certain newcomers' inspirational potential, they softened the initial reinforcement of their symbolic boundary. In other words, discriminators accepted to revise their distinctive characteristics of philanthropy's

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collective identity. Conversely, by creating a specific label for newcomers and by remaining open to definitional debates, affiliators slightly moderated their flexibilizing of the field's symbolic boundary and, therefore, eased discriminators' softening.

While discriminators selective endorsement of newcomers had implications at the symbolic level, it also had implications at the social level. As far as the field's social boundary was concerned, discriminators started to **selectively connect newcomers with other field members**, according to their selective endorsement. They *acted as intermediaries between certain newcomers and other field members*. As support mechanisms for newcomers emerged, newcomers reached more proactively to incumbent organizations. However, these mechanisms were not yet to be found with every incumbent. Some were still not ready to financially support newcomers, as these newcomers did not quite fit within their social mission. Nevertheless, as they recognized certain newcomers' inspirational potential, they provided them with a relational support by connecting them with incumbent organizations who might be able to give them a financial help.

For example, The YouthPower Foundation explained that AdvertRaising "*came to* [them]*, but* [they] *decided not to support them; not because* [they] *did not find their project interesting but simply because their project did not align with* [their] *priorities"* (Interview 2). As this incumbent could not provide this newcomer with a financial support, it guided it toward other incumbent organizations. Eventually, AdvertRaising obtained support from another foundation, The Transformative Foundation.

Along the same lines, discriminators *accepted that certain newcomers got connected to certain incumbent organizations' support*. They recognized that certain incumbents, within the affiliators group, were more capable to interact with newcomers than they were. As such, discriminators transited from initially reacting to affiliators' strategy toward recognizing the diversity of the population of incumbent organizations. Besides differentiating among newcomers, discriminators differentiated among incumbent organizations: *"if there was a place where interactions with social-mission platforms had to occur, it was obviously within the 'umbrella foundation' that* [The Big Foundation] *is."* (The YouthPower Foundation, Interview 2) Umbrella foundations – that is, foundations hosting funds – were believed to have a more comprehensive view of the field and thus to be in capacity to identify and appreciate newcomers. Logically, the first incumbent

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within discriminators to provide financial help to a newcomer was also an umbrella foundation.

As discriminators symbolically recognized certain newcomers' inspirational potential, some discriminators **further supported these newcomers**. As mentioned, an umbrella foundation within discriminators *provided a newcomer it endorsed with financial help*. This incumbent explained that this financial help was to be seen as a *"symbolic support"* (The Transformative Foundation, Interview 3): they believed in AdvertRaising's innovative approach and were ready to take risks. They were in capacity to take this risk because the supported newcomer did not receive financial support directly from the foundation but indirectly from one of its hosted philanthropic funds.

Indeed, despite providing financial help, this incumbent remained critical regarding newcomers. The support provided was a hesitant one, as the incumbent specified that the project *"raised ethical issues"*, that they were *"not sure it had 100% positive impact"*, (Document 9, 2020) and they would need to *"remain attentive to the coherency of the project"* (Interview 3).

Therefore, providing financial help to newcomers did not automatically mean that discriminators legitimized newcomers as field members. This enduring questioning of newcomers' philanthropic nature reflected the intermediary position of discriminators. Their strategy regarding field boundaries was not radically shifting toward full affiliation but was rather incrementally becoming more open. As illustrated by The Transformative Foundation highlighting the risky nature of their support to AdvertRaising:

> *"Within our foundation, the project in itself has not been judged as crossing a red line. Would we have supported it if it had come to us directly? Maybe not. Are we ready to accept the decision of our hosted funds' jury? In this case, yes. Because we have the feeling this project is of some interest. Is this a way to distance ourselves from this type of projects? Well, this hosted fund is a tool to take bets."* (Interview 3)

Similar to affiliators, some discriminators *started using certain newcomers' tools*. As they *"looked for innovative online solutions, they realized platforms could have an added-value"* (The Association, Interview 2). Comparing newcomers and their platforms, they identified platforms' respective advantages and disadvantages and attempted to find the tools that suited them best depending on their philanthropic

actions. As for affiliators, they further specified their use of newcomers' tools. While affiliators were at first willing to largely use newcomers' tools, they were then more cautious in their use. As they had the opportunity to test the platforms, they realized that some worked best for certain philanthropic actions and others for other types of actions. Therefore, some explained how they would adjust their use of social-mission platforms:

> *"My first idea was that every time we launched a call for proposals, our grantees could also raise funds on this platform to get additional funding. And if the campaign on the platform was a success, then we would add again 25% extra funding. That was my ideal. Now, I believe this is still possible but only for specific projects, not all our grantees. We need to be a bit more realistic. But we still want to try to use* [SolyNet]*, because we believe it is a great way to strengthen the projects we support. Maybe we still launch our call for proposals and then we screen the selected projects and look specifically for those which could successfully raise extra money on the platform."* (The Citizenship Foundation, Interview 2)

Following the softening of their symbolic boundary's reinforcement, discriminators partially extended the field's social boundary, by selectively supporting newcomers and by selectively connecting them with field members. Discriminators' shift on the symbolic boundary resulted from affiliators work on the social boundary. In turn, discriminators' shift on the symbolic boundary gave rise to an extension of the field's social boundary. While on the symbolic boundary affiliators made a step toward discriminators by moderating their flexible stance, on the social boundary there appeared to be no change on the part of affiliators. Discriminators thus tended to selectively imitate them. It could be suggested that only discriminators adjusted their strategy because they realized, contrary to what they first expected, that newcomers did not just represent a temporal phenomenon – thanks in part to affiliators. Therefore, discriminators felt like they *"would have to collaborate, revise their position and adapt to find the right balance"* between them and newcomers (The Volunteering Center, Interview 2).

Figure 8 – Integrated analytic mode of interactions between strategies   *Field level*   *Organizational level*

Symbolic boundary

Maintaining plasticity in definition of philanthropy

Legitimizing newcomers as field members

Seeking inspiration through involving newcomers in their org.

Recognizing certain newcomers' inspirational potential

Selectively endorsing newcomers

Reclaiming a precise definition of philanthropy

Separating newcomers from philanthropic identity

Claiming incumbent organizations' innovative potential

Recognizing the evolving nature of philanthropy

Softening symbolic boundary's reinforcement

Social boundary

Selectively connecting newcomers with other incumbent organizations

Connecting newcomers as field members

Developing newcomers' capacities through org. mechanisms

Selectively supporting newcomers

Avoiding newcomers' social connection within philanthropy

Developing incumbents capacities through shared practices and collab.

Partially extending the field's social boundary

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5   Discussion

Although extant research examines how various populations within a field as well as newcomers undertake boundary work (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010) and how social and symbolic boundaries are recursively shaped over time (Grodal, 2018), it mainly considers populations as homogeneous groups jointly engaging in the same type of boundary work at a given point of time (Langley et al., 2019). This paper explores heterogeneity in boundary work strategies within a population of incumbent organizations, examining both the drivers and the implications of such heterogeneity in terms of field boundaries. Our findings on the Belgian field of organizational philanthropy bring two contributions to the literature on fields, boundaries and boundary work. We theorize first how given fields yield in-population heterogeneity in boundary work strategies, and then how, in the other sense, divergent boundary work strategies interact to shape field boundaries.

5.1   *Influence of field configuration on boundary work*

Our findings show how, within a same population, some organizations pursue an affiliating strategy regarding newcomers and aim to bring flexibility in field boundaries, while others simultaneously pursue a discriminating strategy that aims to strengthen such boundaries. These opposite strategies and boundary work types show that organizational actors within a population may have divergent interests regarding their field and its symbolic and social boundaries.

We suggest that heterogeneity of strategies within population regarding newcomers is to be related to the configuration of the field in which these actors are embedded. Belgian organizational philanthropy has an issue-based nature and a fragmented condition. Within fragmented issue fields, populations connecting to the field do not always share common meanings and practices and social positions are usually in flux, with some populations and even some organizations identifying more strongly than others with the field (Grodal, 2018; Hoffman, 1999; Zietsma et al., 2017). Fragmented issue fields usually lack a close-knit core population or a strong collective interest organization which define and promote shared meanings and practices, encourage interactions and negotiations among field members and retighten meanings and practices or uniformly prompt their renewal in case of contestation (Furnari, 2018; Hinings et al., 2017).

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Our findings show that divergence concerns not only the field's meanings and practices but also the way in which boundaries are viewed. Some actors may want to pursue an affiliating strategy. They strive to keep field boundaries open in order to attract newcomers, generate a critical mass around the issue and thereby confer more legitimacy on the field (Furnari, 2018; B. H. Lee et al., 2017). Philanthropy, as other issue fields, is regularly contested (undemocratic, plutocratic, nontransparent, in conflict with values of social justice and equity…) (Reich et al., 2016). Therefore, portraying an inclusive image of the field may be regarded as an effective strategy to increase its recognition.

On the contrary, some actors may want to pursue a discriminating strategy. They fear that leaving the field open will further diversify the – already diverse – contested meanings and practices of philanthropy (Lamont & Molnár, 2002; Leibel et al., 2018). Newcomers may bring meanings and practices that will heighten criticisms and contribute to the field's delegitimation (Leblebici et al., 1991; Oliver, 1992). These actors will rather have a tendency to close the field and be exclusive, in order to keep diversification to a low level, better put forward their own meanings and practices and counter contestation (Grodal, 2018).

In addition to showing how fragmented issue field favors heterogeneous strategies among actors belonging to a same population, we also show that in this field configuration the affiliating strategy is likely to prevail over the discriminating strategy. We observe that affiliators come to influence discriminators by playing on the interactive dynamics between symbolic and social boundaries (Lamont & Molnár, 2002). As such, we contribute to calls to devote more attention to linkages between different types of boundaries (Langley et al., 2019).

As already showed in extant literature (Grodal, 2018), symbolic and social boundaries mutually influence each other. While affiliators' flexibilization of the symbolic boundary stimulated the alignment of the social boundary, the aligning social boundary further reinforced the flexibilization. This mutual reinforcement helped, on one side, affiliating newcomers to the field. On the other side, it pushed discriminators to revise their initial exclusive strategy. Indeed, discriminators were more likely to soften their own symbolic boundary reinforcement if affiliators brought flexibility in the field's social boundary. As social-mission platforms were supported by and connected with affiliators, they became increasingly visible and developed their capacities.

Hence, discriminators started to differentiate among newcomers, endorsing some of them, and to accept to revise their understanding of philanthropy – that is, what it meant to belong to the field.

The prevalence of the affiliating strategy can also be explained by actors' social position within the fragmented issue field. In our case, from the start, affiliators – including exclusively resource-providing organizations – mobilized valuable (material and symbolic) resources to support newcomers. One organization in particular mobilized significant resources within and outside the field and played a field-structuring role (i.e., The Big Foundation). As affiliators supported newcomers, they could make them almost unavoidable within the field. Therefore, affiliators were in capacity to constrain discriminators to also affiliate newcomers to the field. Discriminators could not mobilize a similar amount of valuable resources to support their own development and further counter newcomers' affiliation strategy. Moreover, competing with newcomers might not be in their best interest, as this competition might in turn deprive them of future collaboration with affiliators.

We suggest that affiliators were able to "fly solo" and extensively support newcomers because meanings and practices guiding organizations' behaviors within the field were not fixed and jointly endorsed. There was thus no sanction in acting against the rules. This could drive some field members to take greater risks and possibly endanger their social position and legitimacy in the field. Conversely, discriminators – including both resource-providers and collective interest organizations – displayed a stronger willingness to enforce field rules and stimulate a sense of collectivity within the field.

It can be argued that under an exchange-based and established field configuration, the discriminating strategy would have prevailed over the affiliating strategy. On one hand, there would have been less heterogeneity within the population. On the other hand, even though some actors would have tried to depart from shared meanings and practices, they would have faced greater risk of being outcast by other field members abiding by the rules (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; J. Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Studying a fragmented issue field allows us to bring a more fine-grained understanding of actors' strategic behaviors. As field are in constant evolution, going from one cycle of life to another (Hinings et al., 2017; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010), we argue that such strategic behaviors could also be observed in other more established fields, experiencing episodes of contention.

5.2   Influence of boundary work on field configuration

The affiliating strategy prevailing over the discriminating strategy has implications on the boundaries and ultimately the configuration of the field. Consistent with affiliators' flexibilizing work on the symbolic boundary, anyone feeling concerned with the issue, wanting to address it, could connect to the field and claim its membership. Therefore, the field would keep growing larger and more open and stay longer in a fragmented issue-based configuration. If the discriminating strategy had prevailed, we could have expected the field to increasingly adopt an exchange-based nature, as a greater structuration would have developed and a more established state emerged (i.e., incumbent organizations with defined and established roles) (Zietsma et al., 2017).

This insight is counterintuitive regarding extant literature on field configuration and boundary work. On one hand, fragmentation in fields is said to occur following contestation of boundaries when no actor has the capacity or motivation to undertake boundary work and bring back structure to the field (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). On the other hand, favoring ambiguity, fragmentation is an uncomfortable state for field members (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2009). When actors have the capacity to undertake boundary work to bring structuration to the field, they thus do so (e.g., implementation of networks, standards, labels…) (Zietsma et al., 2017). Extant literature has shown that actors maintaining or restoring structuration usually belong to insider, core, incumbent populations (Bucher et al., 2016; Gieryn, 1983). These maintain boundaries aligned in order to avoid contradiction within the field and protect their autonomy as well as resources (Lawrence, 2004). On the contrary, peripheral populations, newcomers and outsiders are said to pay less attention to boundaries or to be more inclined to breach them, at the risk of creating contradiction, as long as they forward their interest (Grodal, 2018).

In our case, incumbent affiliators acted similarly to peripheral populations in their approach to field boundaries. However, because of their position, boundary work was not anecdotical and took a field- structuring dimension, as expressed through field-configuring events, support mechanisms…. Yet, rather than bringing the field toward a more established state, the boundary work affiliators undertook preserved ambiguity and kept a certain degree of fragmentation. In this sense, we contribute to research on persistent ambiguity (Chliova et al., 2020; Granqvist, Grodal, & Woolley, 2013; Pontikes, 2012). Chliova and colleagues (2020) explain that within

ambiguous categories comprising divergent frames, ambiguity disappears when resource providers collectively support the dominant frame. On the contrary, ambiguity persists if resource providers equally support the divergent frames.

We could have expected ambiguity to disappear as affiliators extensively provided resources to support their affiliation of newcomers. As discriminators were unable to compete, the affiliators' vision became dominant. As a result, rather than disappearing, ambiguity may be intentionally sustained by incumbent organizations. Affiliators may frame ambiguity as consistent with their aim to extend the field. In our case, ambiguity enabled to include multiple societal actors in philanthropy and thereby build a global movement of philanthropic actors addressing societal and environmental issues and serving general interest. As a result, incumbent organizations may be instrumental in maintaining the field in an issue-based form, at the expense of discriminating boundary work that would gradually lead to a more structured exchange field.

5.3   Limitations and future research avenues

Our study has limitations which provide opportunities for future research avenues. A first limit to our research is that we observed our phenomenon as it occurred: we met with incumbent organizations and newcomers at the time of their interaction. The observed outcomes of both strategies are thus very recent. And even though we conducted our data collection over several years (2017-2021), our longitudinal perspective is still limited to apprehend longer-term field boundaries' dynamics (Langley et al., 2019).

Indeed, as incumbent organizations did not reach a collective agreement regarding newcomers inclusion into philanthropy – discriminators rather soften their strategy in the face of affiliators – the field settlement that we see emerging at the end of our research is a rather weak one (Furnari, 2018). As such, it is possible that the discriminating strategy resurfaces. We also begin to witness newcomers purposefully disaffiliating themselves. Therefore, future research should be conducted with a more longitudinal perspective in order to study over a longer period of time the affiliating and discriminating strategies, their interactions as well as newcomers' emergence at the fringes of philanthropy.

A second and directly related limit is that our analysis focused more largely on discourses than actions (e.g., interviews, archival documents). We did observe events where newcomers and incumbent organizations interacted, however the number of events was limited, and we did not conduct ethnographic observations within organizations themselves (Lamont & Molnár, 2002; Santos & Eisenhardt, 2009). Furthermore, incumbent organizations partnering with and supporting newcomers was only starting to happen significantly at the end of our fieldwork.

A third and final limit is that we only met with resource-providing organizations which could give resources to social-mission platforms (as social-mission platforms needed support). We focused on organizations that provide philanthropic mechanisms rather than on organizations that use these mechanisms. In other words, we did not meet with resource-seeking organizations such as nonprofit organizations. Yet, social-mission platforms are in an intermediary position between resource-providers and -seekers (Presenza et al., 2019). Nonprofit organizations are beneficiaries from philanthropic foundations and may also use social-mission platforms for their fundraising campaign or their volunteering recruitment.

Future research should therefore investigate the relationship between social-mission platforms and nonprofit organizations in order to document, among others, the impact of the affiliating and discriminating strategies on the development and work of resource-seeking organizations. If we consider a specific social cause, such as homelessness, would homelessness be better addressed and would social impact increase if incumbent philanthropic organizations develop their capacities to support nonprofit organizations (discriminating strategy) or, in reverse, if newcomers step in and bring diverse innovations to help nonprofit organizations in their work (affiliating strategy)?

Despite these three limits, our research provides a representative example of divergent boundary work within a given population of incumbents when they faced the arrival of newcomers. In this sense, it contributes to literature on field boundaries and boundary work and offers a more fine-grained understanding of actors' strategies.

TRANSVERSAL DISCUSSION

The final part of this dissertation aims to integrate the findings of the three preceding chapters and attempts to bring a transversal and reflexive perspective on my research process. First, I connect the stand-alone chapters and the questions they address. Each chapter is to be conceived as a puzzle piece, presenting a particular viewpoint on Belgian philanthropic organizations and social-mission platforms. Assembling these pieces enables to draw the bigger picture of Belgian organizational philanthropy and to recount the story of its developments as observed during the last four-to-five years.

The first section highlights the consistency of the dissertation. Building on these integrated findings, the second section intends to detail the transversal theoretical contributions with regard to the two bodies of literature on which the dissertation builds – philanthropic studies as well as institutional theory and especially fields theory. While each chapter brings its own contributions, considering them together allows to bring the dissertation to a higher theoretical level. Especially, we introduce and develop two constructs: divergent boundary work and fragmented structuration. In the third section, I consider the possible managerial implications of my academic work. Fourthly, I review the limitations of my research process and suggest future research avenues. Along this vein, a final and more reflexive section sheds light on my role in the research process. As mentioned in the introduction and the chapters, my PhD journey started with a study requested by field actors. This study, my relationship with incumbent philanthropic organizations and with social-mission platforms and my belonging to the University Chair in Philanthropy and Social Investment ineluctably influenced my research process and the resulting picture I draw of Belgian philanthropy. While my involvement had its downsides, it also had its strengths.

1   Integration of findings

The story of the present dissertation started with the observation of both endogenous and exogenous conditions that triggered structuring and renewal dynamics within the Belgian field of organizational philanthropy. First, endogenous conditions related to Belgian incumbent philanthropic organizations (that is, philanthropic resource-providers and collective interest organizations) framing a common diagnosis regarding philanthropy's failures and their field infrastructure. Consistent with failures outlined within extant philanthropic studies, the three interrelated failures identified by Belgian incumbents were: (1) a lack of collaboration between and among philanthropic resource-seekers and -providers; (2) a tendency of resource-providers to close themselves from external expertise, societal evolutions and to potentially tend toward plutocracy; and (3) a lack of professionalization of philanthropic organizations.

Incumbents linked these failures to the fragmented infrastructure of Belgian philanthropy, and especially to the flexible regulatory framework as well as to the weaknesses of the formal field-structuring actor – The Association. Belgian philanthropic organizations lacked interaction networks (relational system), collective thinking on what it means to be a philanthropic organization (meaning system) and guidelines on how to undertake philanthropic actions (operational system).

Second, exogenous conditions related to the arrival of platform-based newcomers, prompted by the tremendous development of new technologies in all domains of society. Belgian social-mission platforms arrived and gravitated at the fringes of philanthropy. As mentioned in the introduction, the continual emergence of such newcomers is a distinctive feature of fields forming around an issue. Philanthropy – the use of private resources for public purposes – has an open and contested nature, as its meanings and practices reflect the broader societal context in which it takes place. With each societal development (e.g., neoliberal trend, technological innovations…) comes new philanthropic actors, practices, tools, and models. All carry their own interpretation of the philanthropy issue. These new actors, practices, tools and models add up in cumulative layers, forming – as one of my research participants metaphorically put it – a "*mille-feuilles*" (The Big Foundation, Interview 1).

At the onset of my fieldwork in 2017, social-mission platforms did not directly and openly challenge philanthropic institutional arrangements. They were disparate and unorganized, akin to free electrons. Yet, while not explicitly connecting with philanthropy, claiming field membership nor directly questioning incumbent philanthropic organizations, social-mission platforms framed a similar diagnosis than incumbents regarding how private resources were used for public purposes. According to them, unmet needs and available resources did not meet; citizens and other societal actors (such as for-profit businesses) were largely not involved in addressing social and environmental issues, which questioned philanthropic action' democratic nature; and organizations addressing social and environmental issues lacked operational support. In sum, while they did not especially target the field of philanthropy to frame the added-value of their technological tool, social mission platforms, in their diagnosis, also highlighted the fragmented field infrastructure.

Overall incumbent organizations and newcomers framed similar diagnosis regarding Belgian philanthropy and agreed that it needed to evolve. This was the starting point of this dissertation and each of its three chapters has striven to consider it from a particular angle. Chapters I and III show that while all incumbent philanthropic organizations faced these endogenous and exogenous conditions, they did not respond with a common strategy regarding the development of their field infrastructure and their interaction with newcomers. Their divergence in strategies was to be related to their divergence in the solutions they believed should be articulated to overcome the failures they identified. Two strategies co-existed to take a field-structuring position and build the field infrastructure (i.e., The Big Foundation's versus The Transformative Foundation's strategy) as well regarding newcomers (i.e., affiliators versus discriminators). While I developed the infrastructural strategies and the boundary strategies separately, enlightening parallels can be drawn between them.

Ultimately, infrastructure strategy and boundary strategy jointly form two more global strategic patterns regarding philanthropy's configuration: a first integration pattern (permeable, flexible and at the organizational level) and a second differentiation pattern (distinctive, consistent and at the collective level). The first part of this section on findings' integration is thus dedicated to connecting Chapters I and III.

Focusing on platform-based newcomers, Chapter II shows how social-mission platforms developed within the Belgian philanthropy context, explains how they organized to overcome philanthropy's failures they identified, and illustrates how they combined – to a more or lesser extent – the entrepreneurial and the digital evolutionary layers of philanthropy. In sum, Chapter II highlights three archetypes of social-mission platforms (i.e., ecosystem-building platform, community-designing platform, and meeting-space platform) and their internal and external consistency. Among these three archetypes, two strategic patterns emerge and mirror the two global strategies developed by incumbent organizations regarding their field's infrastructure and boundaries. The second part of this section on findings' integration is thus dedicated to contrasting Chapter II on newcomers with Chapters I and III on incumbents.

Finally, the last part of this integration of findings takes comparisons between the three chapters a step further. More than an opposition between two groups of actors – incumbents versus newcomers –, findings reveal crossed collaboration and opposition patterns between four groups pursuing two distinct strategies. On one side, certain incumbents and newcomers adopted the first integration pattern (permeability, flexibility, and organizational level) and on the other side other incumbents and newcomers adopted the second differentiation pattern (distinctiveness, consistency, and collective level). Building on these crossed collaboration and opposition, I end by formulating hypotheses on philanthropy's future configuration.

1.1 *Two global strategies regarding field infrastructure and boundaries*

Chapter I and Chapter III unveiled two global strategies to configure philanthropy: a first integration strategic pattern relying on permeability, flexibility and based at the organizational level and a second differentiation strategic pattern relying on distinctiveness, consistency and based at the collective level.

Table 9 – Two strategies to configure philanthropy

	TBF / Affiliators	**TTF / Discriminators**
Boundary	High degree of permeability	High degree of distinctiveness
Infrastructure	High degree of flexibility Organizational level	High degree of consistency Collective level
Strategic patterns	*Integration*	*Differentiation*

The strategy implemented by The Big Foundation (TBF) to take a field-structuring position reflects the affiliators strategy regarding newcomers (see Table 10.1. here below). TBF is indeed part of affiliators. Overall, TBF and affiliators form the first integration strategy which can be characterized by a high degree of *permeability and flexibility* and is based mainly at the *organizational level*.

Table 10.1. – Comparing TBF's field-structuring strategy and affiliators' boundary strategy

	TBF / Field-structuring strategy	**Affiliators / boundary strategy**
Second order codes	Developing, refining, and disseminating its own understanding of philanthropy	Maintaining some plasticity in the definition of philanthropy Legitimizing newcomers as field members
	Building field members' capacities within its organization	Developing newcomers' capacities through organizational support mechanisms Seeking inspiration through newcomers' involvement in their organization
	Defining field members' interactions through convening	Connecting newcomers as field members Legitimizing newcomers as field members

The core idea of this strategy is to structure and renew the field by growing in size and, hence, increasing heterogeneity. To avoid philanthropy's decay, actors advocate for permeability. Within its position-taking strategy, TBF *developed, refined, and disseminated its own understanding of philanthropy* by calling on experts and appointing think-tank groups to assess whether philanthropic actions undertaken by TBF fell under the broad, common denominator of general interest as well as to produce knowledge on philanthropy and its evolutions. Framing its understanding of philanthropy on the notion of general interest, TBF cast a wide net of potential philanthropic actors and actions. Along the same line, affiliators *maintained a plastic definition of philanthropy* by welcoming diverse and complementary means to contribute to general interest.

This broad and plastic definition formed philanthropy's meaning system and symbolic boundary – that is, what it means to belong to the field, its distinctive characteristics and collective identity. This abstract collective identity then concretely translated into philanthropy's operational system and social boundary – that is, how to appropriately implement philanthropic actions and who can access the field's resources to implement these actions. As, according to their definition, any actor – including platform-based newcomers – which undertook actions directed toward general interest were to be conceived as part of philanthropy, TBF and affiliators respectively hosted diversified and *flexible* vehicles to operationalize as much philanthropic projects as possible and supported newcomers through extending their internal mechanisms.

These vehicles, and more broadly internal mechanisms, served to *build field members' and newcomers' capacities*. Within both TBF's and affiliating strategy, operational mechanisms occurred in the first place *at the organizational level*. This created a direct link between TBF and (potential) field members as well as between affiliators and newcomers.

This direct organizational link had three implications for philanthropy's configuration. First, TBF and affiliators got privilege access to (newcomers') innovations at the fringes of philanthropy which could serve as *a basis for inspiration to renew their own philanthropic practices*. Second, by providing newcomers and field members at large with a specific "box" within their organization, TBF and affiliators incited them to adopt what they believed were appropriate philanthropic behaviors. In this sense, TBF and affiliators educated field members and newcomers. It can be argued that this decreased and constrained

newcomers' potential radicalness vis-à-vis philanthropy and brought an incumbent-controlled renewal into the field.

Third, as newcomers' inclusion started at TBF's and affiliators' organizational level, TBF and affiliators were also in a position to influence how innovation unfolded throughout the field and how it reached other field members. This is broadly reflected in the *convening* approach of TBF to build philanthropy's internal and external channels as well as in *affiliators' connections of newcomers to philanthropy* and its members. While TBF organized field-configuring events, matched philanthropic organizations together and created connections with broader societal stakeholders and while affiliators created connections among newcomers and between newcomers and philanthropic organizations as well as other stakeholders, these connections mainly occurred within the framework set by TBF and affiliators and through their intermediation. Newcomers publicly endorsed and legitimized as field members through their access to field resources – including operational and relational mechanisms – were therefore those TBF and affiliators previously approved of within their organizational boundaries. It can be argued that they served as filters to philanthropy's innovations.

Overall, this integration strategy – permeable, flexible, and organizational – outwardly portrayed a rather open image of philanthropy, which in turn served to keep attracting newcomers at its fringes and to maintain its plastic definition and highly adaptable vehicles.

On the other side, the strategy implemented by The Transformative Foundation (TTF) to take a field-structuring position reflects the discriminators strategy regarding newcomers (see Table 10.2. here below). TTF is indeed part of discriminators. Overall, TTF and discriminators form the second differentiation strategic pattern which can be characterized by a high degree of *distinctiveness and consistency* and is based mainly at the *collective level*.

Table 10.2. – Comparing TFF's field-structuring strategy and discriminators' boundary strategy

	TTF / Field-structuring strategy	Discriminators / boundary strategy
Second order codes	Collectively developing and disseminating an alternative understanding of philanthropy	Reclaiming a precise definition of philanthropy Separating newcomers from philanthropic identity
	Building population members' capacities within and outside its organization Setting examples on how to undertake philanthropic actions	Developing incumbents' organizational capacities through shared practices (and collaborations) Claiming incumbents' innovative potential
	Defining population and field-members interactions through collaborating	Developing incumbents' organizational capacities through (shared practices) and collaborations Avoiding newcomers' social connections within philanthropy

The core idea of this strategy is not to structure and renew philanthropy by growing in size but rather by promoting a paradigm shift rethinking how philanthropy is undertaken. To avoid philanthropy's decay, actors advocate for distinctiveness and thus a lower degree of permeability. Facing TBF and affiliators' broad and plastic definition of philanthropy, TTF and discriminators *reclaimed a precise definition*. As many different definitions already co-existed within the field, to the point that some philanthropic organizations did not use the term "philanthropy" anymore, TTF and discriminators urged for philanthropic organizations to gather together and *collectively* negotiate and delineate distinct and consistent characteristics of philanthropy, philanthropic organizations, and philanthropic action. TTF and discriminators argued that clear-cut contours of philanthropy would enable its field members to better act and interact as they would recognize themselves in a collective identity.

This distinct and consistent definition formed thus philanthropy's meaning system and symbolic boundary advocated by TTF and discriminators. As for TBF and affiliators, these were then translated into their philanthropy's operational system

and social boundary. However, unlike TBF and affiliators, TTF and discriminators allowed less flexibility in their operational mechanisms. At its organizational level, TTF provided a limited number of philanthropic vehicles to only host philanthropic projects that were *consistent* with its understanding of philanthropy. As such, it only allowed field's access to actors who specifically met the distinctive characteristics rather than to any actor serving general interest.

Along the same line and contrary to affiliators who flexibilized their internal mechanisms to support newcomers, discriminators *separated newcomers from philanthropy's identity* by questioning their philanthropic nature. Including them would have been inconsistent with the distinct philanthropic characteristics they attempted to build.

Therefore, contrary to TBF and affiliators whose strategy started at their organizational level and whose innovation were then partially shared at the field level, TTF and discriminators' strategy occurred at a more collective level. Shared (innovative) meanings and practices were then implemented at the organizational level of each field member. As such, the bulk of TTF's operational mechanisms occurred at a collective level and consisted in offering advice and *setting examples* of how to appropriately undertake philanthropic action. TTF also implemented peer-learning groups at the incumbent population level and learning-oriented partnerships at the field and broader environment level in order to develop and diffuse its alternative shared meanings of philanthropy. Similarly, discriminators *developed incumbents' organizational capacities through shared practices and collaborations*. They transparently shared their philanthropic practices in order to inspire others and experimented with joint projects and collective support programs.

Examples, shared practices and collaborations created direct links among philanthropic organizations, which had three implications for philanthropy's configuration. First, it strengthened philanthropy's internal channels. Rather than being connected through the intermediation of a convening actor, philanthropic organizations *collaborated* within multi-stakeholder partnerships. As field members formed a more close-knit community, philanthropy portrayed a less open and accessible image. Second, innovation did not travel from the periphery of philanthropy to its center but was claimed to be designed at its very core. TTF and discriminators *claimed their very own innovative potential*. Third, philanthropic organizations' collaboration and innovation helped further differentiate newcomers

from philanthropy, as newcomers' innovative nature was questioned in the light of incumbents' collective innovation. Yet, this did not mean that TTF and discriminators did not pay attention to newcomers. When they recognized the innovative potential of one newcomer, they attempted to support it while keeping it outside of philanthropy and connected it to other fields, such as social entrepreneurship. This prevented newcomers from directly getting access to the field's resources and to bring unnecessary diversity into the field by regularly entering and exiting it, while still allowing incumbents to be aware of broader societal evolutions.

While both strategies aimed to bring structuration and renewal into the field, their coexistence, and the adherence of the various field members to one or the other did not stimulate a "regular" and "steady" configuration of the field. If regarding newcomers' arrival and boundary strategies, two distinct groups formed, this was not quite the case regarding field-structuring strategies. Although developed and pursued by two distinct actors, TBF's and TTF's field-structuring strategies were variously and inconsistently endorsed by other field members. Most field members recognized some added value in both, had grievances against both, and had expectations regarding The Association.

In addition, as TTF's field-structuring strategy opposed TBF's strategy and as discriminators reacted to affiliators' proactive inclusion of newcomers, the field could be argued to evolve from a fragmentated condition to a contested one. However, this evolution of the field toward a more contested condition should be considered cautiously as Belgian philanthropy was no "war zone". TBF did not consider TTF in its field-structuring strategy. And affiliators barely adapted their strategy in reaction to discriminators' contestation. Given this loose adherence and this one-way contestation, the field structured rather slowly and even tended to remain in a fragmented condition.

1.2   Newcomers mirror incumbents' global strategies

Interestingly, two archetypes of social-mission platforms out of the three I identified mirror in their organizational configuration the two strategies developed by incumbent philanthropic organizations regarding their field, its infrastructure, and its boundaries. On one hand, the community-designing archetype reflects the first integration strategic pattern (permeable, flexible, and organizational) (see Table 11.1. here below).

Table 11.1. – Comparing TBF's field-structuring strategy, the affiliating strategy, and the community-designing archetype

	TBF's strategy	Affiliating strategy	Community-designing archetype	
Second order codes	Developing, refining, and disseminating its own understanding of philanthropy	Maintaining some plasticity in the definition of philanthropy Legitimizing newcomers as field members	Semi-open access	Organizing elements
	Building field members' capacities within its organization	Developing newcomers' capacities through organizational support mechanisms Seeking inspiration through newcomers' involvement in their organization	Customized digital interface Decentralized interventionist approach	
	Defining field members' interactions through convening	Connecting newcomers as field members Legitimizing newcomers as field members	Community-centered interactions	

The community-designing archetype allows various societal stakeholders a *semi-open access* to its digital interface. It considers that social impact goes beyond the nonprofit sector and the public sphere and rather concerns all stakeholders of society, including for-profit businesses. According to community-designing platforms, considering the complexity of social and environmental issues, it would be counterproductive to restrict the use of private resources for public purposes or, more broadly, societal engagement only to a certain kind of societal stakeholders (such as wealthy philanthropists, nonprofit organizations, volunteers…). To access community-designing platforms, stakeholders do not need to meet specific criteria regarding their social mission but are selected according to their capacities to manage a customized platform.

Therefore, community-designing platforms have quite *permeable* boundaries and comprise a wide set of heterogeneous stakeholders. This conception of social and environmental issues and of how to address them as well as who can address them can be compared with affiliators' plastic definition of philanthropy and the diverse and complementary means they welcome as well as with TBF's shared meanings built around the broad notion of general interest.

Community-designing platforms manage their wide set of heterogeneous stakeholders by building highly *customizable digital interfaces*. The community-designing archetype is highly *flexible* as it tailors digital interfaces to stakeholders' features. This customizability parallels TBF's diversified and flexible tools to operationalize as much philanthropic projects as possible as well as affiliators' extension of their internal mechanisms to support newcomers.

In addition, in order for each stakeholder to appropriately engage, boost and expand its own community via the customized platform, community-designing platforms provide consultancy and training. While this reflects a decentralized interventionist approach in respect of the platform organization, this management of stakeholders' action and interaction still relates to TBF's infrastructural centralizing logic. Indeed, as much as TBF's vehicles, tools and advice directly link field members and newcomers to TBF's organization, community-designing platforms' consultancy and training create a *direct link between the platform organization and a stakeholder and its distinct community*. If the platform organization and its stakeholders are considered as forming a "mini-field", it could be argued that community-designing platforms are centralizing knowledge, tools, and templates.

Just as TBF – and by extension affiliators – community-designing platforms remain the center of expertise: they know how to build a platform and how to manage it. Although stakeholders are supposed to be autonomous in their daily use of their platform, community-designers remain in charge whenever major modifications need to be made.

Furthermore, the interaction pattern – occurring between community-designers and distinct communities as well as within communities but not across communities – reminds the convening approach of TBF's to create the internal and external channels of philanthropy. By creating distinct digital interfaces for specific communities, the community-designing archetype avoids stakeholders with too divergent interests to be in the same digital space. It acts as a matchmaker, fostering the relationships it deems successful.

On the other hand, the ecosystem-building platform reflects the second differentiation strategic pattern (distinctive, consistent, and collective) (see Table 11.2. here below).

Table 11.2. – Comparing TTF's field-structuring strategy, the discriminating strategy, and the ecosystem-building archetype

	TTF's strategy	Discriminating strategy	Ecosystem-building archetype	
Second order codes	Collectively developing and disseminating an alternative understanding of philanthropy	Reclaiming a precise definition of philanthropy Separating newcomers from philanthropic identity	Closed access	**Organizing elements**
	Building population members' capacities within and outside its organization Setting examples on how to undertake philanthropic actions	Developing incumbents' organizational capacities through shared practices (and collaborations) Claiming incumbents' innovative potential	Generic digital interface Centralized interventionist approach	
	Defining population and field-members interactions through collaborating	Developing incumbents' organizational capacities through (shared practices) and collaborations Avoiding newcomers' social connections within philanthropy	Ecosystem-like interactions	

Ecosystem-building platforms put a strong emphasis on building multiple relationships on and around their digital interfaces (multilateral, online and offline, inside and outside platform's boundaries). Interaction patterns occur between the platform organization and resource-seekers, resource-providers and third parties as well as among resource-seekers and among resource-providers. These multilateral interactions resemble the collaborating approach adopted by TTF to create philanthropy's internal and external channels as well as the shared practices and collaborations undertaken by discriminators to build philanthropic organizations' capacities.

Similar to discriminators who argue that more qualitative and innovative philanthropic actions could be undertaken through collaborating, the ecosystem-building archetype claims that its multilateral interactions with and among its stakeholders enable it to give credibility and a guarantee of quality to the platform.

To ensure that interactions properly develop, the ecosystem-building platform opts for a *closed access*. There is a strict screening and selection process at platform's entry: only stakeholders properly aligning with the platform's social mission can join its digital interface. As such, ecosystem-building platforms have quite *distinct* and rather *impermeable boundaries* which allow them to reduce heterogeneity in their membership. The group of stakeholders composing an ecosystem-building platform is rather homogenous, sharing a collective identity. This can be compared with the precise definition of philanthropy advocated by discriminators and the distinct characteristics they strive to give to philanthropy.

Ecosystem-building platforms' collective identity is further strengthened through careful and *consistent* management of its stakeholders' actions and interactions. Contrary to community-designing platforms which embody the expertise on social-mission platform's building and management, ecosystem-building platforms tend to rely on their stakeholders' expertise to assess resource-seekers sustainability, to provide them with a multifaceted coaching, but also to share ideas, knowledge and best-practice examples. This way of building the infrastructure on which their stakeholders rely to act and interact reflects a centralized interventionist approach. Indeed, the platform organization equates its digital interface, all stakeholders are displayed on a generic interface and thus involved within platform' boundaries, contrary to the community-designing archetype which dissociates its organization and its customized digital interfaces.

Still, stakeholders' management of ecosystem-building platforms is consistent with TTF's decentralizing and exemplariness logic, which also provides guidelines on how to appropriately operationalize philanthropy through *collective mechanisms*. Ecosystem-building platforms' intervention in their stakeholders' action and interaction is also consistent with their multilateral interaction pattern. As they follow common guidelines, share ideas and best practices, stakeholders further convey shared values and develop a collective identity, which in turn reinforce their close-knit interactions.

While the meeting-space platform, with its open access could be argued to reflect the first permeable strategy, its noninterventionist approach implies it lacks an infrastructural strategy. This is the reason why I only consider the community-designing and the ecosystem-building archetypes in my comparison with TBF's and TTF's strategies and with the affiliating and discriminating strategies. With their interventionist approach, these last two archetypes develop an infrastructural strategy to stimulate the action and interaction of their stakeholders – alongside a boundary strategy to determine the scope of stakeholders they consider.

Chapter II explains that at the end of my fieldwork ecosystem-building platforms were starting to form an alliance and that they were excluding community-designing platforms of their consortium. Ecosystem-building platforms appeared particularly critical regarding community-designing platforms. Interestingly, when criticizing community-designers, ecosystem-builders used similar arguments than those discriminators used against social-mission platforms in general. For instance, ecosystem-builders questioned community-designers' for-profit orientation and the genuine nature of their social mission, they qualified them of mere digital tools and wondered about their social added value and the quality of their action. And when community-designers replied to ecosystem-builders' criticisms, they advanced the same arguments they used against discriminators: they argued their for-profit orientation enabled them to have a greater social impact than discriminators and ecosystem-builders' nonprofit orientation.

As affiliators and discriminators assigned platform-based newcomers a collective identity – either philanthropic or not – without much distinction among these newcomers, and as affiliators created connections among newcomers who previously did not know each other, it could be hypothesized that these various collective identities and connections shed a particular light on differences among social-mission platforms and influenced how they mutually perceived themselves. The various and opposite discourses within the field of philanthropy might have shaped how platform-based newcomers structured themselves and developed their interaction with one another to build a collective identity. At first, social-mission platforms did not consider themselves part of philanthropy, some only begin to do so after being proactively affiliated by incumbents.

I suggest that because newcomers mirror incumbents' strategies, their structuration as a field or subfield is as fragmented as that of incumbents. As mentioned, open contestation did not really manifest between the two incumbents' strategies within Belgian philanthropy. This pattern seems also to be reflected among newcomers. While ecosystem-building platforms have started to form alliances, it is not quite the case for community-designing platforms. On one hand, the latter was not critical regarding the former – in the manner of affiliators and TBF which did not openly oppose discriminators and TTF's contestation. On the contrary, community-designers stated they would be open for a collaboration with ecosystem-designers should the opportunity arise, as they believed they could be complementary. On the other hand, community-designers appeared to be on their individual path, as they were more incline to individually develop their own expertise than rely on others.

1.3 Crossed collaboration and opposition between four groups of actors along two strategies to configure the field of philanthropy

Overall, the three chapters of this dissertation highlight heterogeneity among both incumbents and newcomers. Four groups of actors are distributed along two strategies to configure philanthropy: (1) incumbents and (2) newcomers pursuing an integration strategic pattern; and (3) incumbents and (4) newcomers pursuing a differentiation strategic pattern (see Table 12 here below).

The end of Chapter III, building on my latest (2020-2021) interviews with incumbent philanthropic organizations, illustrates the softening of the discriminating strategy. As far as philanthropy's boundaries were concerned, discriminators appeared to come closer to affiliators, as they selectively endorsed newcomers. Globally, while incumbents of the integration strategy (TBF and affiliators) interacted with both newcomers of the integration (community-designers) and the differentiation strategies (ecosystem-builders), incumbents of the differentiation strategy (TTF and discriminators) tended to start interacting only with newcomers of the differentiation strategy (ecosystem-builders) and to keep questioning newcomers of the integration strategy (community designers).

Conversely, newcomers of the differentiation strategy (ecosystem-builders) tended to interact with all incumbents, even though they expressed doubt regarding philanthropic intentions of actors such as banks. Newcomers of the integration strategy (community-designers) tended, for their part, to interact with incumbents of the integration strategy (TBF and affiliators), but still experienced struggle interacting with incumbents of the differentiation strategy (TTF and discriminators)

which did not always selectively endorse them. This depicts a pattern of crossed collaboration and opposition.

Table 12 – Two strategies to configure philanthropy and four groups of actors

	Integration strategy	**Differentiation strategy**
Incumbent philanthropic organizations	TBF / Affiliators	TTF / Discriminators
Platform-based newcomers	Community-designers	Ecosystem-builders

In terms of field configuration, the coexistence of these two strategies and their embodiment by both incumbent philanthropic organizations and platform-based newcomers demonstrate that each strategic attempt to structure and renew philanthropy is offset by an alternative strategy. Rather than leading to a steady structuration and renewal, this interplay between these two strategies and four groups of actors constantly brings back a certain degree of fragmentation.

While discriminators started to selectively endorse and interact with newcomers, this selective endorsing did not build on clear criteria to objectively determine which newcomer could actually fit the philanthropic identity and which one could not. Each incumbent gave its own analysis of newcomers and differentiated them according to its "homemade" criteria. This situation is to be related to the lack of a centralized structuring force within the field, as the formal field-structuring actor – The Association – did not play its role to take a stance vis-à-vis newcomers in order to guide its members. While the boundary aspect of the two strategies appeared to come closer together, a similar bridging did not appear to occur on the infrastructure aspect. On the contrary, as discriminators' selective endorsement varied from one philanthropic organization to the other, newcomers' support was a bit enhanced but was not consistent. This inconsistency is likely to create disparities among newcomers and to further widen the cleavage among them.

What is observed at the infrastructural level is the heightened acknowledgment and endorsement of TBF's and TTF's key role as informal and challenging field-structuring actor. Despite criticisms regarding how TBF took a field-structuring position, certain field members started to recognize that newcomers' connection to philanthropy should occur through its umbrella organization. Interestingly, these field members did not mention The Association. Along the same line, TBF was the first to give newcomers a specific label within philanthropy – "philanthropic

entrepreneurship" – which was in itself an act of structuration and served to further establish TBF's authority as field-structuring actor. In reaction, TTF was the first discriminator to support a newcomer. This support could be interpreted as TTF's willingness to "stay in the race" and to keep opposing TBF in all its structuring actions. As such, it could be argued that boundary strategies' bridging could lead to further divide the two field-structuring strategies; and especially if TTF, promoting another understanding of philanthropy, supports other newcomers than TBF. While discriminators' softening was a step toward field's structuration, a wide divide in field-structuring strategies is a step toward fragmentation.

Finally, beyond acknowledging the key role of TTF and TBF, discriminators' increased attention to newcomers also enabled them to take a different look at their field and its members. On one hand, discriminators realized that newcomers might not be that different from other philanthropic organizations (e.g., foundations with no endowment). This comparison confronted discriminators with their inconsistencies. What if excluding platform-based newcomers would not especially help align the field's social boundary to the symbolic boundary claimed by discriminators, as it would simply add to existing inconsistency? On the other hand, discriminators started to admit that a certain complementary could exist between incumbent philanthropic organizations and newcomers, as neither of them managed to address philanthropy's failures on their own. Newcomers could help incumbents reach democracy and collaboration which they struggle to achieve, whereas incumbents could strengthen newcomers' micro-act of societal engagement which on their own would lack efficiency. The shape of this complementarity, its implementation and development remain to be understood.

2 Contributions

Building on the integration of findings, I detail in this section the transversal contributions this dissertation makes to philanthropy studies and institutional theory. The following Figure 9 summarizes the integrated findings and links them to transversal contributions in the left and right margins. The circle shapes refer to contributions to philanthropy studies and research on social-mission platforms. The square shapes refer to contributions to institutional theory and fields theory.

Figure 9 – Integration of findings and contributions

Endogenous conditions: Incumbents' diagnosis framing of philanthropy's failures; Fragmented field infrastructure. Philanthropy as essentially contested issue

Exogenous conditions: Arrival of newcomers: do not claim membership; but frame a similar diagnosis than incumbents. Multiple issue interpretations alongside societal developments

Boundary work / field conditions

Divergence in incumbents' strategies

Newcomers' heterogeneity
Chapter II

Fine-grained understanding of platforms

Documenting incumbents' heterogeneity

Chapter I
Field-structuring position strategies

Chapter III
Newcomers interaction strategies

Meeting-space platform

Interorg. boundary work

TBF's strategy

Affiliating strategy

Community-designing platform

Understanding of platforms' interaction with philanthropy

Integration strategic pattern

Persistent fragmentation

TTF's strategy

Discriminating strategy

Ecosystem-building platform

Multilevel boundary interaction

Differentiation strategic pattern

Purposeful fragmented structuration

Discriminators' softening

Integrating incumbents

Differentiating incumbents

Explaining oscillations of cycles

Productive fragmented structuration

Integrating newcomers

Differentiating newcomers

Crossed collaboration / opposition

2.1 Contributions to philanthropy studies and research on social-mission platforms

As a result of my research process, I make three contributions to philanthropy studies and research on social-mission platforms. I first contribute to research on philanthropy's essentially contested nature by documenting the heterogeneity of incumbent philanthropic organizations. Second, I offer a more fine-grained understanding of social-mission platforms, their collaborative mechanisms and entrepreneurial aspects, as well as how they relate to philanthropy. Finally, I enrich the understanding of philanthropy as oscillating between stability and change as well as evolving according to a cumulative-layered process.

2.1.1 Documenting the heterogeneity of philanthropic incumbents

The first contribution relates to the heterogeneity of incumbent philanthropic organizations, and more specifically how their divergent understandings of philanthropy lead to divergent strategies regarding philanthropy's configuration. While engaging in my fieldwork and meeting with research participants, I decided not to impose on them my own academic and textbook definition of philanthropy. On the contrary, during interviews and archival documents analysis, I chose to take a particular interest in philanthropic organizations' own understanding of philanthropy. This choice allowed me to better highlight the significant heterogeneity of incumbent philanthropic organizations, which *a priori* could have been expected to form a rather homogenous group.

Beyond highlighting heterogeneity, I looked closer at what was happening behind the definitional debates. I unveiled the various strategies which incumbents – according to their own understanding – developed vis-à-vis their field: what ought to be considered as philanthropic resources, who is legitimate to be recognized as a philanthropic organization and to undertake philanthropic action, how should a philanthropic action be undertaken, with whom is it appropriate to collaborate? Contrasting research participants' discourses, I also revealed how these strategies interacted, opposed, or ignored each other. More than being heterogeneous, the Belgian field of philanthropy is crossed by contending views.

By highlighting heterogeneity and ensuing actors' divergent strategies, I contribute to scholarly work emphasizing the essentially contested nature of philanthropy (Daly, 2012; Gallie, 1956; Gautier, 2019) and to work describing philanthropy as a "solo, fragmented, competitive and image-driven enterprise" (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016a, p. 515). This dissertation offers an empirical illustration of the current and relevant meanings at play in contemporary philanthropy as well as their implications. Taking a close interest in the field and its actors, I am able to shed light on – too often – hidden contentions and soft power struggles between philanthropic actors. Within philanthropy studies, power issues are not always considered, especially when the focus is on benevolence and altruism. With the arrival of venture philanthropy and impact investing, this "selfless" and "harmonious" image of philanthropy has started to change (for examples of such contentions, see Mair and Hehenberger (2014) as well as Hehenberger and colleagues (2019), and most recently Harvey and colleagues (2020)). It would appear that philanthropy – although supposedly primarily directed to public purposes rather than self-interested goals – is a marketplace like any other, with its market shares, its dominant positions and monopoly, and its business strategies.

While scholars tend to call for more conceptual clarification of philanthropy in order to reduce controversies and advance a more consistent body of philanthropy research (von Schnurbein et al., 2021), my research process reminds us that this conceptual clarification – however needed – won't occur without philanthropists, philanthropic organizations, philanthropy observers and practitioners as a whole. Before being an academic definitional discussion, the assumptions underlying what giving means and how to give remain a field-grounded debate.

Furthermore, even though a commonly agreed understanding of philanthropy would eventually be reached, this would inevitably be a flexible and changing one. Recent research on philanthropy – this dissertation included – have shown the significance of constantly comparing our understanding of the philanthropic phenomenon to social reality in order to ensure its relevance (Barman, 2017; Jung et al., 2016).

2.1.2   A fine-grained understanding of social-mission platforms

Second, this dissertation – and particularly Chapter II – contributes to a more fine-grained understanding of social-mission platforms and their various organizational configurations. As such, my findings move away – to a certain extent – from commonly researched philanthropic topics (such as elite individual philanthropists or highly-formalized foundations) and offer a different lens through which to look at philanthropy by exploring new philanthropic forms (von Schnurbein et al., 2021). The typology of social-mission platforms and its three archetypes move research on technology-enabled philanthropic intermediaries forward. As these intermediaries are so far insufficiently researched, I answer scholars' call to develop qualitative and comparative case studies (Logue & Grimes, 2020; Messeni Petruzzelli et al., 2019; S. Phillips & Jung, 2016a). I give a rich and in-depth empirical account as well as European – rather than U.S. – examples of social-mission platforms, as representing one manifestation of recent philanthropy's innovations.

Disentangling their organizational configurations and uncovering their organizing elements, I contribute, on one hand, to further explaining how social-mission platforms organize to build and manage their network of stakeholders to address societal issues. While it is largely said that technology-enabled intermediaries – and especially digital platforms – have the potential to give a more democratic and collaborative tone to philanthropic action (Bernholz, 2016; Bernholz et al., 2010; Piatak & Mikkelsen, 2021), few research has so far closely looked at platforms' collaborative mechanisms in social mission settings (for exceptions, see Logue & Grimes (2020) and Presenza and colleagues (2019)).

By highlighting different degrees of platform organization's intervention in stakeholders' action and interaction as well as the significance of digital interfaces and their customizability, I enrich this emerging body of research, and by extension also connect to conversations on the sharing economy and, more precisely, on online communities' governance (Acquier et al., 2017; Berkowitz & Souchaud, 2019; Maurer et al., 2020; Reischauer & Mair, 2018a, 2018b). As social-mission platforms are a recent phenomenon, I am only able to infer some implications of implemented collaborative mechanisms on the type of collaborations that unfold (e.g., limited to philanthropic community or reaching multiple stakeholders but re-creating silos). Undoubtedly, a more longitudinal perspective would enable to

confirm and refine the collaborative mechanisms I highlight and further explain and challenge the collaborative potential of platforms in social-mission settings.

On the other hand, I contribute to further explaining how social-mission platforms combine entrepreneurial and digital evolutions of philanthropy. Extant philanthropy literature already suggests that technology-enabled philanthropic intermediaries emerge at "the boundaries between markets and social purpose" (Bernholz, 2016, p. 444; Bernholz et al., 2010) and that Millennials tend to build on technological and entrepreneurial approach to engage in philanthropic actions (Y. Lee, 2020; Moody & Goldseker, 2017; S. Phillips & Jung, 2016b). Moreover, sharing economy literature highlights the existence of both nonprofit and for-profit models of platforms and how this orientation choice impacts on their outward image and their network building (Gerwe & Silva, 2020; Wruk, Oberg, Klutt, & Maurer, 2019; Zhang et al., 2020).

My typology further supports these two bodies of literature by confirming a firmer entwining of philanthropy and entrepreneurship, and even more so not just a coexistence of entrepreneurial and digital evolutions but their genuine combination (especially with the community-designing archetype). I also bring two nuances. I first show that although all three archetypes include, to a certain extent, for-profit businesses within their stakeholders, they do not all agree on the type of businesses (e.g., ecosystem-builders emphasize social enterprises). As already shown by research on entrepreneurial philanthropy (Boiardi & Gianoncelli, 2018), the entwining of philanthropy and entrepreneurship appears to also occur along a continuum when digital innovations are accounted for. Some social-mission platforms will tend toward the more entrepreneurial end of the continuum while others will hardly include entrepreneurial elements and rather emphasize their mission-driven orientation.

Second, I show that social-mission platforms' for-profit legal status or inclusion of business-like stakeholders is not always a voluntary choice – at least in the Belgian institutional context. The lack of philanthropic funding or public subsidies for digital platforms sometimes constrained platform founders to opt for a market-driven orientation. And when this is a voluntary choice, it is not always a rewarding one, as platform's sustainability and success also depend on the (external and internal) consistent implementation of other organizing elements. This tension between social mission and market logics emphasized by my typology more broadly relates to research on hybrids (Battilana, Besharov, & Mitzinneck, 2017).

While studies on hybridity has tended to take social enterprises as its typical example of hybrid organizations (Ebrahim, Battilana, & Mair, 2014; Mair, Mayer, & Lutz, 2015; Pache & Santos, 2013), the three archetypes of social-mission platforms described in this dissertation show that further and deeper connections could be made with studies on philanthropy's evolutions and digital platforms to document hybrid organizing and hybrid orchestration of multi-stakeholder interactions (Reypens, Lievens, & Blazevic, 2021; Savarese, Huybrechts, & Hudon, 2020)

Finally, while I emphasize the heterogeneity of incumbents, I also illustrate the heterogeneity of newcomers. In this sense, I align with studies conceiving philanthropy as increasingly becoming "a burgeoning 'philanthropy industry'" (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016b, p. 11). Furthermore, I show that platform-based newcomers' heterogeneity is closely linked to incumbent philanthropic organizations' heterogeneity – at least in my Belgian institutional context. The debates among incumbents regarding what is "the best model" of philanthropy mirrors with newcomers which argue about "the best platform-based model" to orient private resources for public purposes. As such, this dissertation further contributes to document the interaction between established philanthropy and new and emerging philanthropic forms (Barman, 2017; Bernholz, 2016). I reflect further on this specific interaction in the section on contributions to fields theory below.

Extant literature portrays technology-enabled intermediaries as either aiming to radically disrupt philanthropy (S. Phillips & Jung, 2016a) or akin to free electrons uncoordinatedly gravitating at the fringes of philanthropy (Bernholz, 2016). In the specific case of social-mission platforms, the present dissertation rather illustrates the latter than the former. Platforms I encountered adopted a complementary approach vis-à-vis established philanthropic organizations. While philanthropy's failures stimulated the emergence of platform-based newcomers, so did its merits (i.e., redistribution, pluralism, and innovation). Social-mission platforms aimed to complement and reinforce philanthropic organizations' action. This contrasts with the onset of entrepreneurial philanthropy, during which venture philanthropists first explicitly opposed traditional philanthropists before a "mutualistic coexistence" could develop (Mair & Hehenberger, 2014). From my research process, it appears that social-mission platforms express the willingness to coexist in a mutually reinforcing way as from the beginning, without going through a phase of open conflict and by building up on as well as integrating previous philanthropic evolutions (such as the entrepreneurial layer of the 2000s).

As Chapter III shows, dispute rather originated within incumbent population. As such, despite newcomers' explicit willingness for complementarity, collaboration with incumbents did not automatically develop, as incumbents themselves did not all adopt a complementary approach (i.e., affiliators versus discriminators). The crossed collaboration and opposition between and among incumbents and newcomers further contribute to a deeper understanding of power struggles within philanthropy. Indirectly, this also contributes to water down and nuance polarized debates around digital innovations within philanthropy, notably around issues of slacktivism, greenwashing, ethic-washing, social-washing, open-washing, and the like (Heimstädt, 2017; Hinings et al., 2018; S. Phillips & Jung, 2016a). Even though I do not address these issues in the present dissertation, highlighting the diversity of actors and the possibility for these actors to evolve helps prevent to homogenously consider them under the same umbrella. In this vein, it encourages scholars to continue to take a cautious look at platforms' actual practices and evolution patterns.

2.1.3 Further explaining enduring failures leading to cumulative layers of innovation

Finally, the present dissertation enriches initial studies claiming that philanthropy is a "product of its time" (Breeze, 2011; Daly, 2012) and that it evolves according to a process of cumulative layers (Cunningham, 2016; Moody & Breeze, 2016). As mentioned in the introduction, failures and merits inherent to the use of private resources for public purposes are enduring, what changes is the way they are respectively avoided and fulfilled, depending on the socio-historic context within which the private-public relationship develops (Reich, 2018; Reich et al., 2016; Wiepking & Handy, 2015). Given the enduring nature of failures and merits and the context-dependent and changing responses to them, multiple, uncoordinated, and sometimes conflicting interpretations of philanthropy are to be expected whenever a new response emerges. According to their interpretations, philanthropic organizations develop and implement various action and interaction with others, including newcomers.

By precisely documenting how philanthropic organizations developed different and uncoordinated strategies to delineate what philanthropy means and how philanthropic organizations should act and interact (that is, field infrastructure) as well as to determine who can be part of philanthropy and who cannot (that is, field boundaries), this dissertation further shows that philanthropy's layers of

innovations are neither entirely externally-driven nor the sole product of individuals' agency. They are the combined result of both exogenous developments and actors' strategies. As strategies coexist and at times interact, come either closer to collaboration or opposition, they simultaneously structure and fragment philanthropy. Each step toward structuration as implemented by one strategy (such as TBF's field-structuring mechanisms or affiliators' inclusion and support of newcomers) is questioned by another strategy embodying another conception of structuration (such as TTF's alternative field-structuring mechanisms or discriminators' exclusion of newcomers and capacity building of incumbents). In turn, this questioning is a step toward fragmentation.

This interplay between structuration and fragmentation challenges the supposedly revolutionizing character of contemporary philanthropy (Salamon, 2014). On the contrary, the interplay allows for multiple, piecemeal structuring acts that perpetuate a certain degree of fragmentation. Rather than revolutionizing philanthropy, innovations – be they entrepreneurial and/or digital –progressively and regularly add up as they are negotiated, tested, incrementally integrated to the field by actors and associated to their established practices which do not disappear. Perpetuating fragmentation – and therefore preserving philanthropy's essentially contested, open and fairly ambiguous character – allows the evolution of philanthropy according to societal evolutions. This produces philanthropy's oscillation between cycles of stability and change and prevents it to completely settle, even though it is an age-old phenomenon.

As a result, I provide another perspective on philanthropy's structuration than the one commonly described in philanthropy studies. When European philanthropy's development and professionalization are discussed, it is usually in relation with the modification of laws regulating philanthropy and the creation of professional associations – that is, formal infrastructural mechanisms (Carnie, 2017; Lambelet, 2014). In the absence of a guiding regulative framework and of a functioning professional association, I show that the structuration of Belgian organizational philanthropy does not rely on formal infrastructural mechanisms but rather on actors' power play and the interplay of their different strategies. Accordingly, I align with research claiming for more attention to formal and informal institutional context in which philanthropic mechanisms and evolutions unfold (Barman, 2017; von Schnurbein et al., 2021; Wiepking & Handy, 2015; Wiepking et al., 2021)

This dissertation provides a particular European example of philanthropy, following a corporatist tradition, rather than the commonly understood Anglo-Saxon examples. It can be wondered whether similar dynamics occur within other geographically located fields of philanthropy. Looking behind formal structuring mechanisms and accounting for informal mechanisms and their hidden power play is not a simple endeavor for scholars, as it requires a close involvement with the field under study. In this sense, I encourage European philanthropy researchers to ask: How do incumbent philanthropic organizations of other (European) countries react to the emergence of social-mission platforms? Do they present a united front following a clear and firm stance taken by their professional association – as would be expected in any professional field (Kipping & Kirkpatrick, 2013)? Or do they also appear to be highly heterogenous embodying different interpretations of philanthropy and promoting divergent strategies? I would lean towards the latter, as extant studies show that philanthropy appears to neither completely resist change nor uniformly embrace it (Jung et al., 2016; Mair & Hehenberger, 2014). In this sense, the role of its field-structuring actor – such as its professional association – seems different than in a field forming around a clearly defined profession (e.g., accounting (Greenwood et al., 2002)).

I look deeper in these notions of fragmentation, structuration and divergent strategies in the following section dedicated to theoretical contributions to institutional theory and fields theory.

2.2   Contributions to institutional theory and fields theory

The present dissertation brings two contributions to institutional theory and more specifically to how we understand field configuration. Each contribution is divided into three sub-contributions. The first contribution relates to actors' *divergent boundary work*: (1a) how it is enabled by issue-based and fragmented field conditions, (1b) how the interplay between integration and differentiation patterns shapes crossed collaboration and opposition with newcomers and (1c) how newcomers' organizational boundaries mirror the field's boundaries and their contestation. The second contribution highlights the *fragmented structuration* process of the field and how its (2a) persistent and (2b) purposeful nature eventually become (2c) productive and support field maintenance and alignment with its broader societal environment.

2.2.1 Divergent boundary work

I first respond to Langley and colleagues' (2019) call to better document the conditions in which boundary work is performed and to illustrate with more nuances the link between macro-level conditions and micro-level boundary work by organizational actors. Especially focusing on issue-based and fragmented characteristics of fields, I more broadly contribute to research (Greenwood et al., 2011; R. Meyer & Höllerer, 2016; Pache & Santos, 2010) considering how organizational actions is hindered or constrained in "structurally heterogeneous and complex institutional environments" (Micelotta et al., 2017, p. 1895). I highlight that in such environments organizational actors follow both integration and differentiation patterns. Secondly, beyond showing the simultaneous coexistence of these two opposite patterns, I contribute to extant work explaining the interplay of different and sometimes conflicting boundary work and the influence of such interplay on field boundaries and actors' interactions (Cartel et al., 2019; Glimmerveen et al., 2020; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). Along a similar line, I third point out that integration and differentiation patterns can occur along different boundaries, both at the organizational and field level. In this sense, my research further extends recent studies demonstrating dynamic relations between different types of boundaries (Comeau-Vallée & Langley, 2020; Grodal, 2018).

2.2.1.1 Boundary work and field conditions

Consistent with van Wijk and colleagues' (2013) study on the issue of sustainable tourism, I show that when the issue around which a field forms is ambiguous – as is philanthropy and its essentially contested nature –, then actors' interpretations of this issue and how it should be addressed are multiple and diversified (Hoffman, 1999; Litrico & David, 2017). Hence, actors' conceptions of what are the field, its boundaries and membership are also multiple and diversified (Furnari, 2018). Diversification further increases when the field has a fragmented institutional infrastructure. As few elaborated and coherent infrastructural elements exist, actors have few opportunities to meet, interact and negotiate their multiple and diversified interpretations (Leibel et al., 2018; Zietsma et al., 2017). Field members are heterogenous, forming separate small groups adhering to different field's conceptions and promoting different and opposing meaning, operational and relational systems (Hinings et al., 2017; O'Sullivan & O'Dwyer, 2015). As I demonstrate, divergences may not only be found across different populations of actors, but also within a given population of incumbents.

Furthermore, as a fragmented issue field allows for various field's conceptions to co-exist, mimetic, coercive and normative isomorphic pressures are low (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). When faced with uncertainty, organizations have few and sometimes contradictory successful models to turn to, are little coerced by field-structuring actors or regulators, and advice from experts or professional support organizations are scarce (Fligstein & McAdam, 2011). In such particular cases, field institutions may entail limited constraints for actors. There are little expectations to conform to and divergence from conformity is not sanctioned. This leaves them a larger room for maneuver and to draw the field boundaries that corresponds with their field's conception. As demonstrated in this dissertation, some incumbents promoted more inclusive boundaries and followed an integration strategic pattern, while others argued for more exclusive boundaries and followed a differentiation strategic pattern.

In addition, as I emphasize that some incumbents may undertake inclusive boundary work, I contribute to a more thorough understanding of institutional change within issue fields. So far, scholars suggest that within issue fields incumbents tend either to resist change for fear of losing their powerful social position (Hensmans, 2003; Vaccaro & Palazzo, 2015; Zietsma et al., 2017) or to collaborate and coopt challengers so that changes align with their privilege social order (Davis, Morrill, Rao, & Soule, 2008; DiMaggio, 1991; van Wijk et al., 2013). I show that although some incumbents indeed resisted newcomers and their innovation by engaging in exclusive boundary work, others embraced newcomers and their innovation. These inclusive incumbents were able to diverge from other exclusive incumbents, because of their field's fragmented infrastructure and its lack of sanctions for not tending toward conformity. A fragmented issue field can therefore be an ideal setting for incumbents to initiate change dynamics.

Furthermore, in such a setting, gaining access to innovation allowed inclusive incumbents to strengthen their social position in the field, as they enhanced their resource endowment (Battilana, 2006, 2011; Wild et al., 2020). While institutional theory's initial core argument is that conformity leads to legitimacy (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017; J. Meyer & Rowan, 1977), I add to more recent studies which show that distinctiveness can also increase organizational legitimacy (Taeuscher, Bouncken, & Pesch, 2021) and show that within a fragmented issue field divergence can be rewarding. It can be assumed that in an established exchange field, such a divergent strategy would not have proven as fruitful.

2.2.1.2 Interorganizational boundary work: crossed interactions between incumbents and newcomers

Diverse and divergent boundary work allowed by field conditions echoes studies showing field members' interplay between integration and differentiation patterns (Cartel et al., 2019; Garud, Gehman, & Karunakaran, 2014; Mikes, 2011). While initial boundary literature emphasized the need to draw strong boundaries around fields to encourage and sustain their structuration dynamics (Gieryn, 1983), it has been shown that too strong boundaries may have paradoxical implications: leading to aggressive struggles between insiders and outsiders and/or to field's decay as it is unable to adapt to its broader environment's evolutions and prone to recursive challenging criticisms (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). As a result, actors' boundary strategies often involve an interplay between integration and differentiation patterns, which creates a certain degree of permeability in field boundaries and allows ongoing incremental development (Comeau-Vallée & Langley, 2020; Langley et al., 2019).

Studies, such as Grodal's (2018) longitudinal observation of nanotechnology, have started to show the particular significant of boundary works' interplay and boundaries' permeability within the specific context of a fragmented issue field. The field is likely to be initially expanded to attract a critical mass of actors around the issue, and subsequently contracted to reduce diversity, mitigate misalignment between symbolic and social boundaries and stimulate settlement.

My findings fall within this recent body of research and continue to explore the subtleties of boundary works' interplay. More than consensual among core or peripheral populations (Grodal, 2018), I add that this interplay can emerge from in-population's contestation. The interplay between integration and differentiation patterns can occur within a given population of incumbents as well as of newcomers. On one hand, I show that the arrival of newcomers at the fringes of the field prompted discriminating strategies of some incumbents and led them to demonstrate their value and to work to increase their field structuration. This is consistent with initial literature on competitive boundary work, which emphasizes the significance of strong boundaries (Bucher et al., 2016; Gieryn, 1983). On the other hand, I show that, by affiliating newcomers, other incumbents avoided a potential struggle with them and initiated collaboration. This is consistent with literature on collaborative boundary work, which views boundaries as "junctures" (Lindberg et al., 2017; Quick & Feldman, 2014; Soundararajan et al., 2018).

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Adding permeability to the field, this interplay between integration and differentiation patterns within incumbent population as well as the ensuing partial inclusion was helped by the heterogeneity among newcomers. Some newcomers mirrored incumbents' integration pattern, proved to be more inclusive and collaborated with a diversified scope of actors, while others mirrored other incumbents' differentiation pattern, were more exclusive and refused some collaborations. This contributes to van Wijk and colleagues' (2013) idea of "movement permeability" (building on Greenwood & Hinings' (1996) broader concept of "permeability"). The authors explain that collaboration between incumbents and activists is more likely to occur when a social movement is relatively disparate, lacks consensus around issue's meaning and practices to address it, and thus is open to outsiders' influence. They add that such movement permeability is likely to exist when issues are ambiguous and multifaceted (e.g., sustainability in the authors' example or philanthropy in this dissertation). When issues are clearer, activists' movements are likely to be impermeable and thus not easily influenced. In their study, the sustainable tourism movement was permeable but not too much, which made incumbents perceived it as a threat and react to it.

In my case, newcomers appeared highly heterogenous and did not form a movement structured enough (i.e., akin to free electrons, newcomers were too "permeable") to pose a threat to incumbents. In such situation, I demonstrate that the intervention of a group of inclusive incumbents was required to make newcomers' value visible and incite other incumbents to react, first by excluding them and then by partially including them, as discriminating strategy softened.

As mentioned, through affiliation, inclusive incumbents made newcomers increasingly visible in the field as well as gained access to innovation which helped them enhance their powerful social position. Newcomers' increased visibility and inclusive incumbents' enhanced social position made the affiliating strategy appealing to some discriminators. Willing to maintain their powerful social position and to avoid being overtaken by others, some discriminators also started to include newcomers. In particular, I show that this inclusion did not come from any discriminators, but from a particular actor already attempting to strategically take a field-structuring position. Eventually, the outward-oriented discriminating strategy of this actor came in contradiction with its inward-oriented field-structuring strategy. Acting according to its own interest – that is, privileging its position-taking strategy –, this discriminator eventually initiated an enlargement of the field.

Accordingly, I show that specific field members – in my case field-structuring actors – can drive field configuration in a sense they initially did not intend to. This contributes to literature on unintended consequences of boundary, and more largely, institutional work (Langley et al., 2019; Micelotta et al., 2017; Song, 2021).

In addition, the heterogeneity among incumbents and newcomers as well as the interplay between integration and differentiation patterns revealed crossed collaborations and oppositions between four groups of actors. In this regard, I advance extant literature which usually illustrates collaboration and/or opposition between two distinct groups: incumbents versus challengers or newcomers and insiders versus outsiders (Hockerts & Wüstenhagen, 2010; Maguire & Hardy, 2009; van Wijk et al., 2013; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). While inclusive incumbents tended to collaborate with both inclusive and exclusive newcomers, exclusive incumbents only collaborated with exclusive newcomers and refused collaboration with inclusive newcomers. In reverse, inclusive newcomers tended to collaborate with inclusive incumbents but did not manage to collaborate with exclusive incumbents, whereas exclusive newcomers collaborated with both inclusive and exclusive incumbents.

Finally, highlighting crossed collaborations and oppositions, I show that, more than becoming permeable, field boundaries become more plastic. Depending on the incumbent enacting them according to its conceptualization of the field, boundaries were more rigid or more flexible for some newcomers than for others. This led to some plasticity in field membership, as newcomers were affiliated according to some incumbents and not according to others. Plasticity increased heterogeneity but also ambiguity among field members (including newcomers) and seemed to add to field's fragmentation. On one hand, this contrasts with literature on field structuration dynamics which portrays actors' purposeful boundary work as a means to precisely develop or restore structuration (Granqvist & Laurila, 2011; Grodal, 2018; Howard-Grenville, Nelson, Earle, Haack, & Young, 2017; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010).

On the other hand, this contributes to a more recent category literature which highlights the possible persistence of ambiguity (Chliova and colleagues (2020) building on Granqvist and colleagues (2013) and Pontikes (2012)) as well as to the institutional theory concept of "institutional plasticity" (Ghaffari, Svystunova, & Jarvis, 2021; Lok & De Rond, 2013). Both concepts – persistent ambiguity and institutional plasticity – have been shown to enable the maintenance and

incremental development of the concerned category or institution, as they allowed their adaptability to various actors' frames and outside evolutions. I take this last idea up again and further develop it here below in the second contribution relating to fragmented structuration.

2.2.1.3 Multilevel interaction: organizational boundaries mirroring field boundaries

A third and final sub-contribution pertaining to divergent boundary work concerns the multilevel interaction between different types of boundaries. More than the interplay between integration and differentiation patterns of boundary work, my findings show a multilevel interaction between field boundaries and newcomers' organizational boundaries. As a fragmented issue field displays heterogeneity of incumbents, each advocating for different field's conceptualizations, institutional infrastructures and boundaries, the outward image of the field is vague (Furnari, 2016, 2018; Zietsma et al., 2017). While incumbents and field members as a whole have few guidelines on which to rely to act and interact, this is also true for newcomers emerging at the periphery of the field. I observe that depending on the field's conceptualization (inclusive or exclusive) upon which they based themselves, newcomers adopted a different organizational configuration. As such, some newcomers demonstrated a quite open and inclusive configuration, while others were more closed and exclusive. Furthermore, toward the end of my fieldwork, I started to observe similar debates among newcomers than those taking place among incumbents. Some newcomers argued that a "true" social-mission platforms is an exclusive one and formed alliances with other newcomers sharing their vision.

Accordingly, I further contribute to research on boundaries' intersectionality and its effects (Comeau-Vallée & Langley, 2020; Grodal, 2018; Langley et al., 2019). Contrary to Grodal (2018) who focuses on symbolic and social boundaries of a given field, and contrary to Comeau-Vallée & Langley (2020) who focus on intra- and inter-professional boundaries, I shed light on the vertical interplay between boundaries of organizations and boundaries of a field. By highlighting newcomers mirrored the field boundaries in their organizational configurations as well as the field's contestations in their interaction with one another, I show that the field's fragmented and issue-based conditions simultaneously hampered the development of incumbents' collective identity and the emergence of newcomers' collective identity. In this regards, this dissertation contributes to the recent area of research

examining the link between organizational features and field-level features (Casasnovas & Chliova, 2020).

In a similar vein, this emphasizes the importance of considering fields as "linked arenas" (Furnari, 2016). More than individual organizations, platforms and their stakeholders could be conceived as "mini fields". As these "mini fields" interact with other related fields – including the field of philanthropy –, what happens in these related fields has an influence on how they develop and evolve, as argued by Fligstein & McAdam (2012). Multilevel interaction between organizational and field boundaries can thus contributes to research on digital platforms and their organizational configurations as it provides a plausible explanation for the existence of multiple platforms' configurations (Jacobides et al., 2018; Kretschmer et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). The particularity of digital platforms is that they do not quite form a societal domain of their own, but rather populate existing societal domains (e.g., housing, tourism, social settings).

As such, it can be argued that they will be influenced and may follow the legitimized organizational templates of domains – or in other words, fields – around which they gravitate or in which there are embedded. If the field has an established institutional infrastructure, a certain degree of isomorphism can be expected among platforms, which may be likely to interact, structure and form a sub-field of their own. On the other hand, if the field has a fragmented institutional infrastructure – as shown in this dissertation –, diversity is likely to be the norm and disparate small groups or alliances, rather than a subfield, are likely to form.

2.2.2   Fragmented structuration

My findings contribute to field research and build on a cyclical and structural perspective on field types and conditions rather than a linear approach (Hinings et al., 2017; Zietsma et al., 2017). Fragmentation may not always be a temporary, uncomfortable, and nongenerative cycle which follows exogenous or endogenous disruption and precedes restructuration punctuated by contestation and alignments periods (Leibel et al., 2018; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). As shown in the present dissertation, fragmentation may be an integral part of structuration dynamics. In this sense, it can be persistent and latent, purposefully created and maintained by actors through their infrastructural and boundary work, and even productive for structuring fields in a flexible manner.

2.2.2.1 Persistent fragmentation

While this research remains episode-driven – as I focused on platform-based newcomers' arrival –, it still offers a four-to-five-year (2017-2021) window on a longer and more global process of field evolution. As I rely on interviews and archival documents recounting the history of the field, I am able to observe – to a certain extent – field configuration and the emergence and ongoing development of platform-based newcomers. In this regard, the present dissertation contributes to research striving to develop a more fine-grained understanding of how fragmented and issue fields – and fields more generally – evolve, structure, and settle. While issue fields are supposed to be more dynamic due to the various interpretations multiple populations hold on the issue at stake, little is still known on how they go over their initial fragmented nature, endure over time and settle down. The idea that issue fields either disappear or evolve into exchange fields when going through a structuring process remains speculative (Furnari, 2014; Zietsma et al., 2017).

Using philanthropy – and its cumulative layers – as a representative example of such issue fields, I describe and start to theorize that these seem to not settle as commonly portrayed for exchange fields. While exchange fields structure and reduce fragmentation – hence, uncertainty and ambiguity – by developing an elaborated and coherent infrastructure sustained by well-identified and legitimate field-structuring actors (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006; Greenwood et al., 2002; Reay & Hinings, 2005), issue fields tend to make fragmentation an inherent part of their structuring dynamics. Indeed, building on my four-to-five-year fieldwork and on archival documents, I observe an interaction between fragmentation and structuration. Fragmenting and structuring dynamics unfold simultaneously within the field, feeding and balancing one another. This persistent interaction between fragmenting and structuring dynamics stimulates a process of – as I call it – fragmented structuration. Out of this process results a field structuration that appears to be more flexible and to preserve the issue-based nature of the field. Therefore, my findings show a third path for issue fields' evolution and settlement, which is neither disappearance nor conversion into exchange fields. Rather than being reduced or eliminated, fragmentation persists.

Emphasizing the possible persistence of fragmentation and introducing the concept of fragmented structuration, I enrich discussion on field's types and conditions. Research has already shown that field evolution occurs along a cyclical rather than a linear pattern (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). Fields move from an established

condition to a contested one and aligning one, and reversely from a fragmented condition to a more established one (Hinings et al., 2017; Zietsma et al., 2017). I argue that the process of fragmented structuration as revealed by my findings is significant in bringing nuances to the characterization of fragmentation and structuration as well as to the idea of reversals and oscillations between conditions.

Taking the example of Belgian philanthropy, I first show that a field can still be considered as forming a field on its own, even though it has a fragmented condition due to its lowly elaborate and coherent institutional infrastructure. I highlight that Belgian philanthropy displayed few and uncoordinated infrastructural mechanisms, but still featured enough of these mechanisms for philanthropic organizations to be mutually aware of their involvement in a common enterprise, to partially interact with one another and for patterns of domination and early coalition to emerge. In this sense, although Belgian philanthropy did not appear as established as other professional fields portrayed in extant literature (e.g., Lawrence (2004), Kipping and Kirkpatrick (2013) or Greenwood and Suddaby (2006)), it was also more than a project, a "temporary and more transitional settings in which [actors] interact" (Furnari, 2014, p. 444). This implies that when studying and theorizing fragmented fields, scholars could provide more granular characterizations and consider the degree of fragmentation (e.g., rather moderate as in the case of Belgian philanthropy or more extreme as in very new collective projects (Acquier, Carbone, & Vasseur, 2020; Bucher & Langley, 2016; Cartel et al., 2019)).

Second, beyond adding to the distinction between a field and a "non-field", I contribute to the understanding of field trajectories and their evolution through different stages of structuration. Fragmented structuration highlights reversals and oscillations may not always be clear-cut successive cycles but may take on a more concomitant aspect. Being persistent, fragmentation becomes latent: it does not come and go but is always the other side of the structuration coin. It is not an either/or situation. Doing so, I challenge the idea that for a field to engage in a structuring process always implies the elimination of its fragmentation. In contrast, tending toward structuration, a field may still retain a certain degree of fragmentation. As explained below, this degree of fragmentation is what makes the field enduring yet amendable.

While institutional theory has tended to initially focus on field's structuration dynamics and stability through processes of conformity, legitimation and isomorphism (Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017; Pache &

Santos, 2013), fragmented structuration further confirms – as many other studies from the last decades – that changes – be they merely incremental and developmental – are more the norm than the exception (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012; Micelotta et al., 2017; Wooten & Hoffman, 2017). In this regard, through the example of philanthropy, this dissertation might explain why some fields manage to endure and operate although they remain fragmented to a certain extent. Therefore, this calls for more work on field evolution and trajectories as they move through different stages of structuration and more specifically on understanding the conditions in which the persistent interaction between structuration and fragmentation occurs.

I begin to show that fragmented structuration occurs at the crossroads of both endogenous and exogenous conditions. First, there needs to be a willingness from various field members to bring structuration into their field and the capability of some to take a field-structuring position. Yet, given the multiple issue interpretations, field-structuring actors are uncoordinated in their endeavor, promoting various and sometimes conflicting field's conceptions.

Second, this particular endogenous situation is further reinforced by exogenous developments – such as the arrival of newcomers. As these exogeneous developments cannot be completely ignored – at the risk of impermeably closing the field (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010) – and are common in issue fields (Furnari, 2018), field members adapt their boundaries as well as infrastructure in the making to (partially) include these developments. As they adapt, they increase heterogeneity and (re-)grow fragmentation. In this sense, I extend Zietsma and colleagues' (2017) assumption that issue fields settle through processes of extensive negotiation and are iteratively renegotiated any time change challenges the delicate emerging collective rationality.

2.2.2.2   Purposeful fragmented structuration

Highlighting exogenous and endogenous conditions for the persistent interaction between fragmentation and structuration to occur, I further contribute to relate discussion on fragmented fields to considerations on issue fields, to enrich the understanding of issue-based and fragmented fields' internal dynamics, as well as to connect with discussions on fields' social positions and roles.

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First, the process of fragmented structuration highlighted by my findings extends the fragmented structure of weakly institutionalized fields described by Kipping & Kirkpatrick (2013). While the authors explain that the state of fragmented structure results from the exogenous pressures (i.e., outsiders and newcomers' arrival at the fringes of the field) and from the endogenous response of one particular field member (i.e., the professional association), I demonstrate that fragmented structuration is more purposefully created and maintained by field members (i.e., willingness and capability of field members to take a field-structuring position and affiliate newcomers) and, accordingly, is more akin to a process than to an outcome.

Second, and in a similar line, I link the purposefulness of philanthropic organizations highlighted in this dissertation to debates around agency and hierarchical order in fields (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009; Battilana et al., 2009). Like exchange fields, issue fields would be hierarchically stratified. Yet, scholars lack a clear appreciation of issue fields hierarchical order, especially in the case of fragmented issue fields. While some studies have shown that within issue fields incumbents occupying key positions – such as field-structuring actors (van Wijk et al., 2013; Wooten & Hoffman, 2017) – tend to collectively influence structuration process, and more so when the issue is ambiguous (O'Sullivan & O'Dwyer, 2015), other accounts are more tempered and assume that, as multiple and various populations interact, none of them is likely to entirely dominate the field (Furnari, 2018; Zietsma et al., 2017). In addition, when capturing and addressing the issue, incumbents would either resist change (Hensmans, 2003; Vaccaro & Palazzo, 2015) or collaborate and coopt challengers so that changes align with their privilege social order (Davis et al., 2008; DiMaggio, 1991).Within fragmented fields, incumbents are disorganized and have little influence on social order, unless there exist in the field actors willing and capable to engage in structuring acts (Rao et al., 2000; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). As fragmentation creates ambiguity and uncertainty, field members attempt to avoid it (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005).

On one hand, my findings confirm that within an issue field with a moderate fragmentation, incumbents greatly influenced structuration process but rather did so in a disorganized manner than through collective organization. Moreover, those incumbents willing and capable to engage in structuring acts indeed occupied a key position. However, I show that these incumbents and these key positions appeared to not always be the expected ones. Other field members than the formal field-structuring actor (e.g., the professional association) purposefully elaborated their

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field infrastructure by uncoordinatedly creating informal infrastructural elements to make up for missing or failing formal elements.

On the other hand, I explain that these informal elements introduced by informal and challenging field-structuring actors were surprisingly not always aiming to preserve status quo and to enforce dominant social order – as would be expected from incumbents in issue fields – but could rather be flexible and even advocate for a paradigm shift. This flexibility was reflected in the field contested and unsettled boundaries as well as in the rather quick softening of the discriminating boundary strategy. Eventually, the accommodation of newcomers as field members was akin to pragmatic strategies for survival and relevance (Kipping & Kirkpatrick, 2013).

Allowing flexibility and shift in their field's infrastructural elements and boundaries, incumbent philanthropic organizations reconfigured the membership of their field and further increased its diversity. Although intending to bring structuration into their field, it could be argued that they deliberately left room for fragmentation. Although this seems paradoxical, it can be explained by incumbents' apparent reluctance for formal structuration. Incumbents appeared to be willing to avoid a highly coordinated and hierarchical structuration. Such structuration would admittedly make the field enduring but not amendable, as incumbents would be constrained in their experimentation with societal evolutions. Therefore, in their endeavor to structure, they showed a preference for a certain degree of flexibility. This does not mean that there was a willingness to create fragmentation. Out of the process of fragmented structuration develops a rather flexible structuration, halfway between a formalized structuring process and complete fragmentation.

In the case in which the exogenous and endogenous conditions underpinning fragmented structuration would be absent, an alternative scenario could be imagined where the fragmented issue field of philanthropy would evolve toward a more established exchange field. It can be assumed that this alternative trajectory would require a professional association in a higher capacity to take a field-structuring position, regulate the field, federate its members, and encourage the development of their collective rationality. Moreover, this would be favored by the absence of other members willing and capable to take a field-structuring position and to challenge the professional association. Finally, with a stronger professional association and the absence of challengers, the arrival of platform-based newcomers might have flown under the radar. As a result, the initial structuring

strategy pursued by TTF and discriminators might have prevailed and led the field to reach a higher level of structuration. Philanthropy has at time already been described as an established exchange field (see Mair and Hehenberger (2014)). Yet, as explained above, philanthropy being an ambiguous, multifaceted, and essentially contested concept, it can be assumed that whatever level of structuration the field reaches there will always be one point in time where it reverts to some fragmentation. Accordingly, a last condition for an issue field to settle into an exchange field more permanently would be for the issue to have a lower degree of ambiguity and contestation.

2.2.2.3 Productive fragmented structuration

Finally, beyond being persistent and purposeful, I show that fragmented structuration can be productive. As such, I contribute to depict the virtuous side of fragmentation. Within field research, mostly fragmentation's vicious cycle is represented. It is usually explained that fragmented conditions are not generative (Furnari, 2018; Rao et al., 2000). Without collective agreement on shared meanings, guidelines suggesting appropriate behaviors and relational networks, field members face uncertainty and ambiguity. Therefore, their action and interaction are not facilitated, they struggle to define and acquire legitimacy, odd actors may regularly colonize the field, and innovations may fail to diffuse and institutionalize (Grodal, 2018; Hinings et al., 2017; Lawrence, 2004). I notably report that some newcomers bore the cost of this fragmentation's vicious cycle. Due to their divergence in field's meanings and practices, incumbents did not entirely agree on the added-value of newcomers and their inclusion into the field. Therefore, some newcomers were simultaneously supported as well as largely criticized and delegitimized by incumbents. This led to the failure of some of them, which attracted more criticism than support. In a more established and exchange field, with a highly developed collective rationality, incumbents would most likely have presented a united front, either affiliating newcomers or discriminating them.

While fragmentation vicious cycle is well recognized, I show that when fragmentation is purposefully undertaken and coupled with balancing structuring dynamics, it can have a virtuous side. Indeed, as mentioned above and touched upon in extant literature (Hinings et al., 2017), the lack of elaborated and reinforcing infrastructural mechanisms allows for field members' unsanctioned divergence and experimentation. In this respect, my findings align with studies highlighting experimental processes (Bucher & Langley, 2016; Cartel et al., 2019; Furnari,

2014). On one hand, the fragmented condition allowed different incumbents to build various infrastructural mechanisms, and therefore to stimulate structuring dynamics within their field – even though in an uncoordinated manner. On the other hand, the fragmented condition allowed incumbents to not only (partially) affiliate newcomers into the field, but also to actively support their development as they could adapt their flexible infrastructure.

Eventually, newcomers' affiliation and the subsequent adaptation of field infrastructure sustained a certain structuration of the field and contributed to align it on external societal evolutions. This gave Belgian philanthropy an attractive outward image. While at first newcomers did not claim field membership or tried to access its resources, they proactively reached to field incumbents at the end of my fieldwork. This further put newcomers on a long-term footing and boosted public attention on the field. At the end of my fieldwork, newcomers and their philanthropic supporters were regularly featured in Belgian media. This demonstration of fragmentation's virtuous side calls for more work connecting processes of fragmentation and experimentation. Would experimenting imply fragmenting?

In other words, fragmented structuration – through divergent infrastructural and boundary work – proves to be productive for the field and its maintenance. In this sense, fragmented structuration can be linked to research on institutional maintenance (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). Although initially equated with enduring stability and considered as self-reproducing or only requiring custodial work, maintenance has come to be conceived as an effortful, purposeful, and balancing act (Lawrence et al., 2013; Micelotta & Washington, 2013; Zilber, 2009). Researchers distinguish between institutional work' outcomes and processes. Seeking to achieve the outcome of maintaining their field and to avoid decay, actors may turn to several and contradictory processes (Hampel et al., 2017), including introducing change and diversity in the form of platform-based newcomers. Accordingly, Lok & de Rond (2013) introduce the concept of "institutional plasticity" and demonstrate how changing practices can be accommodated without completely disrupting field institutions. In line with the idea of boundary plasticity, process of fragmented structuration could be seen as a means for field members to ensure the maintenance of their issue field while retaining its inherent adaptability, hence its institutional plasticity.

Overall, this dissertation falls with recent research aiming to "reconcile the attention to durability and transformation" (Hehenberger et al., 2019, p. 1693). By shedding light on newcomers, on their nonconflictual nor fully collaborative relations with the issue field and its members as well as on their multiple organizational configurations mirroring field's debate, I show that exogenous developments do not always result in exogenous shocks disrupting fields. By emphasizing incumbents' divergence regarding their field structuring dynamics and the resulting process of fragmented structuration, I show that incumbent field members do not always form a homogenous group with a clear purpose. They were neither status quo defenders nor institutional entrepreneurs aiming for radical change, even though their field conditions would have enabled them to act as such.

There exists a more nuanced middle ground between durability and transformation. My research helps to document this middle ground thanks to the equal attention devoted to incumbents and newcomers. Had I only looked at incumbents' discourses and actions, I would only have observed their disorganized process of structuration. Had I only looked at newcomers, I would only have observed their diversity. By simultaneously looking at them individually and at their relationships, I was able to highlight the subtle and incremental development of the field and, in turn, to demonstrate how fragmented condition and issue-based nature can be generative. In this sense, I bring a more sophisticated view of field evolution, broadly contributing to research moving away from a notion of fields as containers toward a more dynamic and relational perspective (Wooten & Hoffman, 2017).

3   Managerial implications and recommendations

The findings and contributions outlined in this dissertation can have several managerial implications for philanthropic organizations – that is, resource-providers and -seekers as well as collective interest organizations –, for social-mission platforms and their founders/managers and for policy-makers. In this section, I develop a more personal analysis as a citizen to consider a number of recommendations that I would like to draw based on my academic work.

At the junction of the private and public spheres, philanthropy is and has always been a social phenomenon open to controversies and tending toward ambiguity. The use of private resources for public purposes carries new meanings along with societal, political, economic, and technological developments. With these developments inevitably come new and other societal actors who engage in

philanthropy with their own and various interpretations of private resources for public purposes. Actors populating philanthropy and actions considered as part of philanthropy continuously diversify. As highlighted in this dissertation, heterogeneity can constitute an obstacle for philanthropy and its structuration as a field of activity. As various societal actors hold different – and sometimes quite divergent – interpretations of what giving means and how to give, their interactions are complex, and so is the development of guidelines to stimulate them. As the fields' inner behaviors are multiple, the outward image of philanthropy is nebulous. In the end, philanthropy's lack of visibility and readability may prompt democratic concerns and impair legitimation of philanthropic actions.

However, heterogeneity can also become a strength in the incremental evolution of philanthropy alongside societal developments, as shown in this dissertation through the construct of productive fragmented structuration. A compelling example is the softening of the discriminating strategy as explained at the end of Chapter III, and more specifically the financial support offered by The Transformative Foundation to a social-mission platform. I argued that this support was partially related to the foundation's willingness to maintain its powerful position in the structuring process of the field and to keep up with The Big Foundation. I cannot help but wonder whether social-mission platforms' added value would have eventually been recognized if incumbent philanthropic organizations had not expressed contending views of philanthropy and attempted to strengthen their social position within the field. As societal actors confront their different interpretations, they negotiate philanthropy's meanings, practices, and innovations and, hence, continuously question philanthropy. This endless negotiation prevents philanthropy from reaching a lasting and solid settlement. In turn, this allows for philanthropy to stay up-to-date, to closely follow societal developments.

3.1   Recommendation 1 – Enhance collective dynamics

Accordingly, my first recommendation for Belgian philanthropic organizations would be to further and better build on this heterogeneity and turn it into enhanced collective dynamics. At the collective level, I argue that enhanced collective dynamics imply the continued coexistence of several collective interest organizations and field-structuring actors. Given the issue-based nature of philanthropy, I do not believe that a unique field-structuring actor, embodied by an omnipotent collective interest organization, would be suitable. On the contrary, I believe that several collective organizations (i.e., The Association, The Fundraising

Center, The Volunteering Center, The ClearView Foundation…) can co-exist within Belgian philanthropy and play a concerted field-structuring role, provided that they better interact with and complement one another. Multiple collective interest organizations co-exist and have overlapping memberships because they each address philanthropy's intricacy from a different and specific angle. Philanthropic resource-providers and -seekers simultaneously belong to several collective interest organizations, as they can find there information to better conduct their philanthropic action. This is particularly relevant in the case of Belgian philanthropy, where many resource-providers are also resource-seekers. Many foundations in Belgium do not rely on endowment but raise funds to carry out their activities.

Nevertheless, during the time of my fieldwork, I was often told that information is not always properly disseminated and shared among and between collective interest organizations and their members, as these barely collaborate with one another. A better coordination would reinforce these organizations individually and collectively. Sharing and negotiating philanthropic meanings and practices, collective interest organizations would improve their service to their community of members, as they would spend less time and energy acquiring and making sense of knowledge. This would enhance the structuration of the field while still preserving a certain degree of flexibility to adapt to societal evolutions.

As they collaborate, collective interest organizations would also tend to move Belgian philanthropy in a more or less jointly defined direction. This would increase the outward visibility and readability of the field, shed a new light on democratic concerns, and potentially increase philanthropy's legitimacy in the eyes of citizens at large and policy-makers. It would seem that collective dynamics are already in motion, as there would be more interactions between The Association and The Fundraising Center. How other organizations, such as The ClearView Foundations and its transparency endeavor, will join these dynamics still remains to be seen.

Enhancing collective dynamics depends on philanthropic resource-providers and -seekers, and especially on major members such as The Big Foundation and The Transformative Foundation. Members need to give their collective interest organizations the financial, human and expertise resources they need. In my opinion, several members developing meaning, operational and relational mechanisms while simultaneously supporting The Association (or other collective

interest organizations) just enough for it to barely survive only seems to be a waste of time, money, and energy for field members individually but also for the field as a whole. My argument is not to say that major players such as The Transformative Foundation and The Big Foundation should stop their efforts to structure and renew philanthropy. On the contrary, I would tend to encourage them to keep experimenting but also to better own their role as field's driving forces. Through a closer and steadier relationship between these driving forces and collective interest organizations, mechanisms could better be shared for other field members to seize and implement them as well as continue to refine them. In other words, I would recommend a stronger mutual connection between organizational and field levels. This recommendation directly questions the organization-based field-structuring strategy of The Big Foundation.

In a similar vein, I argue that at the individual level enhanced collective dynamics imply for each philanthropic resource-provider to be attentive to their peers. At the very least, as philanthropic actors already appear to have their own "business strategy", they should further compare and align their actions and performances on what others do. This could lead to "an escalation of excellence", each actors recognizing the added-value of its peers' actions and trying to do better for themselves. Resource-providers usually argue that they do not easily collaborate because every one of them has its own understanding of philanthropy, its own planned actions, its own timing, and its own knowledge and field of expertise. Yet, I believe that these differences are the precise reasons why their collaborations should be increased. In the face of complex, interconnected and systemic societal challenges, uncoordinated supports – however considerable – of individual organizations may prove insufficient. In the end, all resource-providers have one purpose: contribute to general interest. Rather than remaining stuck in discussions on what giving means and how to give, resource-providers could better take advantage of heterogeneity and think about how they could learn from one another. This does not mean that discussion around philanthropy's meanings and practices should not take place, but they should not constitute an obstacle to collaborations.

This suggests that the reasoning behind social-mission platforms' emergence – that is, fostering multi-stakeholder interactions by intermediating between them – could be increasingly adopted at the level of resource-providing organizations. The collective impact project initiated by The YouthPower Foundation was a first step in this direction. In brief, this project gathered multiple resource-providers and -seekers but also third parties around a common issue. In addition, they jointly

appointed a "backbone structure" – that is, an intermediary organization to coordinate the different stakeholders, mediate between the divergent interest at play, facilitate communication among them, provide them with the necessary resources to get actively involved and ensure their individual actions all converge toward collectively defined outcomes. Rather than funding resource-seekers individually, resource-providers support the entire collective process. As such, resource-seekers can focus their time, money, and energy on their genuine social mission rather than on fundraising and managerial reporting. Through this example and collective impact projects in general appears a new role for incumbent philanthropic resource-providers in stimulating the emergence and development of intermediary organizations as well as in reaching innovative collective solutions.

Along their traditional role of funders, philanthropic resource-providers could play a role of connection-builders. Incumbent resource-providers could financially and structurally support the emergence and development of intermediary organizations and, in this respect, stimulate the creation of collective processes. While resources oriented to these intermediary organizations are resources that are not provided to resource-seeking organizations directly addressing social and environmental issues, the former can act as leverage to help the latter better tackle the issues they address. Indeed, collective processes allow to jointly reach diagnosis and innovative solutions which most appropriately rely on the added-value of each involved stakeholder. Intermediary organizations could be at the core of social innovation, by collecting information and developing expertise to document issues, needs and methods.

The burgeoning emergence of social-mission platforms is a proof that such intermediary organizations already exist and are needed but have difficulties to develop as they lack financial and structural support opportunities. The call for projects launched by The Big Foundation and aiming to support digitalization is a first initiative to dedicate specific support to these intermediary organizations. Although this support falls within the foundation's "strings attached mechanisms", it has at least the merit of existing and could inspire other resource-providers. Similarly, resource-providers who would not have the capacity to initiate collective processes should increasingly join those developed by others, and so should resource-seekers.

Finally, I would be in favor of extending enhanced collective dynamics beyond the philanthropic realm. As the advent of venture philanthropy and impact investing have already shown and as the arrival of social-mission platforms continue to show, the boundary between the nonprofit and the for-profit worlds is becoming more and more permeable in today's society. This permeability is both recognized at the micro level with the growth of social enterprises and cooperatives as well as at the macro level with the involvement of for-profit businesses in institutional frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals. In the end, wouldn't an ideal society be a society where all businesses have a positive impact not solely on their own prosperity, but also on the planet, and on the lives of people inhabiting this planet? Nonprofit legal status and business model should not be a requirement to contribute to general interest. Rather than questioning legal statuses and business models (as discriminators and ecosystem-building platforms did vis-à-vis community-designing platforms), societal stakeholders should again think about how they could better complement each other, and more specifically how they could drive businesses toward more sustainable models.

Nevertheless, by encouraging collective processes to include for-profit businesses and social-mission platforms, I do not imply for entrepreneurial and technological evolutions to become panaceas. More precisely, I suggest that underlying the idea of harnessing the power of heterogeneity and enhancing collective dynamics is that of building customized and adaptable solutions to each social and environmental issue. While some issues will be better addressed by market mechanisms, others will require highly technological means, and still others will be most appropriately taken care of by subsidized nonprofit organizations or through social policies. What the most appropriate solutions are can only be assessed by examining the wide scope of available options.

3.2 Recommendation 2 – Build the Belgian fundraising market

This last thought leads me to the second managerial implication and recommendation. As mentioned at the end of Chapter II, the typology I develop provides one of the first fine-grained understandings of social-mission platforms and can help resource-providers and -seekers find their way in the wide diversity of existing platforms. In this regard, I believe this dissertation can contribute to the development of the Belgian fundraising market and profession. Belgian fundraising is still in its infancy. Besides disparate information and best-practices examples provided by collective interest organizations such as The Fundraising Center or The ClearView Foundation, there exists no (professional) training to guide fundraisers in their endeavors. As a consequence, some philanthropic actors complain that others sometimes employ borderline ethical fundraising practices. Moreover, fundraisers are not always aware of recent evolutions and of the most appropriate fundraising solutions for their organizations.

Taking note of the three archetypes I describe, resource-seeking organizations and their fundraisers can be more attentive to the diverse means they could leverage to raise resources depending on their organization' specific projects, their social mission or their partners. Similarly, resource-providing organizations can better evaluate toward which platforms they should gravitate depending on the type of resources they are willing to give, the type of projects or organizations they wish to support, or the extent to which they are able to get actively involved.

In addition, more than stimulating the appropriate use of social-mission platforms, I believe my findings could encourage the development and refinement of these platforms and of their interactions with philanthropic organizations. Platform founders/managers could build on organizing elements unpacked in Chapter II to distinguish the generative configurations from the non-generative ones, depending on the goals they want to achieve. Based on the archetypes, they could also imagine new configurations or improve existing ones, which could lead to innovative solutions for social and environmental issues.

Consistent with enhanced collective dynamics, these new and improved configurations could be developed in partnership with resource-providers and -seekers. The first collaborations between affiliators and social-mission platforms, as illustrated in Chapter III, have started to shed light on how they could mutually complement each other's actions and on the role social-mission platforms could play in philanthropy. While platform founders/managers have a great expertise on digital tools and online techniques for fundraising and volunteer-recruitment, they usually lack a field

experience and an understanding of social and environmental issues at a more global and systemic level. Reversely, resource-seeking organizations have a considerable field experience, anchored in local social realities and resource-providing organizations often develop a global and systemic understanding of societal challenges. Yet, they are both likely to lack the human resources and skills to implement the latest technological evolutions which could improve their actions. I would therefore advise for a closer collaboration between philanthropic organizations and social-mission platforms.

As part of this collaboration, resource-seeking and -providing organizations should also think about the professional profile of fundraisers and managers they hire. With technological developments come specific skills. As already highlighted by the community-designing platforms which specifically work with organizations which have the human resources to manage a customized platform, fundraisers need to be familiar with online communication and website management. This also holds true for resource-providing organizations. If those are willing to engage in matchfunding partnerships with social-mission platforms, they need to keep their skills up to date in order to fully understand and explore the possibilities offered by technology-enabled intermediaries. Once again, I am not suggesting for resource-providing and -seeking organizations to replace all their employees with IT developers. Technological evolutions are no panacea and should neither be blindly adopted by philanthropic organizations nor meant to replace more conventional fundraising (such as street fundraising or mailings) or grantmaking techniques. Social-mission platforms and other technology-enabled intermediaries are more likely to be implemented as a complement to conventional practices and should be part of a global strategy.

Finally, and linked to the early stage of the Belgian fundraising market and profession, my research process reveals implicitly a challenge of visibility for social-mission platforms. When I started my research in 2017, these platforms were not easy to identify. The phenomenon was just starting to develop, and some platforms had just been created. Five years later, social-mission platforms are increasingly known by philanthropic organizations and vice versa, as evidenced by my latest interviews. However, when discussing my dissertation with friends or citizens completely unrelated to philanthropy, it often happened that nobody knew the platforms I was referring to nor the philanthropic organizations. While enhanced collective dynamics have the potential to help increasing the outward visibility of Belgian philanthropy, it appears that this visibility is so far only increasing within the boundaries of the field. I assume that if philanthropic organizations and social-mission platforms are unknown from citizens at large, it can also be the case for policy-makers. In the end, this lack of visibility could impair the development of adequate public policies.

3.3 Recommendation 3 – Find the balance between a clear and a flexible legal framework

In this vein, my third and final managerial implication and recommendation is intended for policy-makers. Such as heterogeneity, the flexibility of the legal framework regulating Belgian philanthropy has both its strengths and weaknesses. On one hand, philanthropic organizations benefit from a certain degree of organizational plasticity. They can easily adapt to societal evolutions. On the other hand, as I argued, too little regulation impairs philanthropic organizations' action and interaction as well as social-mission platforms' development. The risk is that, as field members try to compensate the lack of regulation, gaps open up between formal rules and actual practices.

For instance, as social-mission platforms are not listed in philanthropy's legal framework, they are not entitled to providing their individual donors with tax benefits. Some platforms have tried to negotiate with public authorities and to emphasize their contribution to general interest, but in vain. As a result, they turned to The Big Foundation which, as a public utility foundation, is authorized to grant these benefits. Today, some platforms provide tax benefits through the intermediary of The Big Foundation. The Big Foundation is not the only one who can bypass public authorities' decision in this way. And social-mission platforms are not the only ones benefiting from such a bypass. As such, it can be assumed that today in Belgium there are organizations whose philanthropic purposes are questionable, and which can still offer tax benefits or benefit from other advantages linked to philanthropy.

Considering the strengths and weaknesses of the Belgian legal framework, I recommend that its flexibility should be sustained rather than reduced, but simultaneously better framed. Policy-makers could use findings of this dissertation as a window to start revising philanthropy's regulatory framework. The key issue of this revision would be to find the right balance. On one hand, the law should be sufficiently clear and precise to avoid democratic drifts and the inclusion within philanthropy of actors that have definitely nothing to do with the use of private resources for public purposes. On the other hand, the law should be sufficiently flexible to allow philanthropic organizations' continuous adaptation to societal developments and the evolution of private resources and public purposes, to allow the inclusion of philanthropy-oriented newcomers, and to foster collective processes. Undeniably, such a revision should be conducted with the collaboration

of philanthropic actors. This brings us back to the first managerial implication and the necessity for collective interest organizations to better coordinate and enhance their visibility.

Overall, these managerial implications and recommendations add to the theorical contributions detailed in the previous sections as well as develop further avenues to better grasp philanthropy and its evolutions. I truly hope that my findings and theoretical and practical contributions highlighted throughout this dissertation will help in focusing academics and practitioners' efforts to understand philanthropy's configuration in the age of social-mission platforms.

4   Limits and future research avenues

While the present dissertation has generated findings likely to contribute to both philanthropy studies and institutional theory, it also has its limits. Beyond the limits described within individual chapters, five other more transversal limits can be acknowledged. Two limits are due to methodological choices and three others are to be related to theoretical choices made to observe Belgian philanthropy. For each of these five limits, I suggest future research avenues, highlighting possible methodological approaches and theoretical directions.

The first methodological limit relates to my single case study design, as my empirical observations center on the Belgian field of philanthropy over a limited period of time. While such designs have benefits in terms of internal validity as they allow to dive deep into a phenomenon and inform complex processes, they bring limitations in terms of external validity and possible generalization of findings (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991; Sandberg, 2005; Welch & Piekkari, 2017), as they do not provide an international and comparative perspective. The portability of my findings and contributions thus needs to be discussed in light of other comparable cases. Within the section on contributions to philanthropy studies, I already touched upon the necessity to compare the conclusions I draw for the Belgian context to other (European) philanthropy contexts. Within the present section, I further argue that the dynamics between fragmentation and structuration and their underpinning divergent strategies could also be observed in relation with other social phenomena than philanthropy.

Along the three chapters, I unveil that one of the conditions prompting a process of fragmented structuration and divergent boundary work is the essentially contested nature of philanthropy (Daly, 2012). Scholars have already shown that other social

phenomena present a similar contested nature. Examples of such phenomena are social entrepreneurship (Choi & Majumdar, 2014), corporate social responsibility (Gond & Moon, 2011; Okoye, 2009), circular and sharing economy (Acquier et al., 2020; Korhonen, Nuur, Feldmann, & Birkie, 2018) or sustainability (Connelly, 2007; van Wijk et al., 2013). One interesting similarity among all these concepts is that they are all interested in how to address grand societal challenges. Just like philanthropy, they rest upon a dynamic relationship and tradeoffs between private, individual resources and public, collective, or societal purposes. This complex relationship leads to value-laden debates about proper meaning and action. Being dynamic, this relationship and ensuing meaning and action are subject to change in the face of new circumstances or depending on the context. Hence, interpretations of these concepts are multiple, usually overlapping with one another, and giving rise to diverse and sometimes divergent strategies. This makes them multifaceted, open in character and even ambiguous.

Scholars observing how fields form and evolve around these open and ambiguous issues have highlighted the emergence of particular field configurations. These prove to be different from field-structuring processes outlined in extant field literature and comparable to the fragmented structuration process I uncover in this dissertation. For instance, scholars show how the sharing economy and impact investing fields simultaneously display signs of structuration and of fragmentation (Bell, 2021; Wruk, Schöllhorn, & Oberg, 2020). Along the same lines, scholars studying the emergence of the sharing economy field, the evolution of the social entrepreneurship category, and the arising of the sustainability issue show how particular organizational actors play a unique role in managing these issues (van Wijk et al., 2013) and in purposefully creating and maintaining a certain level of diversity (Acquier et al., 2020; Chliova et al., 2020).

Overall, what all these studies – and this dissertation included – seem to show is that fields forming around phenomena addressing grand societal challenges follow structuring processes that aim to both ensure the durability of the field while preserving a certain flexibility, and hence the openness and ambiguity of phenomena. This flexibility is argued to be necessary to adapt to and address the various issues within our society (Okoye, 2009). As all these studies, similar to this dissertation, focus on a single field, it would be relevant to establish a consistent conceptual framework which would compare the different fields' trajectories as well as the conditions underpinning their singular evolution and configuration. This would help to build bridges between different fields focusing on innovative answers

to grand challenges and to examine how the evolution of these fields may help advance research on field configuration. Given the myriad of social and environmental issues our society faces, scholars could conduct more comparative research on these complex social phenomena, in order to describe and explain their patterns of change.

In this endeavor, the theoretical and methodological construct of field appears to be a relevant unit of analysis to capture the dynamism of such phenomena, to understand the interplay of various actors and their interpretations, to document the constructive side of fragmentation, and thus go beyond endless definitional debates.

The second methodological limit is due to my focus on two populations of the field of Belgian philanthropy – the incumbent philanthropic organizations (resource-providers and collective interest organizations) and the platform-based newcomers. While I chose these two populations and their interactions in order to give a specific direction to my research process, this choice prevented me from considering other populations taking part in the philanthropy field. As philanthropy is an issue field, these other populations may have an influence on the field, holding particular interpretations of how to use private resources for public purposes.

For instance, in my data collection process I did not include corporations, which can provide resources without necessarily using the vehicle of the foundation, nor support resource-seeking organizations benefiting from incumbents' support. Also, and more importantly, I did not examine the role of public authorities. Yet, interviewing them could have made sense given my institutional theory perspective. Indeed public authorities have the capacity to influence organizational actors' behaviors as well as the conditions of field infrastructure (Barley, 2010; Clegg, 2010; Hinings et al., 2017; Mountford & Geiger, 2020). Furthermore, in the specific case of philanthropy, public authorities operate as more than regulators as they use public resources for public purposes. Within philanthropy studies, the relationship between philanthropic actors and public bodies is a central topic of research (Lechterman & Reich, 2020; S. Phillips & Smith, 2016; Saunders-Hastings, 2018; Wiepking et al., 2021).

In the particular case of Belgium, I explained several times in this dissertation that Belgian philanthropy's flexible regulatory framework played a significant role in the field's fragmentation and in the heterogeneity of actors, their action and interaction. Therefore, it could have been relevant to meet with civil servants of Belgian Finance and Justice Ministries, who could have enriched my understanding

of the law and its amendments. This could have given me another perspective on the state of Belgian philanthropy, on the relationship of incumbent philanthropic organizations with public authorities, as well as on how these authorities perceived the arrival of platform-based newcomers and the lack of regulation regarding their development and organization. One future research avenue would be to consider the interactions between philanthropic organizations and social-mission platforms from a broader perspective. It would be relevant to extend the work initiated in this dissertation to a broader set of actors including public authorities and other key populations.

Third, opting for institutional theory and, more specifically, fields theory, I looked at the field of Belgian philanthropy as my unit of analysis. Even though I adopted the actor-centric perspective of institutional theory (as opposed to a logic-centric perspective (Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2012)) and focused on organizational actors' position-taking strategies and boundary work, I still interpreted them from an institutional theory's point of view. This means that I did not take an interest in specific organizational strategies based on organization-level drivers such as their quest for resources or dynamics of competition or collaboration. Such a choice would maybe have given me another understanding of incumbents' and newcomers' action and interaction, and more specifically of philanthropic organizations' "business strategies". As argued, although oriented toward general interest, philanthropy appears to be a market like any other.

In this regard, one future research avenue could be to look at one or several philanthropic organizations with a focus on their resources, leadership, competitors, and more broadly, stakeholders. Such a focus would enable to better understand how philanthropic organizations develop, what is the range of their relationships, how they change and with what effect on philanthropic organizations. From a theoretical point of view, it would imply to use theoretical frameworks such as resource dependence theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Wry, Cobb, & Aldrich, 2013) or stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984; Friedman & Miles, 2002). As already shown by scholars (see for instance Furnari (2016)), meaningful links can be drawn between resource dependence theory and fields theory. In terms of epistemological stance and methodological approach, this alternative theoretical choice would likely imply quantitative and qualitative mixed methods tending toward the more objective end of the ontology-epistemology continuum.

The fourth limit follows on from the third one. As my primary focus was on the field of philanthropy, I did not devote attention to the internal dynamics of philanthropic organizations. I sometimes interviewed several workers within an organization but did not particularly question them on how their strategy regarding newcomers and the field was built inside their organization. As such, I lack an understanding of how incumbent organizations internally discussed the arrival of newcomers and to what extent their affiliating or discriminating strategy was the subject of an internal debate. In order to move my findings forward, researchers could take an interest in philanthropic organizations' internal dynamics as well as how these are influenced by the field-structuring processes and changing boundaries I highlight.

In this sense, these future studies could do a similar analytical work for incumbents than the one I started to do for newcomers and their organizational configurations; and even take this work a step further. While I investigated how newcomers combined organizing elements to configure their platform organizations and manage their network of stakeholders, I did not specifically focus on how they strategically negotiated and drew their platform's organizational boundaries. Yet, platforms' integration and differentiation patterns appeared to reflect incumbents' patterns vis-à-vis their field. As such, a close attention to internal strategic dynamics could further enhance this dissertation' contributions. Theoretical perspectives such as strategy-as-practice research could prove helpful in unveiling how a strategy emerge and how strategy-making takes place within philanthropic organizations, as well as how this strategy impacts organizational outcomes (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; MacKay, Chia, & Nair, 2021; Vaara & Whittington, 2012). Attempting to explain how institutional change can originate in individuals' everyday work, scholars have already started to follow this path and bridge institutional theory and practices theory (see for instance Smets and colleagues (2012)). Such analyses could also further investigate internal power dynamics, hence taking a more sociological approach (Crozier & Friedberg, 1987; Nizet & Pichault, 2001). To do so, researchers would need to take a particular interest in actors' micro practices and would likely rely on qualitative methods such as ethnography and (participant) observations.

A fifth limit of my work relates to the lack of focus on how the different actors frame social change and their specific role for this change to materialize. While I touch upon the similar diagnoses framed by newcomers and incumbents regarding philanthropy's failures, I took these diagnoses as a starting point to look at

incumbents and newcomers' interaction. Therefore, I did not attempt to deeply understand newcomers' and incumbents' vision of change – that is, what they are striving to achieve at a societal level, the problems and solutions they identify and how they justify these to mobilize others in supporting their vision. In other words, I did not take a particular interest in the diagnostic, prognostic and motivational aspects of their framing (Benford & Snow, 2000). Doing so would have likely provided me with a deeper understanding of how and why social-mission platforms emerge, and incumbents evolve, how their action at the organizational and field level as well as interaction with others are influenced by their framing.

Scholars interested in developing a more fine-grained understanding of philanthropic organizations' and philanthropy's emergence and development could follow an idea-centric perspective (as recently suggested by Hehenberger and colleagues (2019)). Such a perspective could, for instance, enable them to better discern the ideas at the basis of the social-mission platforms' movement. Observing platforms for several years, they could also appreciate how these ideas develop, are strengthened, or abandoned. Doing so, they could construct a picture of the movement, what it could have been and how it could still evolve. Scholars could also build on the literature on framing and social movements (Cornelissen & Werner, 2014; Snow & Benford, 2002) and confront the discourses held by newcomers and incumbents vis-à-vis social change. Methodologically, these two theoretical lines would require more ethnographic and longitudinal approaches, as well as close attention to actors' discursive arguments.

Despite these limitations, I believe that this dissertation provides a useful starting point for scholars interested in developing further research along the five avenues proposed here as well as other possible directions.

5 Reflexive thoughts: An insider-outsider position

This section intends to reflect on my involvement in the whole research process and on the influence this involvement may have had on Belgian philanthropy and its organizations, on their relationship with social-mission platforms, and thereby on the findings and contributions presented in the previous chapters. In other words, this section relates to the reflexive work in which I engaged throughout my PhD journey. Brannick & Coghlan (2007, p. 60) define reflexivity as "the monitoring of the behavioral impact on the research setting as a result of carrying out the research". Depending on researchers' epistemological stance and methodological approach, this monitoring takes different aspects. Indeed, researchers will differently consider what constitutes a valid and legitimate contribution to theory (Welch & Piekkari, 2017).

As a qualitative researcher adopting an interpretivist epistemological stance, I am ineluctably part of the story I recounted. Following a subjective ontology, I believe that social reality is to be understood by interpreting social actors' own interpretations of their reality. Eventually, knowledge is socially constructed. This implies for interpretivist researchers to directly experience social actors' world, to get deeply and closely involved in the phenomenon under study (Cunliffe, 2011; Yanow & Ybema, 2009).

Given my very presence in the research context, my choices of angle to observe this context are neither neutral nor unobtrusive (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, it appears essential to understand the extent to which my research process and outcomes are affected by my "nonneutrality". While involvement has long been argued as a tenet of valuable knowledge acquired through qualitative research, the extent of this involvement and its implications are rarely clearly conveyed (Langley & Klag, 2019). Langley & Klag (2019) impute this ambiguity and opacity around researchers' role in their context to the "involvement paradox". While involvement leads to deep understanding of social phenomena, it is also perceived as problematic, especially from a more positivist perspective. Involved researchers might lack the necessary distance and objectivity deemed for valid academic research and risk influencing the phenomenon under study (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007; Welch & Piekkari, 2017).

In order to avoid being challenged on their role and thereby putting themselves in a vulnerable position, researchers have tended to omit or minimize their role. This strategy appears to be equally problematic, as readers are only provided with a

partial story and can only appraise it through the lens given by the researcher. In order for the readers to properly evaluate knowledge claims, it is important as researchers to be fully aware of and interrogate our personal and professional identities, how they influenced data collection and the strategies implemented to deal with involvement when analyzing data and reporting findings (Langley & Klag, 2019). In turn, this increases the legitimacy and richness of qualitative research. Through this specific section, this dissertation is in line with this transparency endeavor.

The present dissertation can be qualified as a particular variant of inside-out research (Evered & Louis, 1981; Hehenberger et al., 2019). While outsider-researchers temporarily join their research context, remain detached and almost invisible guests, insider-researchers are "complete members of organizational systems" (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007, p. 59), fully immersed in their research context. Between these two extremes, there exists a variety of in-between types of researchers' representation (Langley & Klag, 2019). My position tends toward the outsider end of the continuum, as I am a PhD researcher funded by a university scholarship to document the social phenomenon of philanthropy in Belgium. While I previously worked in a philanthropic organization (i.e., a nonprofit benefiting from resources provided by philanthropic foundations and individuals), I no longer was a practitioner when I began my PhD journey.

However, my inquiry cannot completely be regarded as conducted from outside. On one hand, my PhD took place within the University Chair in Philanthropy and Social Investment which was created by one of my research participants (The Oldest Fund) belonging to incumbent philanthropic resource-providers. On the other hand, my research process started with a study (2017-2018) on social-mission platforms requested by The Nextdoor Bank and The Big Foundation (two other research participants belonging to incumbent philanthropic resource-providers). In this regard, my position tends toward the insider end of the continuum. This in-between outsider-insider position had both advantages and disadvantages throughout my research process, from fieldwork's access to the reporting of findings.

5.1   Primary and secondary access

Fieldwork access is crucial for qualitative researchers who seek to be close to their social phenomenon and to deeply interact with social actors; and more so for those willing to study social interaction (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016), as I intended to do between incumbents and newcomers. At first, the research question at the origin of the requested study appeared very straightforward: who are social-mission platforms and what are they doing? As such, I entered the field with a naïve view, uninformed of Belgian philanthropy's politics. I conceived fieldwork access as a practical task; the first one to achieve in order to start the research process. After a short period, I quickly realized that negotiating, acquiring, and maintaining access was much more uncertain, complex, and political than expected. It did not only depend on me, as a researcher, and on my contact with research participants or my framing of research goals, but it was equally contingent on research participants themselves and at times on their self-interested intentions. In the end, the initial straightforward question turned out to be highly political.

My belonging to the Chair and my undertaking of the requested study granted me a pretty easy and direct primary access to the field and to incumbent philanthropic organizations. Primary access relates to "opening the door to an organization" (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016, p. 537) in order to obtain information. Belgian philanthropic organizations already knew the Chair and its members – notably, Virginie Xhauflair, holder of the Chair and supervisor of this dissertation, as well as Amélie Mernier, former PhD candidate of the Chair and (co-)author of reports and a quantitative study on Belgian financing foundations (Mernier, 2014, 2017; Mernier & Xhauflair, 2017). Since 2012, Virginie and Amélie have taken part in different committees, working groups and studies initiated by field members. More than a simple observer of the field, initially created to build knowledge on philanthropy, the Chair has become over the years a member of the field and partakes in the philanthropy phenomenon.

During several of my interviews with incumbents, this insider position was explicitly recognized, as exemplified by these two quotes (my emphasis):

> *"We have more and more clients, entrepreneurs, who want to make their business more responsible, many families who want to create a philanthropic project, a foundation, or something else. I guess that if you work in the Chair, you know how it works."* (The Job4All Foundation, Interview 1)

> *"Recognition is increasing, you* [the Chair] *have become an important actor in the philanthropic sector and it is only going to keep increasing as you have no competitor."* (The Oldest Fund, Interview 1)

However, my relationship with incumbent philanthropic organizations also proved to be a liability and did not always open doors. As I was labeled "working in the Chair" or "working with The Big Foundation or The Nextdoor Bank", I was never perceived as neutral by research participants, be they incumbents or newcomers. To draw the field's picture and see the links among its members, I chose for a snowball technique to identify my next interviewees. At the end of each interview, I asked the interviewee whether they could suggest another organization with which I could have a similar conversation. While this was the last question of my interview guide and, in my opinion, the simplest, it revealed to be the most complicated one. Most of the times, research participants were reluctant to give me names.

On one hand, they believed that as Virginie was in direct contact with many field members, she had a *"good vision"* of the field (The Big Foundation, Interview 1), and as the Chair had a database listing a large number of Belgian foundations (built in the framework of Amelie's study), I could simply go through this database.

> *"I am not going to give you names. I would like you to go through Virginie's database and identify organizations yourself. Once you've done that, we can discuss it. Otherwise, I have the feeling that I am the only one to do this kind of exercise. And this is an interesting exercise."* (The Family Foundation, Interview 1)

On the other hand, philanthropic organizations appeared quite suspicious and uninformed of one another. They would start by asking with whom I had already met and would either disqualify or validate these interviews, always adding a word to comment the other organizations. They would say that the organizations I

mentioned were good enough, they had no other organizations in mind. They would mention The Association, but often without managing to remember its name or to get it right. Or they would simply refer me to The Big Foundation. Facing this reluctance, I always tried to insist and sometimes eventually gave names myself in order to incite them to share their opinion with me and to test some of my own intuitions. Doing so, I may have influenced their responses.

As far as platform-based newcomers are concerned, my association with philanthropy and with the Nextdoor Bank and The Big Foundation was double-edged. On one hand, these two incumbents shared with me the social-mission platforms they already knew, which helped me identify my first interviewees. While this was particularly useful considering the newness of the platform phenomenon, this also gave a particular direction to the start of my data collection. On the other hand, when I approached social-mission platforms, they were not always positively responsive to my reference to philanthropy or its organizations.

At first, when contacting social-mission platforms, I was always transparent and explained that the study was requested by incumbent philanthropic actors. Some of the platforms were motivated to take part to the study, as they hoped to develop a fruitful relationship with or even saw an opportunity to obtain philanthropic funding from The Nextdoor Bank or The Big Foundation. Yet, some platforms were more hesitant, questioning philanthropic actors' motivations. After facing some refusals from platform founders to meet with me, I stopped presenting the study as a request from philanthropic organizations. I went as far as completely avoiding mentioning the word "philanthropy", in order to ensure access to social-mission platforms. I am fully aware that this strategy raises an ethical dilemma and a form of deception in the way I presented myself. At the onset of the interview, I always made sure to mention the involvement of The Nextdoor Bank and The Big Foundation. Research participants could always change their mind and decide not to go through with the interview. In most cases, relationship with newcomers did not end up damaged by my deceptive behavior; SkillUp being the only exception. After taking part to one interview and to the focus group, SkillUp decided it did not want to conduct a follow-up interview as it no longer wanted to risk its platform to be associated with the Nextdoor Bank.

Once primary access is gained, researchers need to secure secondary access – that is, "access to documentation, data, people, and meetings" (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007, p. 67) that are relevant to the research. While my primary access to incumbent

philanthropic organizations was fairly easy and direct, secondary access proved to be more complicated. Due to the insider aspect of the Chair, incumbents largely assumed that, as working in a Chair in Philanthropy and Social Investment, I was already quite familiar with the landscape of Belgian philanthropy. As such, they sometimes only touched upon some topics, interrupting their answers by phrases like: *"no need to spell it out for you, you know it"* (The Nextdoor Bank, Interview 1), or *"what don't you already know?!"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 3) or *"you should interview Virginie about that, she already has a great expertise"* (The Big Foundation, Interview 1). This required me to be attentive to the information they were omitting and to ask for complementary details when needed.

On the other hand, incumbents were not always willing to share strategic and privileged information with me. Interviewees often asked to receive the interview questions in advance to be able to prepare and discuss them with their colleagues. As such, during the interview, they would ensure to preserve the organization's public image and use a consistent discourse following the organization's formal line. For instance, during my interview with the Well-Being Coop, I remember the interviewee reading me prepared answers to previously provided questions. As I struggled to obtain specific answers, I rephrased my questions and sometimes deviated from the original ones. The interviewee was then a bit confused and kept coming back on her script. While this kind of interview was a bit frustrating, it also showed me how some organizations were protective of their image and how they feared exposure to other field members. Interestingly, I never had to face this protective behavior during my interviews with platform-based newcomers.

In other words, incumbents were more inclined to show me their front-stage than their backstage performances (Goffman, 1974). Yet, front-stage performances do "not tell us the whole story" (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016, p. 549). In order to get access to backstage – that is, where rich data, contested meanings, actions and interactions take place (Mair & Hehenberger, 2014) – I had to employ certain (sometimes deceptive) strategies. For instance, when struggling to obtain answers, I sometimes gave my own interpretations or mentioned what another interviewee had previously told me. In this sense, I confronted discourses and incited interviewees to position themselves vis-à-vis a specific statement.

While this strategy usually proved to be successful, its downside was that it necessarily introduced biases, influenced interviewee's answers, and risked standardizing opinions within organizations and the field. Another strategy was to

partially conceal my "real" research purpose, especially regarding Chapter I, its focus on power issues and a more critical approach. Had I fully disclosed my aim to uncover field-structuring strategy, I would not have obtained such detailed and straightforward discourses on The Big Foundation and The Transformative Foundation's actions. While such strategy is helpful in producing theoretically relevant research (which is definitely one of the PhD dissertation's goals), it becomes challenging when it comes to report findings to research participants.

Conversely, incumbents were sometimes more than willing to share privileged, informal, and backstage information with me. This willingness appeared to be more related to my position as a PhD researcher and thus as an outsider, than to the insider aspect of the Chair. While the Chair and Virginie's reputational capital were key in opening philanthropic organizations' doors, my personal identity and positionality had an influence in the relationship I was able to build with organizational actors. Even though my PhD research was associated with the Chair and, at first, with two incumbent organizations, I was still new to the field. Organizational actors perceived me as a "professional stranger" (Agar (1996), cited by Cunliffe & Alcadipani (2016, p. 543)) whose aim was to build knowledge on philanthropy, and not as a threat to their activity. Therefore, some of them dropped their guard and shared more sensitive thoughts on field's political issues. After the interview, research participants would often come back to me by phone calls or emails to nuance their discourse on philanthropy or other philanthropic organizations. This undoubtedly added depth to data collected.

In sum, the insider aspect of my research gave me credibility and legitimacy within the field, whereas the outsider aspect enabled me to gain organizational actors' trust. Inevitably, this in-between outsider-insider position affected the type of data I was able to collect. However, I believe it also facilitated my deep engagement with the philanthropy phenomenon, enabled me to develop and refine relevant research questions. Indeed, my experience of gaining and maintaining access revealed a lot on hidden power struggles in the field.

5.2 *Data collection, analysis process and reporting of findings*

As explained by Langley & Klag (2019, p. 517), interview techniques can be intrusive as "participants think about the study topic, they may become more mindful of it and even change their behavior". As mentioned, as my research started with a requested study and as public events were organized to present the study's first insights, I was never neutral when conducting interviews. Organizational actors had often saw me at an event, knew on what I was working as well as the primary conclusions I drew. Accordingly, they would sometimes start the interview by asking what my definition of philanthropy was before I even had the chance to ask theirs. They would interrogate me on platforms and the link I made with philanthropy. And more broadly they would question me on the current research topics of the Chair. This led to curious situations where an external observer could have wondered who the interviewer was and who the interviewee was. I tried to avoid giving too much information at the beginning of interviews and to stay vague in my answers, but it was not always easy.

While this might have influenced interviewees to subsequently frame their opinion on my interpretations, this also gave me an opportunity to share and discuss insights in real time – while I was still in a data analysis process – and, hence, refine the interview questions and the findings.

Beyond curious situations, my exposure into the field also sometimes led to emotionally challenging situations. More than simply asking for my definition of philanthropy, research participants also sometimes critically commented it. As explained, I entered the field with the goal of documenting field members' own understanding of philanthropy. As such, I purposefully avoided setting a strict definition of philanthropy in the framework of this dissertation. Yet, for methodological reasons, I still needed a broad definition or at least criteria – such as the use of private resources for public purposes – to delineate philanthropy and justify the inclusion of research participants, and especially social-mission platforms, in my data collection.

In the face of this broad definition, a research participant told me that my work *"was bringing more vagueness into philanthropy"* (The Family Foundation, Interview 1). In a similar vein, during a presentation of first insights at the event *Philanthropy works!* (Antwerp) (Event 1, 2017), one person in the audience stood up and bitterly said that what was presented *"was not philanthropy"*. Even though I knew these comments were not personally directed to me and that they brought

valuable information on the Belgian philanthropy phenomenon, I could not help but question my skills and ability to conduct academic research.

In order to reduce potential biases brought about during data collection and take some distance with the phenomenon, I adopted two strategies. First, I made sure to always triangulate insights with other sources than interviews. I read through many archival documents produced by research participants (websites, reports, publications…). I also observed several events organized by participants. During these events, organizational actors' action and interaction were less scripted. As often as possible, Virginie and I tried to both go to events, in order to have two sets of "observing" eyes. This was especially crucial when one of us was an active presenter. The other would then observe and take fieldnotes, making herself as "invisible" as possible. Second, to balance our insider view, I collaborated with outsider researchers to analyze data. These researchers then became co-authors of Chapter II and III. I also regularly presented my insights in front of my thesis committee which comprised scholars not related to Belgian philanthropy as well as at international academic conferences. As qualitative inquiry requires researchers' close involvement with the phenomenon under study, it often involves multiple researchers to travel "from nearness to distance and back" (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007, p. 66).

As my PhD research started with a requested study, my relationship with The Nextdoor Bank and The Big Foundation can be seen in a "transactional perspective" (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016), at least in terms of reporting findings. These incumbents expected deliverables, in the form of a final report (see Xhauflair and colleagues (2018)) and a presentation of findings (The Nextdoor Bank and The Big Foundation, Event 3) at the end of the study (2017-2018). This transactional perspective gave them a certain influence over my research and particularly its dissemination. In this regard, it can be argued that deception was mutual. While I was sometimes deceptive in my fieldwork access and data collection strategies, research participants were also deceptive in concealing their real reasons to participate in the research. Retrospectively, my PhD research can be regarded as part of the affiliating strategy (cf. Chapter III) and was used by some research participants for their own ends. I often had the feeling that my interviews and research as a whole were used by field members to deliver messages to other philanthropic organizations.

One of the first times I reported findings to research participants was through the focus group (2017) gathering social-mission platforms and organized in collaboration with The Nextdoor Bank. This focus group allowed for many platform founders to meet for the first time. Before I contacted them in the framework of the study, many of them did not know each other. In other words, they met thanks to my PhD research. The focus group was a founding moment in creating the first interorganizational interactions among Belgian social-mission platforms. Another reporting of findings occurred through the public event organized at the end of the study (2018, Event 3). This event contributed to further gather social-mission platforms as well as to connect them with philanthropic organizations, as both groups were present in the same room. From 2018 and onwards, each time I met with incumbent philanthropic organizations they would question me about social-mission platforms, and they would ask me to get access to Chapter II describing the typology. Similarly, each time I met with platform-based newcomers, they would ask me about other newcomers as well as about specific incumbents, even specifying that I *"could myself serve as a platform"* (Time2Give, Interview 2) facilitating their meeting.

Undeniably, my PhD research did not only unveil mechanisms configuring philanthropy in the age of social-mission platforms, but it also operated as one of these mechanisms.

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1   Sample interview guides

This first appendix displays samples of interview guides. Three interview guides are listed here, one for philanthropy observers, one for incumbent philanthropic organizations and one for platform-based newcomers. These guides are examples, as each guide was adapted to the individual or organization it was intended to. Interview guides for follow-up interviews were further adapted according to the content of the first interview conducted with the organizations.

1.1   Sample interview guide for philanthropy observers

Interviewee: former EVPA's head of policy

Site: the interview takes place at the Chapelle Musicale Reine Elisabeth, before a public presentation of a study on Belgian foundations by the University Chair in Philanthropy and Social Investment.

Context: this interview is the first one I conducted one month after starting the PhD (17/02/2017). The interviewee was suggested by Virginie Xhauflair (supervisor) as knowledgeable about philanthropy in Belgium and in Europe.

Interview goals:

- Grasp interviewee's interpretation of philanthropy
- What interviewee considers the latest evolutions of philanthropy
- Grasp interviewee's perspective on Belgian philanthropy and its specificities

Introduction before starting the interview:

- Introduce myself as a PhD student in the University Chair in Philanthropy and Social Investment, supervised by Virginie Xhauflair.
- Explain that I conduct a study requested by the Nextdoor Bank and The Big Foundation on youth developing technology-enabled innovations related to philanthropy
- We agreed on a one-hour interview, is this still ok for you?
- Is it ok for you if I record our discussion, only for transcription purpose?
- Do you have questions before we start?

Set of questions:

1. *About interviewee's experience in philanthropy*
    *   *Can you tell me about your professional experience at the EVPA and how you reached that position?*
    *   *Can you tell me about your previous experiences related to philanthropy before the EVPA?*
    *   Potential probes:
        *   What triggered your interest in philanthropy?
        *   What motivated you to work in the philanthropic sector?
        *   To what extent did your family and academic education influence your relationship with philanthropy?
        *   I read that you created a foundation with your siblings. Can you tell me about this foundation?

2. *About interviewee's definition of philanthropy*
    *   *How do you define philanthropy?*
    *   Potential probes:
        *   Do you include other resources than money?
        *   If you do not use "philanthropy", what other word would you use?
        *   What difference would you make with social engagement, social entrepreneurship…?

3. *About interviewee's opinion on philanthropy in Belgium and compared to other European countries*
    *   *According to you, what are the specificities of philanthropy in Belgium?*
    *   *How is Belgium different from other European countries?*
    *   Potential probes:
        *   What is the role of the Belgian Welfare State vis-à-vis philanthropy?
        *   Would you say Belgium favors philanthropy? Or the contrary?
        *   Who are Belgian philanthropic organizations, in terms of legal status, actions, resources…?
        *   What are the philanthropy networks in Belgium?

  o Would you say that Belgian philanthropy is becoming more professional?

  o It is often said that Belgian philanthropists are discreet about their action, would you agree and what is your opinion on discretion?

4. *About interviewee's opinion on philanthropy's latest evolutions*

- *According to you, have philanthropy, its organizations and practices evolved recently?*
- *What evolutions have you noticed?*
- *How and why can they be considered as evolutions?*
- *According to you, to what extent are youth and new technologies playing a role in these evolutions?*
- Potential probes:
  - o It is often said that youth are changemakers, do you agree with this statement and why?
  - o To what extent is philanthropy linked to entrepreneurship and the business world? Are youth adopting more entrepreneurial behaviors?
  - o Who are the new actors of philanthropy?
  - o What are the new tools of philanthropy?
  - o Could platforms such as crowdfunding be considered a new tool?
  - o What are the new causes to support?
  - o What are the new partnerships? It is often spoken of "breaking silos"? Do you see these silos and the activities to break them?

1.2   Sample interview guide for incumbent philanthropic organizations

Interviewee: executive director of The YouthPower Foundation

Site: the interview takes place in the office of The YouthPower Foundation located in Brussels.

Context: this interview (15/11/2018) is part of the first wave of interviews with incumbent philanthropic organizations and was conducted after the event *Philanthropy & Platforms* (Event 3, 2018) organized to present the findings of the commissioned study. The interviewee attended the event and had the opportunity to meet there with some platform founders/managers.

Interview goals:

- Grasp interviewee's interpretation of philanthropy
- Grasp interviewee's perspective on Belgian philanthropy and its specificities, and especially grasp interviewee's opinion on The Association
- Get a broad sense of interviewee's philanthropic actions and interactions with other philanthropic organizations and other societal stakeholders
- What interviewee considers the latest evolutions of philanthropy, and especially grasp interviewee's opinion on social-mission platforms

Introduction before starting the interview:

- Introduce myself as a PhD student in the University Chair in Philanthropy and Social Investment, supervised by Virginie Xhauflair.
- Explain that we meet in the framework of my PhD research, which started upon a request to conduct a study on youth developing technology-enabled innovations related to philanthropy and remind that this study was presented last October.
- We agreed on the interview lasting more or less one hour and a half, is this still ok for you?
- Is it ok for you if I record our discussion, only for transcription purpose?
- Do you have questions before we start?

Set of questions:

1. *About interviewee's definition of philanthropy*
   - *How do you define philanthropy?*
   - Potential probes:
     - If interviewee prefer not to use the word "philanthropy" (for instance, on interviewee's website), what other word would the interviewee use? And why?
     - Do you consider yourself part of philanthropy? Why?
     - Who can be part of philanthropy and who cannot? And why?
     - What is the "limit" of philanthropy?

2. *About interviewee's opinion on philanthropy in Belgium*
   - *According to you, what are the strengths and weaknesses of philanthropy in Belgium?*
     - *What works well in Belgium and what could be improved?*
   - *What is your opinion on The Association?*
   - Potential probes:
     - What is the role of the Belgian Welfare State vis-à-vis philanthropy?
     - Would you say Belgium favors philanthropy? Or the contrary?
     - You are a member of The Association, to what extent are you involved in The Association and its activities?
     - What is the added value of being a member?
     - Are you part of other networks on and around philanthropy in Belgium?
     - Would you say that Belgian philanthropy is becoming more professional?

3. *About interviewee's philanthropic actions and interactions*
   - *What is your mission as a philanthropic organization and how do you achieve this mission?*
   - *What are your relationships with other Belgian philanthropic organizations, resource-seeking and -providing organizations?*
   - *What are your relationships with other societal stakeholders: public authorities? corporations?*

- Potential probes:
  - What actions do you undertake to achieve your mission?
  - How do you conduct these actions? Based on what resources?
  - What challenges have you encountered while undertaking these actions?
  - Do you have a lot of interactions with other philanthropic organizations?
  - Do you wish you would have more interactions? Why? With whom?
  - What is the nature of these interactions?
  - Can you tell me more about the collective impact project you initiated with other philanthropic organizations?

4. *About interviewee's opinion on philanthropy's latest evolutions and the arrival of social-mission platforms*
   - *According to you, have philanthropy, its organizations and practices evolved recently?*
   - *What evolutions have you noticed?*
   - *Have you noticed the arrival of social-mission platforms, such as Time2Give which was present at the event in October?*
   - *What is your opinion on these platforms?*
   - Potential probes:
     - Do you interact with social-mission platforms? Which one? How? Why?
     - What is the added value of social-mission platforms?
     - What could be their downsides?

5. *Could you suggest to me other philanthropic resource-providers similar to your organizations and with whom I could have a similar discussion than the one we just had?*

1.3   *Sample interview guide for platform-based newcomers*

Interviewee: founder of Colibris Booster

Site: the interview takes place in the office of the web design enterprise founded by the founder of Colibris Booster, in Brussels.

Context: this interview (05/09/2019) is part of the second wave of interviews with platform-based newcomers. Colibris Booster is one of the platforms I meet for the first time during this second wave, as I did not meet with it during the first wave. Colibris Booster was created in 2018, between my first wave and second wave of data collection.

Interview goals:

- Grasp interviewee's motivations to create a social-mission platform
- Get a broad sense of the social-mission platform and its operating
- Grasp interviewee's interaction with other social-mission platforms and with philanthropic organizations

Introduction before starting the interview:

- Introduce myself as a PhD student at the University of Liège
- Explain that we meet in the framework of my PhD research, which aims to explore the new phenomenon of social-mission platforms and how it relates to philanthropy
- We agreed on the interview lasting more or less one hour and a half, is this still ok for you?
- Is it ok for you if I record our discussion, only for transcription purpose?
- Do you have questions before we start?

Set of questions:

1. *About interviewee's motivations to create a social-mission platform*
   - *Can you tell me how you came up with the idea of creating Colibris Booster?*
   - Potential probes:
     - What is the history of the platform?
     - What is your experience with platforms and the development of platforms?

        o What is you experience with social engagement? social entrepreneurship? philanthropy? the nonprofit sector?

        o What needs or shortcomings have you identified and which a platform could overcome?

        o What would you say is the role of your platform?

2. *About the creation and operating of a social-mission platform*
   - *How did you create the platform? Yourself? With a team?*
   - *How does the platform operate?*
   - *Who can access it and according to which criteria?*
   - *What concretely happens once someone has accessed the platform?*
   - Potential probes:
     - o Have you experienced challenges when creating the platform? Which ones?
     - o If you had to create it again, would you do it differently?
     - o Have you experienced challenges when operating the platform? Which ones?
     - o Do you organize activities besides those occurring on the platform? What kind?
     - o What is the role of stakeholders accessing the platform? What do you expect from them?

3. *About the evolution of the platform*
   - *Where do you see your platform in 5 years?*
   - Potential probes:
     - o How would you wish your platform to evolve?
     - o What changes do you plan to make in the next months/years? And why?

4. *About interviewee's interactions with other social-mission platforms*
   - *Do you know any other platforms similar to yours?*
   - *How would you distinguish your platforms from others?*
   - *Do you interact with other platforms?*
   - Potential probes:
     - o What is the difference between your platform and, say, SkillUp or Time2Give?

o　What is the nature of your interactions with other social-mission platforms?
　　　o　What is the added value of these interactions?
　　　o　What are the challenges of these interactions?

5. *About interviewee's interactions with philanthropic organizations*
   - *Do you interact with organizations related to philanthropy or the nonprofit sector?*
   - *What is the nature of these interactions?*
   - Potential probes:
     o　Was your platform well received when you contacted philanthropic organizations?
     o　Have you, for instance, contacted The Volunteering Center?
     o　What was your first intention when contacting these organizations? Were you looking for financial support? For partnerships?
     o　Have you experienced challenges in interacting with philanthropic organizations?
     o　Do you consider yourself part of philanthropy?
     o　Do you interact with other stakeholders more or less related to philanthropy?

6. *Could you suggest to me other social-mission platforms similar to your organizations and with whom I could have a similar discussion than the one we just had?*

2　Archival documents

This second appendix displays Table 2.4. listing all archival documents referred to during the research process. Each document has been assigned a code number. This appendix is available upon request.

Configuring the field of philanthropy in the age of social-mission platforms:
A story of fragmented structuration and divergent boundary work
Elodie Dessy

At the junction of private and public spheres, philanthropy is a social phenomenon open to controversies. That which constitutes giving private resources for public purposes evolves alongside societal developments. Philanthropy can be regarded as an issue field – that is, forming around the contested issue of what giving means and how to give. Given this issue-based nature and following digital evolutions, platform-based newcomers (i.e., social crowdfunding, -timing, and -sourcing platforms) have emerged at the fringes of philanthropy. This dissertation explores the configuration of philanthropy in this age of social-mission platforms. It focuses on the Belgian field of philanthropy. One feature of Belgian philanthropy is its fragmented infrastructure. The field lacks the meaning, operational and relational mechanisms to guide philanthropic organizations' action and interaction. As a result, when facing newcomers, incumbent organizations did not offer a united front. This phenomenon is investigated through three papers. Considering the field infrastructure, the first paper documents field-structuring strategies and the unique role of "field-structuring actor". Using a case-based approach, the second paper develops a typology of social-mission platforms. Finally, the third paper examines the relationship between incumbents and newcomers, and emphasizes in-population heterogeneity in boundary strategies. Overall, the dissertation contributes to both institutional theory, by explaining how divergent boundary work leads to a process of persistent, purposeful, and productive fragmented structuration, as well as to philanthropy studies, by documenting the heterogeneity of philanthropic organizations and the development of social-mission platforms.

Elodie Dessy was a Research Fellow at the Center for Social Economy, HEC Liège – Management School of the University of Liège, from 2017 to 2021. She holds a master's degree in Population and Development Studies from the University of Liège (2016). In Spring 2020, she was a visiting scholar at the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin. Elodie presented her research at several conferences (EGOS, EMES, ISTR, ERNOP among others). Her research interests include philanthropy, social enterprises, and digital social innovations from institutional and field perspectives.