Educational Governance Research 11

Christian Maroy
Xavier Pons *Editors*

Accountability Policies in Education

A Comparative and Multilevel Analysis in France and Quebec

Springer

Educational Governance Research

Volume 11

Educational Governance Research

Aims and Scope

This series presents recent insights in educational governance gained from research that focuses on the interplay between educational institutions and societies and markets. Education is not an isolated sector. Educational institutions at all levels are embedded in and connected to international, national and local societies and markets. One needs to understand governance relations and the changes that occur if one is to understand the frameworks, expectations, practice, room for manoeuvre, and the relations between professionals, public, policy makers and market place actors.

The aim of this series is to address issues related to structures and discourses by which authority is exercised in an accessible manner. It will present findings on a variety of types of educational governance: public, political and administrative, as well as private, market place and self-governance. International and multidisciplinary in scope, the series will cover the subject area from both a worldwide and local perspective and will describe educational governance as it is practised in all parts of the world and in all sectors: state, market, and NGOs.

The series:
- Covers a broad range of topics and power domains
- Positions itself in a field between politics and management/leadership
- Provides a platform for the vivid field of educational governance research
- Looks into ways in which authority is transformed within chains of educational governance
- Uncovers relations between state, private sector and market place influences on education, professionals and students.

More information about this series at http://www.springer.com/series/13077

Christian Maroy • Xavier Pons
Editors

Accountability Policies in Education

A Comparative and Multilevel Analysis in France and Quebec

Springer

Editors
Christian Maroy
University of Montreal
Montreal, QC, Canada

Xavier Pons
University of Eastern-Paris Creteil
Paris, France

ISSN 2365-9548 ISSN 2365-9556 (electronic)
Educational Governance Research
ISBN 978-3-030-01284-7 ISBN 978-3-030-01285-4 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-01285-4

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018965927

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG.
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Chapter 1
Introduction

Christian Maroy and Xavier Pons

1.1 Introduction

This book provides a multilevel and comparative analysis of the effective implementation of performance-based accountability policies in French and Quebec education.[1] Generally speaking, these policies can be defined as sets of objectives, measures, organizational processes, and tools whose goal is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of education systems through the introduction of mechanisms encouraging or forcing actors to aim for measurable objectives or targets and to be answerable for their actions and performances. Studied as such in this volume, these policies are also very rewarding empirical subjects for researchers aiming to investigate broader issues such as the implementation of New Public Management in education, state reforms and the globalization of education governance, since these policies are probably indicative of more general changes in public governance.

This book presents the results of the *NewAGE* project (*NewAGE* for "New Accountability and Governance in Education," 2012–2015; funding by the ANR[2] and the FRQSC[3]) which is structured around a comparative view of the trajectory of these policies in both countries, their mediations by intermediate bodies (French *académies*[4] and Quebec school boards), and, finally, the policy tools and their uses

[1] Education refers here to primary and secondary education, whether or not it is compulsory.

[2] French national research agency. Grant number: ANR- 11-FRQU-001 01.

[3] Quebec funds for research on society and culture. Grant number: 2012-QF-163746.

[4] In the French education system, *académies* designate state regional education authorities in charge of primary and secondary education.

C. Maroy (✉)
University of Montreal, Montreal, QC, Canada
e-mail: christian.maroy@umontreal.ca

X. Pons
University of Eastern-Paris Creteil, Paris, France
e-mail: ponsx@wanadoo.fr

C. Maroy, X. Pons (eds.), *Accountability Policies in Education*, Educational Governance Research 11, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-01285-4_1

at school level. To some extent, each defining feature of this project can be regarded as an attempt to fill some gaps in the international literature that we must now explain more fully.

1.2 Multilevel

Much of the literature on performance-based accountability policies follows two principal paths.[5] The first, often focused on international and transnational levels, attempts to analyze the changes occurring in the conception of contemporary education policies. Thus, a number of authors stress the shift from government to governance (Normand & Derouet, 2009), the globalization of an increasingly complex education governance (Dale & Robertson, 2002), a "quality turn" concerning governance which would develop measures of evaluation and quality assurance (Segerholm, 2012), and the conception of measurement and governance instruments based on data and results within the framework of international expert networks (Normand, 2011; Ozga, Dahler-Larsen, Segerholm, & Simola, 2011).

In response to this first approach based on the "production" of these policies at the international and transnational levels, a second focuses on the local "reception" of these international imperatives. In this case, it is a matter of proposing a socio-organizational and socio-cognitive analysis of the local construction and reception of different forms of results-based governance and external evaluation instruments. In France, for example, the implementation of evaluation and results-based governance mechanisms is analyzed as a process of negotiation inscribed in power relationships. Thus, Demailly and collègues (1998) observed the implementation of school audits within the *académie* of Lille and describe the usage of evaluation by the teachers, principals, and inspectors. Barrère (2006) broached this question from the perspective of school principals. Evaluation is described, for example, as a learning process which involves agreements and transactions regarding the normative and institutional significance of the evaluation process and the rendering of accounts (Demailly, 2003). In France, more than in other European systems, professional identities play a key role in the degree and forms of implementation of external evaluation (Buisson-Fenet & Pons, 2014). These works often situate their analysis at a particular scale of public action: that of actors (such as school principals), levels (local, intermediate, or national), or territories (an *académie*). Then, in the best-case scenario, consideration of other scales or levels is based on an analysis of the literature and a historical and institutional contextualization. Yet these two elements do not always allow us to readily envision the processes of negotiation, co-construction, and translation of public action at play at other levels, nor even to envisage their interactions and effects on the level of particular interest in the analysis.

[5] The following elements are developed in greater detail in Chap. 3.

Now, in extending a number of studies on new scales of public action (Lingard, Martino, & Rezai-Rashti, 2013; Lingard & Rawolle, 2011) or new fields of public policies (policyscapes) (Carney, 2012), it is reasonable to suppose that the deployment of accountability policies is far from occurring in a top-down fashion, that policy levels matter, that they are interdependent and may produce retroactive effects, that there are different processes of translation at different levels (e.g., Ozga et al., 2011), and that varied forms of vernacular globalization are at play (Appadurai, 1996; Lingard, 2006).

That is why, in this volume, we provide a multilevel analysis of a policy trajectory whose effects are not reduced to the general and diffuse impact of a transnational discourse, such as the neoliberal one. We show how the construction and implementation of the policy is shaped in France and Quebec through many factors: actor configuration, sets of tools, sensemaking, and the problematization of the policy by local or intermediate actors, their political struggles, and local logics of action. We also take into account the material and institutional constraints, as well as the resources available in each context. In other words, we use a plural theoretical toolbox for the analysis of education policy (development and implementation), combining the perspective of the French version of policy analysis—the *sociologie de l'action publique* (Halpern, Hassenteufel, & Zittoun, 2018; Smith, 1999)—with a North American neo-institutionalist approach.

The former emphasizes actors' games at various levels and scenes that matter in the making and implementation of policy, underlining that these actors could interpret and make sense of the policy in various ways and that political processes—impositions, compromises, struggles, etc.—are also present. The neo-institutionalist approach (either organizational or sociohistorical) underlines that institutions—understood broadly as rules, norms, and cognitive frames (Scott, 1995)—matter, due to the obstacles or barriers that they can represent for certain policy solutions or political games while at the same time supplying resources for action. Institutional arrangements are constraints, resources, and objects of public action.

These games and logics of action, embedded in specific contexts and various scenes, are analyzed more particularly at three levels crucial for policy trajectory. At global and national levels, there are vernacular globalization processes and national recontextualizations of global trends due to various institutional and political processes amidst various scenes. This is central to the specific trajectory of the accountability policy in both national contexts. At the regional levels, logics of mediation of the national accountability policy—leading to policy dilution, policy appropriation, policy amplification, or policy nullification (Malen, 2006)—are analyzed, especially at the meso level (i.e., *académies* and school boards). Lastly, at the national, regional, and local levels, accountability policies are packed with various tools (contracts, projects, plans, testing, statistical indicators and statistics, etc.) that matter in the implementation of the policy at the school level; their uses by local actors (school leaders, or pedagogical counsellors), their impact on school regulation processes, their effect on the core technology of the school (teaching and learning processes), and/or their side effects on local social and managerial relations between school principals, teachers, and other key actors are scrutinized at the school level.

1.3 Comparative

A significant proportion of the international literature on accountability policies tends to focus on the experience of English-speaking education systems. This movement paved the way for a relatively cumulative literature whose aim is to capture the diversity of accountability systems in typologies based on a variety of criteria: types of sanctions, types of actors held accountable, types of obligations constraining them, identity of the people to whom they are held accountable, etc.

This goal of categorization and, sometimes, modelling, is present from the first typologies proposed by certain North American specialists in education accountability (Kogan, 1988; Leithwood & Earl, 2000). It constitutes a questioning of research which is still ongoing, as can be seen in current researches in international or comparative education (Easley II & Tulowitzki, 2016; Education Comparée, 2011, 2014; Harris & Herrington, 2006; Ranson, 2003),[6] but also in some current debates among policy scientists on different "accountability systems" at play in public administration (Mattei, 2009, 2012; Mattei, Mitra, Vrangbæk, Neby, & Byrkjeflot, 2013).

In spite of these different typologies, in the English-speaking literature, accountability in education is often equated with national standards, high stakes testing, as well as the monitoring and surveillance of school results and performances. It is also associated with various forms of incentives and sanctions for principals and teachers. This high-stake regime of accountability has been extensively researched in the USA, the UK, Australia, and Chile, for example. These policies have been analyzed as the enactment of a global neoliberal policy discourse, leading to poor results in terms of efficacy and increasing inequalities. Moreover, this neoliberal governance model leads to a performative managerial regime of surveillance and control within schools, with teachers being confronted with new managerial powers and managerial models of teacher professionalism.

However, accountability regimes have been implemented in different ways in other national areas, and many researchers have noticed that accountability policies may vary (notably in continental Europe or Canada) depending on the stakes (high or low) of the policy, the tools and theory of change involved, and the alignment among various policy levels and tools (e.g., Dupriez & Mons, 2011; Maroy & Voisin, 2014). In contexts such as France and Quebec, accountability policy stakes are low or moderate, alignment is partial, and the expected policy change is related to the involvement and professionalism of teachers, whose use of test results is meant to contribute to the improvement of teaching. These so-called "reflexive" or "soft" accountability policies have rarely been analyzed in the English-speaking literature.

That is why in this book we propose a comparison between France and Quebec. Our goal is to extend the empirical coverage of this literature by empirically documenting these lesser known forms of accountability policies, their orientations, as

[6] Some of these typologies are presented in greater detail in Chap. 3.

well as their effects on school operations and results. Doing so also reinforces existing theoretical interpretations by learning more from other education systems whose institutional experiences cannot be reduced to marginal positions in mainstream typologies but the deep understanding of which can contribute to a more comprehensive view of accountability policies in general. This comparison is based on a most different system design, each system developing a common global governance scheme (accountability) in its own way, and on a transatlantic perspective which enables us to take into account education systems that are differently exposed to international imperatives.[7]

1.4 Implementation

Among the usual paths taken by the current international literature on accountability policies, two last approaches must be mentioned.[8] Their common characteristic is to pay little attention to the implementation processes themselves.

The first consists of trying to evaluate which type of accountability is the most effective in improving student results (e.g., Carnoy & Loeb, 2002; Hanushek & Raymond, 2005; Lee, 2006, 2008; Voisin, 2017; Wößmann, 2007), sometimes on the basis of the typologies mentioned above. These studies allow us to take note of a significant variation in the potential effects of results-based governance. Nevertheless, they have two major limitations. They only concentrate on the officially expected effects in the main subjects for which external "tests" exist (mathematics, science, and mother tongue). Moreover, while they identify some effects, they are incapable of theorizing about the processes by which the performance-based accountability policies produce these changes in schools and classrooms.

The second approach questions the development of these policies and their political significance, linking them to the emergence of knowledge economies, globalization (e.g., Dale & Robertson, 2002), the crisis of welfare states' modes of intervention (e.g., Ball, 1997), the influence of international organizations, or the development of a neoliberal orthodoxy (Whitty, Power, & Halpin, 1998). Others stress the rise of an "obligation of results" (Demailly, 2001; Lessard & Meirieu, 2008), a new performative moral economy (Ball, 2003), and a new evaluative state in education (Broadfoot, 2000; Neave, 1988). The reasons offered for these transformations are somewhat divergent and somewhat complementary. They are of heuristic interest, but it is not easy to test them empirically. According to their prevailing macroscopic perspective, favoring "discourse" analysis, or one with transnational frames of reference or paradigms underlying the evolution of education policies, these works do not always document their concrete and progressive implementation in the systems concerned.

[7] The methodological design of our research is detailed in Chap. 4.

[8] Once again, for more details, see Chap. 3.

This lack of attention to the effective implementation of these policies raises several issues. Implementation is never just a matter of enforcement or conformation. It implies processes of translation, hybridization, and bricolage by various policy actors who, in the end, contribute to co-producing the policy or even sometimes simply constituting the policy itself. Consequently, ignoring them may lead the researcher to miss the point and to reproduce the image that the advocates of these policies want to give and contribute then to their so-called powerful performative effect. On the contrary, researcher could reproduce the discourses of their opponents with a form of complacency with professionals who often strongly criticize these policies. The risk here is simply that of overestimating the governance changes at work. In that sense, this book tries to take seriously into account the "implementation turn" of policy analysis (Lascoumes & Le Galès, 2007) in education (Lessard & Carpentier, 2015; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002), as in other policy sectors.

That is why, in this book, we propose a specific theoretical framework which rests on three main notions: trajectory, mediation, and instrumentation. Each of them allows us to capture one key dimension of the implementation of accountability policies while continuing to link this implementation to the global and structural trends at work.

The notion of *trajectory* is related to an approach sensitive to the dynamic and transformative character of public action, which is to be considered in the analysis. For Ball (1994), this approach implies specifying the dialectic of external or internal processes or those between levels that could affect the policy trajectory. This approach involves explaining how we perceive the interplay between levels and national/global relations in the making or implementation of a policy. Political and institutional processes interacting with the global context and its influence on policy are crucial. As was exposed elsewhere (Maroy, Pons, & Dupuy, 2017), this notion of trajectory is understood as the outcome of the combination of three processes, often intertwined empirically but distinctive from an analytical standpoint: (1) path dependence on earlier choices, due not only to the viscosity of institutions (Pierson, 1994, 2001) but also to the mobilization of actors (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010; Pierson, 1994); (2) bricolage, whereby education policy is developed in the context of negotiations and struggles among actors; and (3) translation, by certain national actors, of policy ideas and instruments circulating at a transnational level.

The second notion is that of *mediation* within the implementation process of the policy. Here we pay attention to how the literature—institutionalist, sensemaking, and sociology of public action—has conceptualized the mediations by which a central policy (legal texts or other discursive elements constitutive of a policy's orientation) tends to actually be implemented, due to various factors and processes: contextual, political, formal, cognitive, and normative. We emphasize the concept of the logic of mediation on the basis of the typology of Malen (2006), as well as the various typologies of organizational responses to a policy. Factors both of mimetism and divergence are taken into account.

The last notion concerns policy tools and the various forms of *instrumentation* of accountability policies. Since the seminal work of Hood (1986), several authors have attempted to conceptualize the notion of a policy tool or policy instrument

(e.g., Salamon, 2002), whether by adopting a policy analysis perspective or an approach closer to a sociology of techniques or a sociology of statistics (e.g., Desrosières, 1993). We mainly develop the central contribution of Lascoumes and Le Galès (2004) and conceive instrumentation as all the issues raised by the choice, implementation, and uses of various policy tools, techniques, and means of action which materialize governing processes.

1.5 Accountability "Policies" as "Most Likely Cases"

If the first purpose of this book is to empirically document lesser known forms of accountability policies, the second is clearly to develop and illustrate an original way to conduct education policy analysis through a plural theoretical toolbox combining the perspective of the French *sociologie de l'action publique* (Halpern et al., 2018; Smith, 1999) with a North American neo-institutionalist approach. This combination seemed interesting to the researchers who participated in the *NewAGE* project because it allowed them to link an analysis of policy processes with an exploration of the possible changes to the very "content" of the policies. In so doing, the idea was to overcome the famous distinction between "substantial" policies and "institutional" policies (e.g., Knoepfel, Larrue, & Varone, 2006; Lascoumes, 1996). The former designate policies the purpose of which is to modify the content of the activities of a specific policy sector or policy domain. In education, for instance, substantial policies refer to education policies, such as curricular policies, focused on education as a pedagogical process. The latter refer to policies whose priority is the development of the institutional frames and rules at work. In education, these policies are more focused on the transformation of education as a policy sector or as a complex institutional organization. Very often, accountability policies are regarded as institutional policies first, and sometimes only, whereas it seems important also to question their possible "substantial" property, through the effects that they may produce but also through the vision of education (as a pedagogical process) that they may convey. While a critical discourse analysis, widely diffused in the international literature on current governance changes, could conceive a possible link between institutional and substantial policies mainly through the performative power of discourse, the aim of our analysis is to do so through a detailed analysis of the implementation processes themselves.

This combination of perspectives from French policy analysis and North American neo-institutionalist approaches allowed us to conceive this research not only as a contribution to the literature on accountability systems in education specifically but also, more generally, as an opportunity to investigate broader academic issues through the most likely case that accountability may constitute (Lijphart, 1971). First, accountability is one of the typical measures of New Public Management reforms in many countries (e.g., Hood, 1991, 1996; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004) even if, of course, New Public Management remains a "doctrinal puzzle" (Bezes, 2005) and the forms of its effective implementation may vary from one education system

to another, according to state models and administrative cultures, for instance (Gunter, Grimaldi, Hall, & Serpieri, 2016). It is also an opportunity to question current state transformations in education since it is through this kind of renewed controlling policies that in Europe historical educating states are often being recomposed (Buisson-Fenet & Pons, 2014). Lastly, accountability may be regarded as a typical example of the "travelling policies" that Ozga and Jones (2006) analyze, and for this reason, as an interesting way to question current forms of globalization in education.

1.6 Structure and Content

The book is organized into six chapters. Chapter 2 provides readers with the main elements of context and information about the French and Quebec education systems with which they must be familiar in order to appreciate the comparison of the accountability policies implemented in these two contexts. Emphasis is placed on the main historical milestones of each education system, the central values or narratives that contribute to the role of the school in each national context, their general structures (institutional and organizational), the dynamic of their sociodemographic developments, their results and performances, and, lastly, the main properties of the traditional modes of governance and regulation at work in each system. The key stakes and policy problems stressed in both countries in relation to accountability issues are also identified.

In Chap. 3, we present our theoretical framework for analyzing education policy. After synthesizing the main current analytical perspectives on education accountability in the international literature, we argue for a pluralist approach which combines the perspective of the French *sociologie de l'action publique* and a North American neo-institutionalist approach, and we explain our three-dimensional approach of the trajectory, mediation, and instrumentation of accountability policies. For each dimension we draw upon various bodies of literature, combine them selectively, and adapt them to our research subject.

Chapter 4 reports on our methodology, which is comparative. France and Quebec were selected on the basis of the "most likely case" and the "most different system design," comparing two contrasting systems, each developing, in its own way, a common global governance scheme (performance-based accountability). The empirical investigation was conducted at various levels. On the national scene, policy texts, discursive material, and key informant interviews on the making of accountability policies were collected and analyzed. This policy-making was examined over a significant period of time in each context. The specificities of the political context also conditioned the choice of discursive material to be analyzed. Special attention was paid to the relations to transnational discourse and networks. The meso level was operationalized by case studies of intermediate governance bodies (three *académies* in France and four school boards in Quebec). The case studies, contrasting in terms of geographical situation, performance, and their relation to the

policy, are based on document analysis, statistical analysis, and various semi-structured interviews with key informants in each setting. Six schools, located within the intermediate body territories, were studied in France and Quebec through various interviews. The qualitative analysis of this material was semi-inductive and thematic. Chapter 4 also provides key pieces of information on the coordination of the two research teams and the several agreements that they had to establish during the research process.

Chapter 5 compares the trajectories of performance-based accountability policies in education in France and in Quebec from their beginning to the end of the school year 2016–2017. It focuses on the national level which remains the key level of policy orientation but, consistently with our multilevel approach, comments on the evolution occurring at other policy levels which are also examined when the latter have significant effects on the dynamics of national public action. We first describe the historical evolution of the two national policies: "results-based management" (RBM) in Quebec and the "steering by results" policy in France, and we recapitulate the main official texts at the origin of each policy, the key historical periods, and the general policy design in each country. Then we show that the two policy trajectories can be understood as the outcome of the combination of three processes that we document for each country—path dependency, bricolage, and translation—and we conclude that, in both countries, we are observing a neo-statist accountability policy trajectory.

Chapter 6 analyzes the mediation processes at work during the implementation of performance-based accountability policies, in particular, those which occur at the echelon of intermediate bodies of public action, the *rectorats* in France, and school boards (SBs) in Quebec. Surprisingly, converging trends are more important in the Quebec decentralized system than in the French more centralized one. We describe these differences and explain them by various institutional mechanisms of convergence which are unevenly developed from one policy context to another. Then we stress different forms of performance-based accountability at work in intermediate bodies, according to the different local educational orders which define these intermediate territories: bureaucratic management by results, reflexive governance by results, and regulatory results-based governance.

Lastly, Chap. 7 shows the repertoire of tools used in each national context that constitutes the national instrumentation of the policy. The repertoire has been built progressively by the layering of various tools promoted by successive national policies or discourses that are ultimately reframed and recontextualized within the specific rationale of accountability policies. Here we stress the similarities of the tools in the forefront (plans, contracts, indicators, and statistics). The central purpose of this chapter is to compare the uses (and nonuses) of these tools within six secondary schools in each context and to analyze the institutional and organizational effects of these accountability tools in each situation. Interestingly, even if the form of these "travelling" tools is very similar from one country to another, they pave the way for very different uses and effects in each system. In Quebec, these tools play the role of "invisible pilots" of public action; they have a significant impact on teachers' practices and contribute to a "new management of pedagogy" which tends to

recouple management and teaching within the school system. In contrast, the decoupling of classroom and teacher's practices, on the one hand, and accountability policy tools, on the other, continues in France where instrumentation consists mainly of the accumulation of various tools which can be activated (or not) according to the political and organizational needs of the moment.

References

Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis, MN: The University of Minnesota Press.

Ball, S. J. (1994). *Education reform: A critical and post-structural approach*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Ball, S. J. (1997). Policy sociology and critical social research: A personal review of recent education policy and policy research. *British Educational Research Journal, 23*(3), 257–274.

Ball, S. J. (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy, 18*(2), 215–228.

Barrère, A. (2006). *Sociologie des chefs d'établissement*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.

Bezes, P. (2005). Le renouveau du contrôle des bureaucraties. *Informations sociales, 6*, 26–37.

Broadfoot, P. (2000). Un nouveau mode de régulation dans un système décentralisé: l'État évaluateur. *Revue Française de Pédagogie, 130*, 43–55.

Buisson-Fenet, H., & Pons, X. (2014). *School evaluation policies and educating states: Trends in four European countries*. Berne, Switzerland: Peter Lang.

Carney, S. (2012). Imagining globalisation: Educational policyscapes. In G. Steiner-Khamsi & F. Waldow (Eds.), *World yearbook of education 2012: Policy borrowing and lending in education* (pp. 339–353). London: Routledge.

Carnoy, M., & Loeb, S. (2002). Does external accountability affect student outcomes? A cross-state analysis. *Educational Evaluation & Policy Analysis, 24*(4), 305–331.

Dale, R., & Robertson, S. L. (2002). The varying effects of regional organizations as subjects of globalization of education. *Comparative Education Review, 46*(1), 10–36.

Demailly, L. (2001). Evaluer les politiques éducatives: sens, enjeux, pratiques. In L. Demailly (Ed.), *Enjeux de l'évaluation et régulation des systèmes scolaires*. Bruxelles, Belgium: De Boeck.

Demailly, L. (2003). L'évaluation comme apprentissage et négociation. *Revue Française de Pédagogie, 142*, 107–121.

Demailly, L., & collègues. (1998). *Evaluer les établissements scolaires: enjeux, expériences, débats*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Desrosières, A. (1993). *La politique des grands nombres. Histoire de la raison statistique*. Paris: La Découverte.

Dupriez, V., & Mons, N. (2011). Introduction. Les politiques d'accountability. Du changement institutionnel aux transformations locales. *Éducation Comparée, 5*, 7–16.

Easley, J., II, & Tulowitzki, P. (Eds.). (2016). *Educational accountability. International perspectives on challenges and possibilities for school leadership*. London/New York: Routledge.

Education Comparée. (2011). Les politiques d'accountability. *Du Changement Institutionnel aux Transformations Locales, 5*, 1–240.

Education Comparée. (2014). Le développement des politiques d'accountability et leur instrumentation dans le domaine de l'éducation. (11), 1–265.

Gunter, H. M., Grimaldi, E., Hall, D., & Serpieri, R. (Eds.). (2016). *New public management and the reform of education*. Londres: Routledge.

Halpern, C., Hassenteufel, P., & Zittoun, P. (2018). *Policy analysis in France*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press.

Hanushek, E. A., & Raymond, M. E. (2005). Does school accountability lead to improved student performance? *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 24*(2), 297–327. https://doi.org/10.2307/3326211.

Harris, D. N., & Herrington, C. D. (2006). Accountability, standards, and the growing achievement gap: Lessons from the past half-century. *American Journal of Education, 112*(2), 209–238.

Hood, C. (1986). *The tools of government*. Chatham, UK: Chatham House.

Hood, C. (1991). A public management for all seasons? *Public Administration, 69*, 3–19.

Hood, C. (1996). Exploring variations in public management reform of the 1980s. H. A. G. Hans, M. Bekke, J. L. Perry, T. A. Toonen, Civil service systems in comparative perspective 268–287). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Knoepfel, P., Larrue, C., & Varone, F. (2006). *Analyse et pilotage des politiques publiques*. Zurich, Switzerland: Verslag Rüegger.

Kogan, M. (1988). *Education accountability: An analytic overview*. London/Dover, NH: USA Hutchinson Education.

Lascoumes, P. (1996). Rendre gouvernable: de la "traduction" au "transcodage". L'analyse des processus de changement dans les réseaux d'action publique. In CURAPP (Ed.), *La gouvernabilité* (pp. 325–338). Paris: Presses universitaires de France.

Lascoumes, P., & Le Galès, P. (2004). *Gouverner par les instruments*. Paris: Presses de la fondation nationale des sciences politiques.

Lascoumes, P., & Le Galès, P. (2007). *Sociologie de l'action publique*. Paris: Armand Colin.

Lee, J. (2006). Input-guarantee versus performance-guarantee approaches to school accountability: Cross-state comparisons of policies, resources, and outcomes. *Peabody Journal of Education, 81*(4), 43–64.

Lee, J. (2008). Is test driven external accountability effective synthesizing the evidence from cross state causal comparative and correlational studies. *Review of Educational Research, 78*(3), 608–644.

Leithwood, K., & Earl, L. (2000). Educational accountability effects: An international perspective. *Peabody Journal of Education, 75*(4), 1–18.

Lessard, C., & Carpentier, A. (2015). *Politiques éducatives: la mise en oeuvre*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.

Lessard, C., & Meirieu, P. (2008). *L'obligation de résultats en éducation: évolutions, perspectives et enjeux internationaux*. Brussels, Belgium: De Boeck Supérieur.

Lijphart, A. (1971). Comparative politics and the comparative method. *American Political Science Review, 65*(3), 682–693.

Lingard, B. (2006). Globalisation, the research imagination and deparochialising the study of education. *Globalisation, Societies and Education, 4*(2), 287–302.

Lingard, B., Martino, W., & Rezai-Rashti, G. (2013). Testing regimes, accountabilities and education policy: Commensurate global and national developments. *Journal of Education Policy, 28*(5), 539–556. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2013.820042.

Lingard, B., & Rawolle, S. (2011). New scalar politics: Implications for education policy. *Comparative Education, 47*(4), 489–502. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2011.555941.

Mahoney, J., & Thelen, K. (2010). *Explaining institutional change: Ambiguity, agency, and power*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Malen, B. (2006). Revisiting policy implementation as a political phenomenon. In *New directions in education policy implementation* (pp. 83–105). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Maroy, C., Pons, X., & Dupuy, C. (2017). Vernacular globalisations: Neo-statist accountability policies in France and Quebec education. *Journal of Education Policy, 32*(1), 100–122. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2016.1239841.

Maroy, C., & Voisin, A. (2014). Une typologie des politiques d'*accountability* en éducation: l'incidence de l'instrumentation et des théories de la régulation. *Education Compare, 11*, 31–58.

Mattei, P. (2009). *Restructuring welfare organizations in Europe: From democracy to good management?* Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave.

Mattei, P. (2012). Market accountability in schools: Policy reforms in England, Germany, France and Italy. *Oxford Review of Education, 38*(3), 247–266. https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2012.689694.

Mattei, P., Mitra, M., Vrangbæk, K., Neby, S., & Byrkjeflot, H. (2013). La réorganisation de l'imputabilité publique: les réformes hospitalières en Allemagne, en Norvège et au Danemark. *Revue Internationale des Sciences Administratives, 79*(2), 259–282.

Neave, G. (1988). On the cultivation of quality, efficiency and enterprise: An overview of recent trends in higher education in Western Europe, 1986–1988. *European Journal of Education, 23*(1–2), 7–23.

Normand, R. (2011). *Gouverner la Réussite Scolaire: Une Arithmétique Politique des Inégalités*. Lyon, France/Berne, Switzerland: ENSL, Peter Lang.

Normand, R., & Derouet, J.-L. (2009). *Quelles politiques pour l'égalité ? Savoirs, gouvernances et obligation de résultats. Réflexions croisées anglo-américaines*. Lyon, France: INRP.

Ozga, J., Dahler-Larsen, P., Segerholm, C., & Simola, H. (2011). *Fabricating quality in education: Data and governance in Europe*. London: Routledge.

Ozga, J., & Jones, R. (2006). Travelling and embedded policy: The case of knowledge transfer. *Journal of Education Policy, 21*(1), 1–19.

Pierson, P. (1994). *Dismantling the welfare state? Reagan, Thatcher and the politics of retrenchment*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Pierson, P. (2001). *The new politics of the welfare state*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Pollitt, C., & Bouckaert, G. (2004). *Public management reform: A comparative analysis*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Ranson, S. (2003). Public accountability in the age of neo-liberal governance. *Journal of Education Policy, 18*(5), 459–480. https://doi.org/10.1080/0268093032000124848.

Salamon, L. M. (Ed.). (2002). *The tools of governance. A guide to the new governance*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Scott, W. R. (1995). *Institutions and organizations: Toward a theoretical synthesis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Segerholm, C. (2012). The quality turn: Political and methodological challenges in contemporary educational evaluation and assessment. *Education Inquiry, 3*(2), 115–122.

Smith, A. (1999). Public policy analysis in contemporary France: Academic approaches, questions and debates. *Public Administration, 77*(1), 111–131.

Spillane, J., Reiser, B. J., & Reimer, T. (2002). Policy implementation and cognition: Reframing and refocusing implementation research. *Review of Educational Research, 72*(3), 387–431.

Voisin, A. (2017). *Systèmes d'accountability basés sur la performance: types, logiques instrumentales et effets sur l'efficacité et l'équité des systèmes éducatifs d'Europe et du Canada. Une étude comparative à partir des données PISA 2012*. PhD Thesis, Université de Montréal, Montréal.

Whitty, G., Power, S., & Halpin, D. (1998). *Devolution and choice in education: The school, the state and the market*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Wößmann, L. (2007). International evidence on school competition, autonomy, and accountability: A review. *Peabody Journal of Education, 82*(2–3), 473–497.

Chapter 2
Morphologies and Contexts

Christian Maroy, Xavier Pons, and Samuel Vaillancourt

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide readers with the principal elements of context and information about the French and Quebec education systems necessary to appreciate the comparison of these two performance-based accountability policies. Our presentation rests on a particular analytical grid which was conceived a posteriori, i.e., after the research study as a whole, to meet two different goals[1]: (1) making more explicit pieces of knowledge on each system which may be taken for granted and enabling a foreign observer to follow our argumentation without being a specialist in each system and (2) detailing key contextual variables that must be kept in mind when interpreting our final results. For instance, it seems difficult to understand why relatively similar policies—at least formally, if we look, for instance, at the policy tools that are implemented—produce such different effects on teaching, with the progressive implementation in Quebec of new pedagogical management, whereas, in France, a strong decoupling persists between managerial

[1] This contextual approach raises several issues. How detailed should this analysis be? It is, indeed, always possible to provide more information about a context. Can a teleological analysis be avoided? There is a risk here of limiting the analysis and choosing only aspects of context that both prepare and confirm our ultimate findings instead of highlighting other forms of "compossibility," to use Leibniz's concept. Both contexts are often exposed to the same general trends of reform but with different intensity. Do we have to favor a symmetrical presentation of the two situations with the twofold risk of having an unbalanced presentation and of overestimating some aspects in one case and underestimating some in the other? Or should we make specific choices and, if so, on what basis?

C. Maroy (✉) · S. Vaillancourt
University of Montreal, Montreal, QC, Canada
e-mail: christian.maroy@umontreal.ca; samuel.vaillancourt@umontreal.ca

X. Pons
University of Eastern-Paris Creteil, Paris, France
e-mail: ponsx@wanadoo.fr

C. Maroy, X. Pons (eds.), *Accountability Policies in Education*, Educational Governance Research 11, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-01285-4_2

reforms and teachers' practices, aside from the statutory differences of teachers in the two situations and the importance of co-management of education policies in France by the ministry and professional organizations such as teachers' unions.

This grid is based on three main components with various subcomponents: (1) school system building (What are the principal historical milestones of the construction of a countrywide education system in each country? What key values are put forward and what are the essential policy narratives that accompany this construction?), (2) the morphologies of the two systems (their demographic evolutions, their key structural features, and their results and performances), and (3) the governance of each system (What are the key policy problems that must be solved? Who are the stakeholders? What are the traditional modes of governance? What are the main characteristics of the performance-based accountability policy and what are the central accountability tools?). This chapter addresses each item successively.

2.2 Building a School System

Public action has its own historicity, meaning both that the past predetermines present conditions and that specific visions of the past or the future can serve as resources in the policy process for stakeholders, so that their interests and views may dominate (Laborier & Trom, 2003). Consequently, analyzing school system development in each situation is essential to understanding the long-term policy trajectories at work and their successive orientations, as well as the more or less heavy weight of history in each case.

The purpose of this section is not to address this question of historicity as a whole but more simply to present readers with the main historical milestones of each system to better understand its current structure and our subsequent interpretations of each case.

2.2.1 Two Opposite Political Models of Education?

In both situations, a state education system was progressively developed, but comparison immediately reveals striking chronological and ontological differences.

2.2.1.1 The French Republican School Model

In France, historians have shown that changes introduced in the nineteenth century were crucial to the current organization of the French education system and that they strongly shape present debates on educational reform (Lelièvre, 1994, 1999; Nique, 1990). In that period, as in other countries (Gellner, 1983), educational institutions became a key instrument for the creation of a national sense of belonging and for

leaders' stabilization of political regimes (Green, 1990; Thiesse, 1999). In France, this relation between educational institutions and the nation-state was particularly strong since it was the historical basis of the Republican regime. For many French citizens, including intellectuals and social scientists, the Republic designates not only a concrete—and thus historically situated—form of democracy but, in a more abstract sense, a political space beyond specific situations and social links. It is conceived as a universal ideal of political integration (e.g., Schnapper, 1994), very different from multiculturalism (Taylor, 1997). From this perspective, schools are supposed to help individuals emancipate themselves from local and cultural ties related to family, religion, social background, ethnicity, or geographical region, to allow them to intervene freely and on an equal footing, at least politically, as citizens in the public debate.

Three main features characterize the French Republican School. First, it was progressively centralized throughout the nineteenth century. Political centralization was already strongly developed earlier by kings and revolutionaries alike, but, as concerns education, a first major change took place in 1806 with Emperor Napoleon's creation of the Imperial University. The term "university" did not then designate an institution of higher education but, in conformity with its etymology (university designated a corporation in the Middle Ages), an entire body of teachers at the service of the state (Lelièvre, 2002). In 1833, Guizot, the minister of what was called at that time *Instruction publique*, introduced new legislation concerning primary education, increasing the power of the central state over local schools. Every commune had to have a public school for boys, and teachers were to be controlled by a state body of inspectors of primary education. Following Guizot, the leaders of the Third Republic (1871–1940) progressively centralized the training of teachers by creating special structures devoted to that task: the *Ecoles normales* and, for the best of them, the *Ecoles normales supérieures*, now prestigious higher education institutions. According to Lelièvre (2002), the apogee of the centralization of the French education system took place in 1963 when De Gaulle created a *carte scolaire* to rationalize school provision—through the creation of small secondary education structures which gave way to the present *collèges* (middle schools)—and school demand, by obliging parents to send their children to the nearest public school in their neighborhood, according to a demarcation of sectors by the state administration.

A second essential feature was the provision of free and compulsory primary education to all children in the name of equality. Again, these terms did not designate exactly the same reality then as today, due to changes in administrative categories and the conception of equality. It was only in 1881 that primary education became absolutely free and in 1882 that it became compulsory. Today compulsory schooling applies to children aged 6–16.

A third feature concerns the fact that the French school, like all public institutions of the Republic, is supposed to be a secular space. Secularity (*laïcité*) is a complex concept uniting dimensions that are conceived as separate in other education systems (Déloye, 1994). There is, first, a cognitive dimension. Inspired by the philosophy of the Enlightenment and by positivism, the first defenders of secularity insisted on the crucial role of knowledge for the development of individual autonomy, the legitimization of the social division of labor and intellectual and social

progress. There is also a normative, ethical dimension. For the first leaders of the Third Republic, secularity meant religious neutrality or, more precisely, the relegation of religion to the private sphere and the promotion of a collective nonreligious system of values. *Laïcité* also includes a political dimension since the state is the only entity considered to be able to legitimately enforce this ideal. The 1881 law required all teachers in primary education (the well-known *instituteurs* of the Republic) to have obtained their national diploma (*brevet de capacité* or *certificat d'aptitude*) by 1884 (except for those who had teaching experience of 5 years and those more than 35 years old). This was an attack against the religious congregations since only 15% of their teachers had these diplomas at that time (Prost, 1968). The 1882 law declared that there should be no religious references in curricula. That of 1886 stipulated that teachers should remain religiously neutral, leading to the creation of an entire state body of teachers in 1889. Finally, in 1905, after ten different bills in 3 years, the official separation of church and state was pronounced, paving the way for many struggles concerning church property that state representatives were supposed to appropriate.

The Republican school model has several consequences for the functioning of institutions. It explains why and how it became increasingly necessary for the state itself to defend the values mentioned above. For most policy-makers and teachers, from the nineteenth century onward, only the state can embody the universal Republican model. This common belief has had a profound impact on the institutional design of the French education system. First and not surprisingly, the education system, at least until the 1960s, was highly centralized. This centralization still holds true for the definition of the curriculum (school tracks, teaching content and methods, and national exams), the recruitment and management of school personnel (until 2004), budgets and the control, and monitoring and evaluation of the education system (van Zanten, 2014).

Second, to meet its needs in terms of management, very early on, the French state created superior state bodies which were supposed to produce highly trained civil servants or state engineers (Bourdieu, 1989; Kessler, 1986). These bodies and other influential administrative elites, such as general inspectors, provided—and still regularly provide—various forms of "state sciences" or "government sciences" about education issues. These sciences can be defined as bodies of knowledge which are halfway between the experienced practices of administrators on the one hand and scientific—or academic—activities on the other. Their main purpose is to stress regularities in social phenomena in order to advise political leaders and to legitimize their actions. Prolonging the tradition of "cameralism," these sciences contemplate society from the viewpoint of the state and try to synthesize it as a collection of issues which must be addressed. They focus more on the concrete internal organization of the state than on the consistency of the social system that policies are supposed to change, and they very often conceive the action of the state as the main policy instrument (Pons, 2011). In other words, in France, the state has its own elites to conceive of its changes, and this body of knowledge is often dominant in policy-making processes.

Third, because of the historical political importance of a national body of teachers, the French education system tends to be entirely organized on the basis of

teachers' interests (and not on those of students as the 1989 law states it should be) which has led some authors, including van Zanten (2014) to use the notion of a "Teaching State" (*Etat enseignant*), with the double meaning of a state that has strongly assumed a teaching function toward citizens and one that is—or was until recently—strongly dominated by teachers. This pivotal role attributed to teachers has favored a neo-corporatist model of decision-making. Educational policies have long been, and still are to a considerable extent, the product of direct negotiations at the national level between the central authorities (the minister, the ministerial cabinet, or the directors of the central departments of the ministry) and national representatives of professional associations, especially representatives of the main teachers' trade unions.

Fourth, teachers and administrative personnel have been historically independent groups. This has contributed to the creation of two distinct and relatively impermeable internal hierarchies, representing two different vertical chains of delegation of power: the pedagogic chain and the administrative one. The latter starts from the minister of education, as well as from members of the ministerial cabinet and directors of central administrative departments in the ministry, and goes down to the *recteurs* (directors of *rectorats* which are educational authorities at the level of an *académie*) and *inspecteurs d'académie* (directors of state local education authorities at the level of the *département*) and stops at principals at the school level. The pedagogic chain links teachers to local/regional pedagogical inspectors and then to the general inspectorate at the national level. This dual internal hierarchy not only favors a very loose coupling of administrative and pedagogical choices and activities at each level (national, local, and school) but also clearly structures the type and scope of knowledge that each actor can legitimately produce. Inspectors at the national and regional level are considered pedagogical experts, while *recteurs* and principals are more concerned with and knowledgeable about educational administration and management.

2.2.1.2 The Long Road Toward a Public Education System in Quebec

In Quebec on the contrary, there is a long tradition of local initiative and management of education, and the important role of a secular state is much more recent. The current structure of the Quebec education system—with three layers, local schools, linguistic school boards, and the provincial government with total control over education—should be resituated in the light of two crucial and intertwined social relations, relations between the linguistic and social communities, Anglophone and Francophone, on the one hand, and relations between the church (Catholic mostly) and the Anglophone authorities, on the other. These two relations have largely impacted the construction of the system's architecture throughout its history.

We must go back more than a century in order to underline the importance of local initiatives and governance in the history of education in Quebec. This allows us to showcase one of the first and principal institutions of the school system: the school board (SB). Local management of education by elected representatives ("trustees")

dates back to the early nineteenth century and was reinforced by a liberal view of education in the wake of the industrial revolution (Curtis, 2012). For example, the first education superintendent Jean-Baptiste Meilleur in the Lower Canada (1842–1855) "advocated to provide schooling for the poor (even against their will), so they could give a meaningful contribution to the society" (Charland, 2005, p. 54).

Thus, there is an alignment between a school and a social project which is associated with economic development: "[Education] must make it possible to eliminate poverty, since it allows everyone to emerge from the brutishness, ignorance, and makes everyone capable of making a meaningful contribution to the community" (Proulx, 2009, p. 36). The existence of SBs stems from this practice, formalized in the law of 1841. Soon thereafter (1846), this was also associated with the capacity of local representatives to raise a school tax (based on the "no taxation without representation" principle). The Catholic and Anglican churches were opposed to commune public schools (*écoles communes*) and asked for their own confessional schools.[2] In 1859, the Council of Public Education was created; led by ten Catholics and four Protestants, it was to be the main education power until 1964. Thus, in this period, the link between a confessional school, its local autonomy, and control by the local elites (largely linked to the church) had been established.

At the time of the creation of Canada (1867), pre-existing school privileges (since 1840 and the Act of Union) were enshrined in the British North America Act (part of the current Canadian constitution). Thus, the Canadian constitution gives the provinces exclusive jurisdiction over education, which is exercised independently of the federal government. In short, both the existence of the SB at the local level and the control of education at the provincial level were institutionalized.[3] SBs create the link between democracy and education.

If SBs are associated with the beginning of Quebec's education system, its takeover by the state is much more recent. From the late nineteenth century to the mid-1960s, the church was in charge of education in Quebec. In fact, the linguistic duality of the province (Francophone majority and Anglophone minority) also manifested itself at the religious level: Francophones were Catholic, and Anglophones were Protestant. Under the political pressure of the Catholic Church, SBs became confessional in 1869. This duality resulted in two distinct school systems, managed by the churches of the two communities. Operationally, the confessional SBs managed most of education for almost a century. That is why SBs maintained their position as a central institution when the state reinvested in the education sector after the "Quiet Revolution" (in the 1960s). In the meantime, few dimensions of the educational powers were under state control, the most important being the method of taxation (excluding the tax levied by the SBs) and the territorial organization of the

[2] In the major cities, Quebec and Montreal, schools were already organized on a confessional basis.

[3] With the British North America Act, the provinces obtained various constitutional powers related to social and cultural specificity, among which was education. The church being a pillar of Francophone society in Quebec, its leaders used this new conjuncture and their alliance with the ruling conservative party to reinvest in the education sector. This led to the creation of confessional school boards in 1869.

latter. The strong presence of religious education also explains the importance given to faith-based school lobbying. This is why private schools have maintained important privileges (including large government subsidies) even after the church's gradual withdrawal from public education.

In the aftermath of the World War II, strong population growth, a dramatic increase in demand for a skilled workforce, and a more "secular" vision of Quebec society put considerable pressure on the administration of the education system by the church. In the 1950s, the Francophone elite expressed concern about accessibility to education: "the important under-schooling of the Francophone and catholic population is perceived as a dramatic threat for the economic well-being and for the preservation of the Francophone community" (Corbo & Gagnon, 2004, p. 25).

This public preoccupation with school accessibility was taken up as a political issue by the Liberal Party of Quebec at the time of the "Quiet Revolution." It underlies the launch of the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Education in the province of Quebec (aka the Parent Commission, 1963–1964) and the solutions put forward in the commission's report. The Parent Commission, consequently, promoted two key ideas: (1) education for all as a societal and political goal and (2) the need for a "national" policy for the development and modernization of Quebec society through education (Corbo, 2002; Rocher, 2004). Since then, these ideas have constituted broadly shared societal conventions. The Parent Commission, thus, appears to be a political and symbolic turning point. Its recommendations actually led to a form of compromise between churches and the growing Quebec state. On the one hand, the development of a public network of schools and a higher education system was accepted as a necessity to develop and to adapt Quebec society, in particular as a functional response to the needs of its economic and social growth. Moreover, the modernization of the school system should be understood also in a more political sense: there was a growing secularization of the system and a greater separation between the state and the churches with respect to the education of young citizens. On the other hand, this public network had been left in the hands of the confessional SBs, while the growing financial contribution of the state was accompanied by various forms of state control (Lessard & Carpentier, 2015). Indeed, the renewed involvement of the Quebec state in educational matters led to the development of a central administration for education. The SBs continued to act as a "local government" (which elected officials and selected their own administrative staff). However, the SBs have been merged, their size enlarged from local to subregional level, and, as a result, their number decreased: from 1830 (1557 catholic, 273 protestant) in 1962 to 253 around 1975 and finally 72 in 1997 (Brassard, 2006).

Moreover, they all had to implement a national curriculum and educational orientations handed down by the Ministry of Education. The control of the state has, thus, been growing ever since (Brassard, 2014), and the issue of decentralization/centralization between state, SBs, and schools has been recurrent during the entire period (Brassard, 2010). As we will see, this issue of the "governance" of the system is related to the growing concern about the system's efficacy and quality but also to new paradigms of school justice that appeared in the 1990s (from school access to

school success for all). These issues are closely related to the question of accountability models in the system.

In 1997, the 72 SBs became based on language, instead of religious denomination (60 French-speaking, 9 English-speaking, 3 special status, i.e., native). Soon thereafter (Bill[4] 108, 2000), all the confessional structures were replaced in both education networks. Religious education, as such, was removed from the curriculum in 2005 (Bill 95); this change has pushed forward the secularization of the public school system advocated by important stakeholders in Quebec society since the Quiet Revolution. Nowadays, neither the Catholic nor Protestant churches have any influence among SBs. However, the dual linguistic networks of schools have remained.

2.2.2 The Similar Challenge of Democratization

Despite these very different historical starting points, the French and Quebec education systems were confronted with the same challenge: improving the democratization of education. While, overall, the problems were similar in the two cases, they gave birth to different policy narratives.

2.2.2.1 Quebec: Recasting the Education System Structure in the Name of Access to Education

The main policy narrative of the Parent Commission Report and the reform that followed involved eliminating the education gap between classes, genders, and linguistic communities. The discourse stemmed from a "humanistic" moral foundation. The promotion of the ideal of liberal equality in education had a broader societal goal "[…] seeking to overcome the fact that many young people remain less equal than others" (Brassard, 2006, p. 24). As already mentioned, the liberal idea of equality of opportunity was then consistent with a hegemonic discourse of social and economic modernization, also promulgated at that time by international institutions, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). However, in addition, this report indicates a clear desire for identity affirmation (for French Canadians) through education, echoing the national assertion underlying the Quiet Revolution.

In the wake of the Parent Report, reforms focused on democratizing access to education underlined by the ideal of "the right to education for all" (Rocher, 2004). According to André Brassard (2006), from the Quiet Revolution until the early 1980s, policies concentrated on accessibility to education services. Several structural changes were undertaken in the name of this objective: the obligation to attend

[4] Following the Canadian usage, we will refer to the various bills discussed and passed at the *Assemblée nationale* as the Bill 108, Bill 82, etc. However, when the bill is passed, it becomes an Act (i.e., legal text of the law).

school up to the age of 15; state funding of SBs; the development of an integrated secondary school model, including vocational training and general education (with a unified curriculum for all); school infrastructure development, especially in regions with limited educational services; and financial aid to promote access to postsecondary education. Moreover, at the postsecondary level, the creation of public colleges and a state university network was another major reform. According to Rocher, the objective of the Parent Report concerning access to education was reached and even exceeded (Rocher, 2004).

The question of equity in education was again in the forefront during the Estates General on Education period (1995–1998, see below). The "dropout problem" became central in the public debate, with an evolution toward policies based on differentiation and "inclusion" in the education curriculum, underlined by a new equity paradigm of affirmative action and more generally by a central motto of "success for all."

2.2.2.2 French Passions: Equity, Merit, and Excellence

In France, too, equity has long been a central issue. According to the French philosopher of democracy Alexis de Tocqueville (1840), France even has a true passion for equality. This is particularly the case with respect to education. The question of equity—and, through it, the debate on the "democratization" (conceived as an equalization process) of the education system—has played an important role in successive school reforms of primary and secondary education since the end of the World War II (Prost, 1997; Robert, 2010). This concern inspired various structural reforms—such as the common school model in lower secondary education (*collège unique*); it aroused many reflections by scholars on the various paradigms of equity (e.g., Dubet, 2004, 2011); and it explains the reluctance that sometimes appears in France when implementing policies that may introduce a form of differentiation within the system, as illustrated by the debates at the origin of the French policy of compensation (e.g., Robert, 2009), the regular controversies about policy experimentation or accountability processes, and the difficulty at times of accepting the definition of statistical targets.

This passion for equity is clearly linked to the Republican model, as well as to concerns with meritocracy and excellence. The whole legitimacy of the Republican model, and its potential universality as its advocates argue, rests on its capacity to align with the Republican promise of social mobility based only on meritocratic school success, as evidenced by a diploma. This has paved the way for a long and recurrent debate on the optimal means to attain meritocracy: through an adaptation of teaching to the new profiles of students to avoid the inequalities of achievement linked to social background, thanks to new pedagogical initiatives, or through a focus on basic knowledge and the maintenance of high expectations regarding disciplinary knowledge, in order to reach excellence. This is a long-standing debate, but, since the 1980s, it has led to a particular controversy regularly covered by the media between, on the one hand, those who were progressively called "educationalists," such as Philippe Meirieu, in favor of constructivist pedagogies for the sake of

democratization and more efficient teaching, and the "(neo)republicans," such as the philosopher Alain Finkielkraut, who frequently denounces the repeated forms of renouncement to a demanding teaching by the government and some professionals and scholars (Forestier, 2014; Vergnioux, 2014).

2.2.3 Two Contrasting Policy Responses

While the question of the democratization of education was addressed in both situations, the policy responses differed slightly. In both cases, they were numerous. We focus here on those more directly linked to the question of performance-based accountability.

2.2.3.1 France: Moving Beyond Centralization

In France, political leaders have long thought—and sometimes still believe—that implementing an education policy is a top-down process in which they decide on and enact a policy through legal and administrative procedures (laws, decrees, circulars, etc.) to be implemented in a uniform manner throughout the country. However, since the 1960s, many interrelated changes have undermined this model of policy-making and implementation.

First, the French education system has undergone two waves of expanding participation in secondary education (Prost, 1986). The initial one, mainly in the 1960s, concerned the first cycle of secondary education (affecting students aged 11–15) and the second, the second cycle (affecting student aged 16–18). This implied a transition from an elite to a mass system of secondary education which translated into increasing educational budgets, reorganization of student school careers with the creation in 1975 of the *collège unique*, massive recruitment of teachers, changes in student profiles and teaching methods, and the development of new programs and policies for those from disadvantaged backgrounds with learning problems.

Second, since the 1960s, the education system has participated in a widespread movement of decentralization and deconcentration. In 1962, some initial decisions were taken to give more power to the *recteurs* in the management of their *académie*. In 1964, for example, the new regional inspectors were placed under their responsibility, even if concretely they shared the management of this professional group with the high central inspectorate. In 1982, the first laws on decentralization established that the construction and maintenance of schools in secondary education fell under the responsibility of local and regional authorities. The 1983 law also created a new administrative status for these schools. The latter were regarded as autonomous in the conception and implementation of local policies and were granted a "moral personality" (i.e., under French law, they are considered civic entities responsible for their decisions and can, e.g., be brought to court if necessary). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the *recteurs* were granted new prerogatives. The

new decentralization laws of 2004 transferred to them the management of teachers' careers while that of administrative and technical staff was transferred to local and regional political authorities. Since 2014, however, a new process of reconcentration of powers has been implemented at the regional level, with the creation of new major regional political authorities, on the one hand, and with the increasing power of the *recteurs* and the creation of new regional *académies* on the other.

Third, a positive discrimination policy was launched in 1981. This was a radical departure from the Republican principle of equal treatment based on standardized provision. This policy created specific education priority areas (*Zones d'éducation prioritaires* (ZEP)), which were supposed to receive more resources (mainly a financial supplement for teachers and a reduction of the number of students per classroom) because students' results were clearly below the national level and because they came from underprivileged categories. Concretely, the ZEP consisted of a middle secondary school, and its network of feeder primary schools linked by a common project and, in a later stage of the policy, by a "success contract." This new policy was an important step in the "territorialization" of educational policies in France (Charlot, 1994; Dutercq, 2005; Henriot van Zanten, 1990) and was conceived as a "social laboratory" to test new policy-making processes and policy tools such as projects, contracts, or partnerships.

Lastly, the French education system is increasingly exposed to European and global influences. While there was no "Pisa shock" in France for various reasons (Pons, 2016), the Lisbon strategy and its implementation at the European level have sometimes required France to redefine its own priorities, as shown with the new focus, since the middle of the 2000s, on reducing dropout rates (Bernard, 2011). More globally, the increasing production of discourses and measurement tools by international expert networks has had various effects on the trajectory of reforms in France (Normand, 2011), as illustrated in the recent curriculum reforms introducing a competency-based approach (Clément, 2013).

2.2.3.2 Quebec: Toward the Estates General on Education Reform

In Quebec, the 1980s marked the emergence of new stakes in reaction to the perceived standardization of education as a result of the previous reform. Indeed, following the Parent Report, in the 1960s and 1970s, secondary education was subject to profound changes. "Comprehensive/polyvalent" schools were created as the embodiment of the "education for all" ideal. These schools were huge, inclusive, and encompassing vocational and general education. They also faced significant organizational problems.

Soon, questions were raised about the level of education and schools' effectiveness and pursuit of excellence. At the same time, the quality of public schools was questioned (Brassard, 2006; Tondreau & Robert, 2011). These issues were discussed in the context of a new neoliberal political paradigm that emphasized efficiency and user needs but also the imperative for states to remain economically competitive. Similar issues emerged in the United States (USA) following the

release of the report *A Nation at Risk* (1983), which painted a devastating picture of the state of education. Those broader economic and social transformations led to new demands from "middle-class" parents. They were increasingly worried about their children's future, as their social and educational assets were eroding (Lessard & Levasseur, 2007).

Private schools picked up the ball and developed their offering to target middle-class children, in particular by promising quality education that public schools would not be able to guarantee. Indeed, the numbers of private schools grew significantly, even if their development was under a moratorium during the 1980s. The proportion of students attending private secondary schools increased from the 1970s to the 1980s from 5% to 11% (Robert & Tondreau, 1997) and continued to grow subsequently (to approximately 20% today). In the 2000s, public schools gained some autonomy with respect to their local curriculum. This allowed them to respond to the competition from the private sector. SBs increased and diversified their schools' offerings, in particular, through the development of specific projects and programs, often involving forms of student selection.

School quality was not the sole issue. In the early 1990s, school dropout rates became a major social and political problem. The Quebec Ministry of Education (QME)[5] produced a policy document, *Our Future Strength: Education*, that translated this narrative into policy change. It explained that we must rediscover the meaning of the educational mission in order to be able to thrive in the twenty-first century. The challenge became to find a way "to ensure the educational success of the greatest number" (QME, 1991, p. 3). However, it was the mobilization of teachers' unions with regard to the issue of school dropout that forced the government to act (Deniger, 2012). As early as 1992, a target of 80% of high school students graduating in 5 years was set. This was a "shift in public policy [which was] imposed by the economic context, in particular by the increasing demands for qualified employees" (Doray, Prévost, Delavictoire, Moulin, & Beaud, 2011, p. 207).

The concern with academic achievement, as well as the persistent issue of the quality of compulsory education, remained at the forefront of policy debates. In the mid-1990s, the pressure came from teachers' unions, various civil society groups, and the opposition political party (the *Parti Québécois*, also promoting independence from Canada). When the latter took political power in 1995, they soon set up a broad public consultation called the Estates General on Education.

Thus, the report resulting from the Estates General on Education intended to renew the goal of equality of opportunity and extend it. It famously stated that the main objective for education policy renewal was "to move from access to success."

[5] The current name for this ministry is the *Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur*. It has changed quite often from one government to another. To simplify matters, we will use the generic name of Quebec Ministry of Education (QME) throughout this book. For the publications (in French or English) of the Ministry, we will generally refer to QME as the generic author.

Several "priority projects" were put into place. The first was labeled "Putting schools back on track for equal opportunities" (QME, 1996). The QME action plan that followed had an evocative title: "Take the success turn"[6] (QME, 1997).

The main reform stemming from the Estates General on Education involved the curriculum. This reform, based on a "socio-constructivist" theory of education, put forward a "competence-based approach" (analogous to that of Switzerland and, more recently, France). This approach, as presented in the accompanying policy statement, linked the two main policy narratives: it aimed to achieve success for all without lowering the quality threshold of education (Lessard, Henripin, Larochelle, Cournoyer, & Carpentier, 2007).

Another line of political action promoted by the government after the Estates General on Education was the "decentralization" of responsibilities and powers in favor of schools. The main idea was to promote the adaptability of school services to the populations they served. Bill 180 (1997) confirmed the institutionalization of the already existing structure and tools at the school level: school council, educational projects, and autonomy of the school administration. However, this bill put forward two logics of change: (1) the autonomy of the institution was perceived as a means to improve academic success; and (2) school autonomy had to be kept in check by the accountability of the school team to the local community. On the other hand, school administrators at the higher levels continued to maintain a top-down approach that reduced schools' autonomy. This created real tensions in the school system. At the end of the century, the policy narrative became a mixed message, putting the logic of decentralization at the service of the success of all goals without totally calling into question the bureaucratic and hierarchical day-to-day operation of the public education network. Both the "vertical" hierarchical monitoring and the "horizontal" accountability of the school to the local community were focused on the means taken to lessen the dropout rate and boost student achievement (Lessard, Henripin, & Larochelle, 2004).

As a side effect, the diversification of public school offerings continued following the Estates General on Education. Bill 180 favored a form of school autonomy through the recognition of specific "educational projects" developed by the school and the parents. The multiplication of specific projects may have contributed to creating internal competition in the public education network, insofar as there is now another form of school choice besides the private sector (Proulx, 2009). The development of school choice (encouraged by some private actors) has also contributed to the publication of rankings of school effectiveness. The school's achievement indicators become part of a discourse on school performance soon to be recognized as a legitimate policy issue.

[6] In French "L'école, tout un programme: prendre le virage du succès. Énoncé de politique educative"

2.2.4 *Two Different Predispositions to Performance-Based Accountability Measures?*

In both cases, the implementation of accountability-related measures in education was first seen as a minor issue, and we insisted in the introduction on the necessity of avoiding a teleological description of policy contexts.

Nevertheless, it seems that a difference existed from the start between the two systems. In France, as Agnès van Zanten (2014) argues, equity and secularity still play a decisive role in the rhetorical defense of the French Republican model. Other values, such as effectiveness or efficiency, widely promoted in other policy sectors or, in other countries, for instance, through market-based devices, are still rarely invoked in public speeches. This aspect is, for example, visible in the difficulty at times of accepting the definition of statistical targets. A previous study of the indicators mentioned in the ministry budgetary documents between 2006 and 2008 (Pons, 2010), especially those on expected student performance, revealed that they often corresponded to general assertions of values and not to numerical targets, as if a differentiated policy targeting different levels of achievement for specific school populations was not officially conceivable.

In Quebec on the contrary, the new policy narrative following the Estates General on Education was fertile soil for management by numbers rationale, whereby success is formulated as quantified targets and subject to a time frame. Indeed, the EGE report also puts forward ideas stemming from New Public Management, stating that: "the setting of clear objectives for each level of education in terms of access and graduation is an interesting avenue" (QME, 1997 cited in Doray et al., 2011, p. 211). As Doray et al. observed, school statistics actually became a "tool for policy monitoring." Their development gradually led to an increasingly clear demand from public authorities to local SBs either to "justify their action" on the basis of data or to account for their performance (Doray et al., 2011). Thus, strategic planning at the SB level (see Sect. 2.4.3) was called for in many public reports and debates. However, the focus of plans with quantitative targets was not yet fully integrated with the development of statistical indicators to monitor them. Similarly, the link between this planning and performance-based accountability was not yet formally implemented. Those gaps opened the door for the upcoming "results-based management" policy.

2.3 Morphologies

The aim of this section is to synthesize the main structural features of each education system, its organization, its demographic developments, and its performances, in other words, its morphology. According to Durkheim (1899), studying morphology entails examination of the material form and organization of societies or, in other words, the substratum on which social life is based. This study is not only of descriptive and demographic interest but is also noteworthy in analytical terms if we

agree that these morphologies both express and make visible long-held and forceful traditions (Halbwachs, 1938).

2.3.1 School System Designs

2.3.1.1 France: The Growing Importance of *Académies*

In France, schools in secondary academic and technical and professional education (the *collèges*, *lycées*, *lycées techniques*, and *lycées professionnels*) became relatively autonomous organizations in 1983. Their construction and maintenance are the duties of local (for the *collège*) and regional (for the others) authorities. Principals are the representatives of the state within their schools. They belong to a national body and are evaluated either by the *recteur* directly, by an inspector in charge of the state local education authority at the level of the *département* (the *inspecteur d'académie*), or by a special service devoted to this task led by a *proviseur vie scolaire* (a former principal with a long experience in administration) who acts in place of the *recteur*. Principals also represent the school—and the state—in local events. In addition, they evaluate their staff but rarely do so alone. They evaluate teachers on administrative issues (such as presence, dynamism, aura, etc.) for 40% of an overall assessment grade, while inspectors evaluate teachers on pedagogical issues (60% of the final grade). The bursar is generally evaluated by the principal but can also be controlled by the local/regional audit court. The technical staff is evaluated both by local/regional authorities who became their superiors after the new decentralization wave of 2004 and by the principal. The principal also leads the board of trustees who manages the school. This board is composed of representatives of educational professionals (one third), representatives of parents and students (one third), and representatives of local/regional authorities, other school administrations, and qualified external members, generally chosen by the principal (one third). The principal also leads councils which make decisions concerning everyday student life, such as the CVL (*conseil de la vie lycéenne*).

The status of primary schools (*écoles primaires et élémentaires*) is very different. First, the principal is only a primus inter pares. Principals do not belong to a separate body and only have a special agenda to allow them to manage the school (especially teachers' timetables and student management). The school is not autonomous but is, rather, a municipal service. Primary school teachers' pedagogical activities are evaluated by local inspectors. The overall provision of schools in primary education is made by the *inspecteurs d'académie* who are also responsible for teachers' recruitment and careers.

The local education administration is led by the *inspecteurs d'académie*. The latter are appointed by the minister and are the representatives of the state at the local level (the *départements*). They are under the authority of the *recteurs*, who lead the regional administration (the *rectorat*) and the regional territories (the *académie*). The mandate of *inspecteurs d'académie* is diverse. They must organize the opening and closing of classes in primary education, inspect schools (a task they

sometimes delegate to local inspectors), negotiate with local/regional authorities on the construction and maintenance of schools, and represent the *préfet* in particular councils such as the local council of national education, which formulates advice on every decision concerning the public service of education at the *département* level. Around the *inspecteur d'académie* is an administration whose organization may vary from one *département* to another.

The state regional education administration, i.e., the *académie*, is led by a *recteur* appointed by the prime minister. *Recteurs* are the representatives of the state at the regional level, which means they have the classical missions of evaluating staff, controlling the material and moral situations of schools, checking that the implementation of national curricula is done correctly, confirming the timetables of staff and school, and organizing exams. With the changes mentioned above, *recteurs* have been granted many other responsibilities since the beginning of the 1980s. First, they are supposed to implement national directives on education policy and monitor their implementation. With the collaboration of their services, they have to develop, implement, and evaluate a regional project. They must allocate teachers and hours of teaching to schools, both in primary and secondary education. This trend was reinforced with the implementation in 2006 of the "LOLF" (*Loi Organique de la Loi des Finances*). According to this new law, the state budget is now divided among several missions, within which particular actions are targeted. For each action, a list of objectives and statistical indicators is determined. The allocation of the budget depends on the degree of achievement of each objective measured by these indicators. This overall structure operates horizontally between all national ministries but also vertically between the central administration and the *académies*. This means that the budget *recteurs* receive from the minister depends on the capacity of the *académie* to reach the targets set in pluralist committees comprised of central state agents and representatives of the *académie* (the *recteur*, the *inspecteurs* , and their cabinets). In their everyday work, *recteurs* are helped by many technical advisors, especially by regional inspectors. The internal organization of each *rectorat* is very different from one *académie* to the other, according to the social and educational features of each *académie* and to political and administrative choices.

At this regional level, two major changes have occurred since 2012. In January 2012, the governance of the *académies* was reformed, and the *recteurs* became the first state representatives at all levels within the *académie*, and the function of the *inspecteurs d'académie* was redefined as that of directors of local services (Dasen). The aim of this reform was to simplify the hierarchy and to favor contractualization, mutualization, and subsidiarity among school administrations. Furthermore, in 2015, 13 regional *académies* were created, bringing together former *académies* (without causing them to disappear), in order to work with the new expanded regions created in 2014.

At the national level, the central administration of the Ministry of Education has undergone multiple changes since the creation in 1828 of the first Ministry of Public Instruction. The last modification occurred in 2006 to comply with the implementation of the LOLF described above. Just under the minister and his/her cabinet, a general secretariat was created, covering all the former technical departments (budget, evaluation, media and communication, law procedures, international and

European affairs, etc.). Only the department devoted to pedagogical issues, the powerful "DGESCO," is not included in this secretariat and remains at the same hierarchical level. This organization clearly recalls the split between pedagogical and administrative issues mentioned above. Indeed, the general secretariat must implement all policies concerned with modernization of the administration and coordinate the various administrative departments, whereas the DGESCO has retained a monopoly on pedagogical issues.

The ministry also includes the high central inspectorate and several consultative bodies, such as the Higher Curriculum Council (*Conseil supérieur des programmes*) or the Higher Council of Education (CSE[7]), which is consulted before each decision. This council is composed of national representatives of each group of educational "stakeholders," teachers, parents, students, local/regional authorities, and researchers, and representatives of various associations.

2.3.1.2 Quebec: The Basic Education Network

The Quebec education system is characterized by two parallel networks: higher education and basic education (compulsory until the age of 16). Higher education is beyond the scope of this book, so we will focus on the basic education network here. The basic education network includes preschool, primary, and secondary education. Most of the network is public, but as mentioned earlier, private education has strong roots in the religious history of Quebec. That is why private schools, in the name of freedom of conscience and religion, can provide confessional education. Private schools (congressional or not) are subject to the Private Education Act under which they can obtain subsidies from the provincial government: the mean is 50% of their operating budget, but for most schools it would be around 60% of their budget (QME, 2015).

As explained above, the public network and the SBs are no longer associated with a religious congregation as they had long been. Instead, SBs are organized into two parallel sub-networks, according to the language of the students. Public education is controlled by the Quebec Ministry of Education (QME). This is the second largest ministry (after the Health Ministry). It is led by the minister of education. Several advisory bodies have been established to provide advice to the minister. The most important of these is the Higher Council of Education (*Conseil supérieur de l'éducation*).

The QME does not directly provide education. Instead, this responsibility is held by an intermediate authority, the school board. Each SB provides for the organization of educational services in its territory. SBs act as intermediaries between the central organizing authority (the government and the minister of education) and the schools. They are territorial organizations governed by the Public Education Act (PEA). Quebec is divided into territories of French-speaking SBs (60) and English-speaking SBs (9), in addition to two native SBs and one with special status (bilingual). The SB is administered by a Council of Commissioners. Most commissioners are elected by the population residing on the SB territory. The legal status of the SB

[7] Conseil supérieur de l'éducation.

is that of a legal person governed by public law. This status makes it an autonomous legal entity. The commissioners are independent from the central organizing power. They have the power of deliberation, the power of taxation, and the power to appoint SB officers. However, these are all closely supervised by the QME. On the whole, the SB can be considered both as an administrative agent of the state and as a regional or supra-local government.

The SB's main task is to organize the educational services of preschool, primary, and secondary education for the benefit of those entitled to it. Its other duties, as set out in the PEA, are to promote education, ensure the quality of educational services and student success, and contribute to the development of the region (PEA, Section 207.1). SBs are created by decrees of the Quebec government. From a legal perspective, they are decentralized organizations: they constitute public corporations. SBs deploy complex organizational structures that are both administrative and participatory (deeply rooted in the ideal of school democracy). They are responsible for the public schools on their territory. Private institutions are not subject to their authority. Finally, SBs as organizations carry out various management tasks on their territory (including the management of personnel, buildings, and student transport).

The SB employs its own staff. It owns its property (mostly schools and administrative buildings). Finally, the SB is responsible for the financial resources at its disposal and for their allocation to schools. These resources come from state subsidies (~85% of the budget), school tax, and other special income (~15% of the budget).

The SB has four types of schools under its authority: primary and secondary schools, adult education centers, and vocational training centers. The public education network comprises 1738 primary schools, 419 secondary schools, and 193 schools for the 2 levels of education. In comparison, the private network has 128 primary schools, 118 secondary schools, and 63 schools for both levels.

The general education of young people is based on 6 years of primary education (preceded by 1 year of preschool) and 5 years of secondary education at the end of which the student obtains a secondary school diploma (SSD). Alternative pathways can lead to other forms of qualification for students experiencing difficulties (directed toward access to the world of work). In addition, a vocational training course can be undertaken at the secondary level, leading to a Diploma of Vocational Studies, which includes various specializations to practice a trade (e.g., to become a mechanic or a secretary).

Schools are administered by principals (and their team) who are considered to be executives of the school board. From this perspective, they have a direct hierarchical relationship with teachers who work in their school. Teachers are also employed by the SBs. However, a significant number of their working conditions (especially their wages) are negotiated between their trade unions and the Quebec government. Correspondingly, a local collective agreement is negotiated between the local union and the SB. Inside the school, the main task of teachers is to provide educational services (in the classroom). However, they are part of the "school team" and, therefore, have different obligations outside the classroom (notably in terms of professional training but also related to school administration).

As far as educational services are concerned, they are defined by the regulations for preschool, primary, and secondary education. The common purpose of these

services, as stated in the PEA, is the integral development of the student, which teachers must ensure. A common curriculum[8] must be followed.[9] The QME also enforces a common "progression of learning," but a school may offer special programs that diverge from it.

Schools may adapt educational services with regard to specific needs: (1) students with special needs (based on the principle of inclusive education); (2) students in disadvantaged areas (based on the principle of affirmative action, more resources for deprived populations); and (3) other particular characteristics defined by local programs and specific educational projects (based on the principle of local autonomy and adaptation of the curriculum to specific needs).

Common educational services are available to all children eligible for schooling. Children are admitted to preschool at the age of 5 (or 4 years for students in disadvantaged environments; Bill 23, 2013), at the primary level at the age of 6, and at the secondary level at the age of 12. The school calendar consists of 180 days of classes, with 25 h of instruction per week. Primary education is centered on "basic learning" and grants access to secondary education. At the secondary level, learning is geared toward the personal and professional orientation of the student; it has an explicit objective of qualification.

The adaptation of educational services for students with disabilities or special needs is legally required (these students benefit from special measures adapted to their condition). Schools are responsible for defining an appropriate "intervention plan" for each student with disabilities or special needs. The law specifies that (if possible) those students should be integrated into regular classes. Otherwise, they are placed in adapted classes or even special schools.

Educational services in disadvantaged areas are also adapted. Schools and children in such areas benefit from specific policies. A tailor-made policy for the Montreal metropolitan SB targets the large population of disadvantaged children with "measures to catch up on education in disadvantaged areas" (PEA, A. 430). The "New Approaches, New Solutions Intervention Strategy" is another program available for every secondary school in disadvantaged areas to help them put in place measures tailored to their needs, in order to promote student academic success. This program is associated with specific funding, granted to schools located in neighborhoods classified within the upper range of the poverty index used by the QME.

Schools have the possibility of adopting certain programs and defining a particular pedagogical project (PEA, A. 85). Local programs are varied and often aimed at the practice of sport (sports studies), music, or enhanced training (the international studies program) for "gifted" students. These programs can change the structure of studies, but the mandatory content must always be respected. Specific programs must be approved by the QME. The multiplication of these local programs is often a response to private school competition. This is why Maroy and Kamanzi (2017) stated that these programs create an unofficial school hierarchy in the education

[8] In French "Programme commun de l'Ecole Québécoise".

[9] Basic school regulations for preschool, elementary, and secondary education (Consolidated Statues and Regulations, Chapter I–13.3, r. 8)

system of Quebec: "Without being declared as such, this pedagogical differentiation is hierarchized in practice, at least for the parents, perhaps even for the teachers and the other school professionals" (p. 2).

Lastly, the QME use external and mandatory exams to assess students at specific points in their school career. Those kinds of common exams were imposed as soon as the state took over education in the 1960s. Until 1974, they were the sole condition for graduation. After that date, they were transformed into "uniform tests" which contributed to students' overall results in certain subjects. The results in the exams leading to a secondary school diploma are worth 50% of the final mark (the other 50% coming from in-class exams taken during the course of the year). Moreover, the QME systematically adjusts the grades given at the school level. This is called "moderation of results." All subjects are evaluated separately, and students must pass in every graduation-related subject (French and English, mathematics, science, and history) to obtain their diplomas.

2.3.2 Schools' Demographic Profiles and Results

We cannot, of course, talk about performance-based accountability policies without presenting the state of school performance in both education systems studied. However, a comparison is fraught with difficulties. Differences in school careers, examinations, and degrees are striking. In addition, the methods of calculating success rates differ. There is also the matter of the size of the two education systems, with France's school-age population approximately ten times the size of that of Quebec. Consequently, we have chosen to present separately the few salient features of these two systems in terms of both demographic and academic performances. Finally, to facilitate international comparison (with all the caution that this imposes), but mainly because it is the prevalent public standard of comparison, we present an overview of the PISA survey performances of both.

2.3.2.1 France: A Country of Social Inequalities

In France,[10] the number of students in primary and secondary education has stabilized at roughly 12–12.5 million since 1980.[11] After a slow and regular decrease, this number grew again from 2002 in primary education and from 2010 in secondary education, but without reaching the peak of 1995 (DEPP, 2016).

[10] In this section, statistics are drawn from the official publications of the Department of Evaluation, Forecasting and Performance (DEPP) of the Ministry of Education. We provide only a general view. For a broader picture, see either publications of the DEPP translated into English, such as *The State of Education* published every 2 years (see cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/etat24/44/1/DEPP_EE_2014_anglais_425441.pdf), or the descriptive monographs provided by the DEPP for the European Eurydice network (see, for instance, https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/France:Overview).

[11] These figures do not take into account agricultural education.

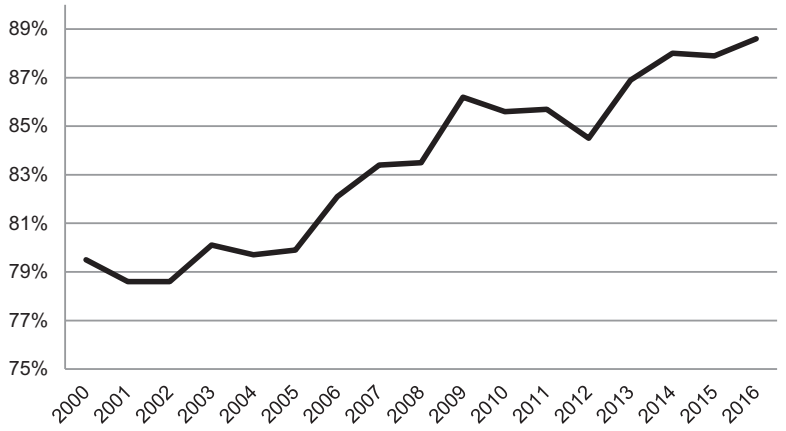

Fig. 2.1 *Baccalauréat* success rate in France 2000–2016. (Source: MEN-DEPP)

Domestic expenditure on education has increased by 90% in constant prices since 1980 because of higher individual costs of students: +88% in primary education and +63% in secondary education (DEPP, 2014). This domestic expenditure now represents about 7% of France's growth domestic product (GDP). This growth of individual costs is mainly due to the diversification of costly teaching and options in secondary education and to the increase in teachers' salaries. Indeed, more than 75% of public expenditures in education are staff expenditures. In 2014, the state's contribution to funding preschool and primary school teaching amounted to 54.1% and up to 67% for secondary teaching. These figures were, respectively, 37.6% and 21.5% for local authorities, the rest being funded by families or companies.

This general effort allowed the overall level of student qualifications to rise. For instance, the proportion of students without education and without any diploma (or only the DNB[12] granted at the end of lower secondary education) fell from 40% in 1978 to 10% in 2015. The objective announced in the mid-1980s, to bring 80% of a generation in the last year of upper secondary education to the *baccalauréat* level, led to a spectacular increase (more than 30 points in one decade) and is about to be reached (78% in 2015), thanks to the restructuring of vocational training which now allows students to study for a vocational *baccalauréat* in 3 years. In 2015, 87% of people between 20 and 24 years old had a secondary education diploma and the *Baccalauréat* success rate was close to 89% the year after (See Fig. 2.1). Furthermore, these results were obtained in the context of the diminution of the grade repetition rate in primary and secondary education. According to the PISA 2015 results, this rate fell from 38% in 2009 to 22% in 2015. It still represents twice the OECD average, but it is also the greatest decrease. Lastly, reading skills of young people around 17 years of age, assessed during the *Journées de Défense et de Citoyenneté* ((JDC) Defense and Citizenship days), show that in recent years about

[12] *Diplôme national du brevet* which is the qualification at the end of lower secondary education.

80% of young French people are proficient readers. The percentage of young people in difficulty has decreased slightly over the same period and that a little more sharply among boys who still outnumber girls experiencing reading difficulties.

Nevertheless, the performance and equity of the system as a whole, measured through student achievement, remain problematic (See Fig. 2.2). Successive PISA rounds have shown that French performance has remained essentially unchanged and average across OECD countries (or slightly above in reading). In 2007, the DEPP gave students in primary education the same test that was implemented in 1987 and even showed that overall student performance in reading, writing, and mathematics was declining (Rocher, 2008). The social inequalities of educational achievement are particularly high, among the highest in PISA. Of all OECD countries, France is where performance in mathematical literacy, for instance, is most strongly linked to students' economic, social, and cultural status (ESCS): in France the difference in score associated with the variation of a unit in the ESCS index was 57 points in 2012 (DEPP, 2014).

These results converge with those that the DEPP obtained from its own statistical survey: the disciplinary assessment cycle conducted on a sample (CEDRE[13]), designed to measure attainment of targets set by the curricula in different disciplines over a 3-year cycle. If student performance at the end of primary and secondary education was stable in science in 2013 compared to 2007 and in reading in 2015 compared to 2009, strong differences can be pointed out between boys and girls and above all, according to the socio-educational position index conceived by the DEPP: the higher the index, the better the performance (DEPP, 2014, 2016).

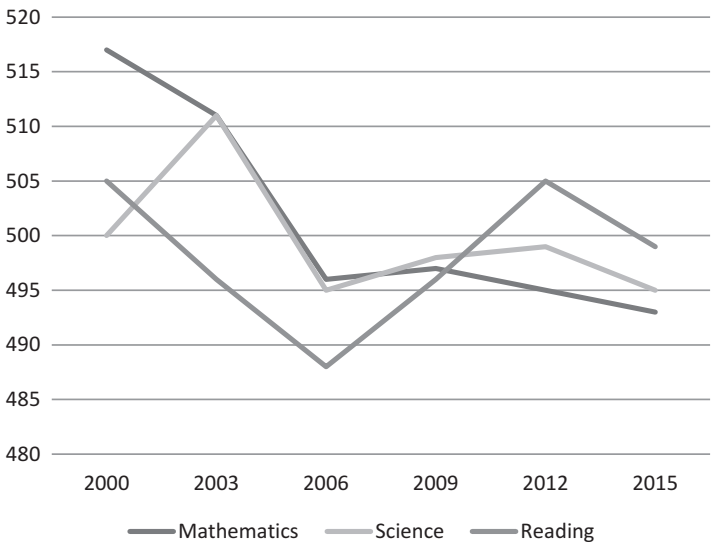

Fig. 2.2 PISA results in France from 2000 to 2015

[13] Cycle des évaluations disciplinaires réalisées sur échantillons.

2.3.2.2 Quebec: A Top Performer?

There are slightly fewer than one million students enrolled in general education (2014, youth sector).[14] In addition, 191,000 students are being trained in adult education and 129,000 in vocational training. It should be noted that the student population had been declining slightly but has been almost constant since the end of the 1990s. Quebec has a total population just above eight million people.[15] That population is distributed unevenly across the province's vast territory, as are the students, but the Montreal metropolitan area (more than one third of the province's population) contains about 23% of them. About 12% of secondary schools and 25% of primary schools are in a socioeconomically disadvantaged environment.[16]

As the language-driven SB network demonstrates, the language spoken by students' parents plays an important role in their school career. In general education, about 89% of students study in French-language schools, 10% in English-language schools, and less than 1% in schools where Cree or Inuktitut are the languages of instruction. It should be noted that approximately 16% of students attending French-language schools do not have French as their mother tongue.

The other major divide in the Quebec education network is on the public-private axis. Private education serves about 12% of students, more precisely 7% of primary school students and 21% of secondary school students. Public schools have also played the competition game in areas where private schools are primarily located (in the metropolitan areas of Montreal and Quebec City and their respective suburbs). Thus, about 18% of students at the secondary level attend a special program (as explained in Sect. 2.3.1.2).

Finally, approximately 19% of students are considered to have a disability or special needs. Most are in the public education network. These students can obtain special services, as well as adaptive measures, to compensate for their disabilities or difficulties.

Academic performance in Quebec has been improving since 2008. Graduation rate by cohort is the most common performance measure used to assess the education system. The graduation rate includes different forms of degrees (secondary school diplomas and professional diplomas) and recently created qualifications (for students who have difficulty following the regular curriculum).[17] The standard

[14] According to the most recent QME data (for the 2013–2014 school year): 995,178 students of which 108,132 were preschool children, 483,156 primary, and 403,190 secondary students.

[15] More precisely, 8,214,503 people for the year 2014 (Statistical Institute of Quebec, 2017).

[16] However, these data are older (2009), based on the number of schools that benefited from the program called "Strategy to Act Differently" which gives special funding to schools located in socioeconomically disadvantaged environments (QME, 2009).

[17] "A cohort represents a group of students who enrolled for the first time in Secondary 1 at the beginning of the observation period. The graduation and qualification rate is calculated after 5, 6 and 7 years. For example, the graduation and qualification rate of the 2008 cohort establishes the proportion of these students who are newly enrolled at the beginning of the 2008–2009 school year, who received a first diploma or first qualification in 2014–2015. […] As a result, the graduation and qualification rate for the 2008 cohort is 78.8% after seven years" (QME, 2016, p. 2).

Fig. 2.3 Graduation and qualification rates by cohort, after 7 years of secondary schooling (Sources: QME Reports on Secondary School Graduation and Qualification, Edition 2011–2016)

secondary degree should be obtained within 5 years, but the QME uses the 7-year mark as a benchmark for this graduation rate target (80% in 2020). As shown in the Fig. 2.3, 78.8% of the 2008 cohort had graduated by 2015 (after 7 years). This is quite close to the 2020 benchmark, but student graduation is distributed unequally. However, this progress is partly based on the recent creation of new semiprofessional qualifications.

Boys' graduation is a problem at the forefront of public debates in education. For the same 2008 cohort, the graduation rate falls to 73.8% (compared to 83.9% for girls). Moreover, this issue is exacerbated in the public education network (only 69.6% of boys got a diploma from a public secondary school, compared to 80.6% of girls). Private schools, on the other hand, have a near perfect graduation rate (93.3% for the same 2008 cohort). This is largely explained by the wide gap in the average socioeconomic level of the students attending the two education networks and by the selection of students in several private schools, which excludes a large proportion of those with learning difficulties.

Furthermore, students who attend regular classes in the public system are significantly disadvantaged in their postsecondary education pathway compared to students from the private sector or those who have attended special programs in public schools (see Maroy & Kamanzi, 2017).

The implicit difference between academic pathways within the public network is not the only one that influences student achievement. The graduation rate is significantly higher in the English-language network (84.6% for the 2008 cohort) than in the larger French-language network (78.4%). The few First Nations-associated SBs are far behind in terms of academic achievement.[18] Finally, the variation in gradua-

[18] The Cree nation school board had a graduation rate of 26% for the 2008 cohort; at the Kativik School Board—for Innu people—it dropped to 18%.

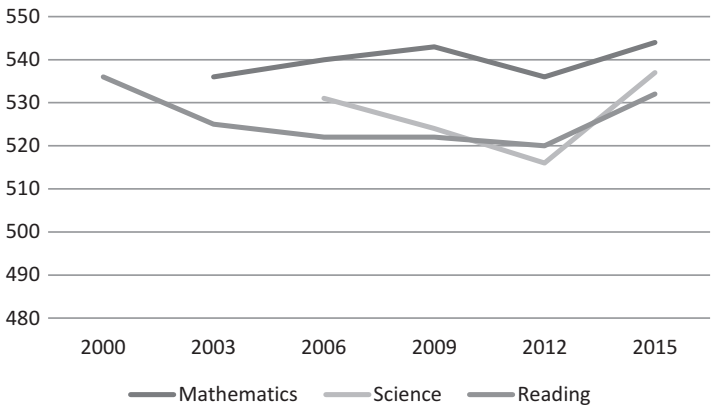

Fig. 2.4 PISA results in Quebec from 2000 to 2015

tion rates is also dramatic in the case of students who already had an academic delay at an early stage of secondary school entry (52.5% for the 2008 cohort), as well as those with a disability or learning difficulties (48.3%).

For an international comparison, the Canadian data from the PISA survey are broken down by province (the provinces are also responsible for managing the survey). It is, therefore, possible to identify the performance of Quebec. However, participation in PISA is not mandatory and is at the discretion of school principals. The proportion of participating schools was below the threshold recommended by PISA in the last three surveys (CMEC, 2013).[19] Moreover, an overrepresentation of private schools is likely in this PISA sample because many public school principals have boycotted the test as a protest to ask for more school autonomy (Le Devoir, 2016). Therefore, these data should be treated with caution.

Nevertheless, Quebec's average performance in PISA has historically been very good, often above the Canadian average and among the highest-ranked OECD nations. Figure 2.4 above shows the evolution in the three competencies assessed (when the data were collected).

Without making waves in the media, Quebec ranked among the best-performing nations in the few first PISA surveys of the early 2000s contrary to France (See Fig. Fig. 2.5). The political and media impact of these first international comparisons

[19] "Given that the response rate among Quebec's Francophone students did not meet international standards (75% vs. 80%), an analysis of the nonrespondents in PISA 2012 was undertaken by the QME. By linking the PISA 2012 raw data set for Quebec with administrative data from the ministry, it was determined that those students who did not respond to the PISA survey differed from those who responded based on the following characteristics: (1) Proportionally, more PISA nonrespondents came from public schools than PISA respondents. (2) On average, PISA nonrespondents came from households with a higher International Socioeconomic Index of occupational status (ISEI) than PISA respondents. (3) Proportionally, there were more male students among PISA nonrespondents than among PISA respondents. (4) On average, PISA nonrespondents did not perform as well as PISA respondents on the provincial test of French administered to students in Quebec" (CMEC, 2013).

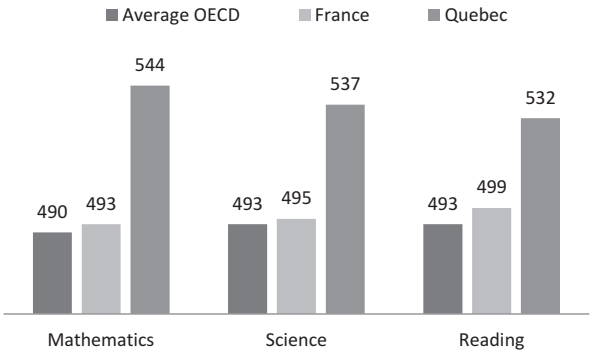

Fig. 2.5 Comparison of PISA 2015 scores: OECD, France, Quebec

was not very significant (Pelletier, 2013). Recently, this impact has increased, and even if the results have declined since 2006, the Quebec educational network has received praise for its performance. However, the data collection problems revealed recently have considerably clouded this picture.

Nonetheless, the province's performance at PISA has never become a major issue in the public debate on education in Quebec. The latter remains much more focused on concerns related to graduation and dropping out. In addition, academic success in Canada, especially in the neighboring province of Ontario, remains the most commonly used benchmark to which to compare Quebec's education system's performance.

2.4 Governance

Performance-based accountability policies in the French and Quebec education systems do not occur in a vacuum. Their conception and implementation depend on various factors, such as key political problems identified in policy debates, the traditional modes of governance at work, and crucial institutional and instrumental choices made in terms of accountability. In this section, we present these three elements which serve as a backdrop to subsequent chapters. Thus, we will develop the policy problems specifically related to accountability in the trajectory chapter (Chap. 5) and deal with the regulation of school organization and the tools associated with it in the two subsequent chapters (Chaps. 6 and 7). We invite the reader to return to this section as a quick reference point throughout the book.

2.4.1 The Main Governing Problems

In some respects, the definition of contemporary issues in education is relatively similar in the two cases studied. The question of school autonomy and the increasingly vocal discourse on public administrations' necessary search for efficiency

seem to have been built up progressively, both in France and in Quebec. For the latter, this issue is integrated with the needs of a societal development which must involve better school performance, while in France the idea of a changing "culture" in the education system seems to be the driving force behind the recent reforms.

2.4.1.1 France: Shifting Away from Top-Down Government

In France, the progressive decentralization and deconcentration of the education system were concomitant with the development of specific policy narratives, especially among senior civil servants, about the need to rethink the governance of the education system and to go beyond top-down government. The expanding participation in secondary education, sometimes described through gripping metaphors such as the "school explosion," and the rapid development of school administrations were depicted as necessary causes of a drastic change of governance. Several scenarios and narratives have emerged since the 1960s, but, beyond their particularities and potential divergences, they all lead to the same diagnosis and demand for a governing change. In 1968, for instance, some senior civil servants, such as Louis Cros, pleaded for a new management of the "education enterprise." In his opinion, to be truly autonomous, the school must define its own objectives, choose its own means, improve its processes, and have a better knowledge of its outputs and outcomes (Cros, 1968). During the 1970s and the 1980s and the implementation of school projects, this narrative evolved and consisted in asserting the obsolescence of a uniform, totally centralized, and exclusively top-down government of education through norms and bureaucratic injunctions. These arguments were put forward to plead for enhanced school autonomy (Obin, 1991). This policy narrative lasted until the 2000s and sometimes merged with others on the need to develop new organizational cultures in the administration and strengthen leadership and new systems of quality control and evaluation. They even led to counter-narratives by some teachers' unions who interpreted these discourses as a sign of a new neoliberalization of education and as the illustration of its domination by New Public Management principles (Dupuy & Pons, 2013).

2.4.1.2 Quebec: Toward More Efficiency and More Equity

The US report *A Nation at Risk* (1983) linked the disappointing academic performance of US students and the jeopardy of the nation's postindustrial future. Similarly, in Quebec, the issue of school dropouts was immediately viewed from the perspective of the threat to the overall development of Quebec society. Moreover, starting with the Estates General on Education (1995), the definition of the political stakes in education has been accompanied by an emphasis on ensuring improved alignment between the needs of society and the labor market. On the other hand, students (and their academic success) are, discursively, placed at the center of education priorities. It is in the name of their needs and success that a policy like RBM is justified, even though it mostly affects school administration.

From that perspective, the stakes of academic performance and school dropouts have been integrated into the policy narrative for some time. Thus, student's success is very often at the heart or the goal of any policy narrative on educational change. However, not only is RBM in line with this discourse, its very conception emanates from this political problem. This policy institutionalizes the performance issue as a permanent one. It does not aim to find a direct solution to this problem but rather to oblige the actors to consider student success in each of their decisions and actions. In doing so, this becomes the problem of all actors in the educational network. The issue of the effectiveness of the education system is therefore first and foremost approached from the perspective of academic results.

However, the more classic issue related to the efficiency of public administration also remains at the forefront of the political agenda. It transcends the boundaries of education and emerged at the turn of the 2000s as an essential component of the political discourse on the rationalization of the state and the reduction of public spending (among the two main political parties). The "solutions" associated with New Public Management are put forward as a tool to achieve these goals.

The education system is no exception to this trend. According to Lessard (2004), strategic planning is, thus, associated with the search for "efficiency in education." This issue has been present in education since the 1960s but has become more pressing recently. The school administration is not only obliged to put in place the right means to achieve its goals but must also ensure that they have a real effectiveness. For Lessard, this is a "performance obligation" that stems directly from the problem of academic effectiveness and creates a specific discourse about the public education network: "[...] there is a whole managerial rhetoric as well as a language of performance and efficiency constraints" (Lessard, 2004, p. 23). The question of the effectiveness and efficiency of the education system becomes thus an important political issue.

Finally, the question of school democracy or the exercise of collective choices in education is also a recurring debate. Already present during the Parent Reform in the 1960s, this challenge puts SBs and their status as local government under pressure as institutions.

On the one hand, the relevance of an elective mechanism is called into question; on the other, users' individual needs tend to become more important. At first glance, this issue does not appear to be linked to the implementation of a results-based management approach. Yet it guides many of the elements of this policy: (1) the form of accountability it implies (especially to whom to render accounts) and (2) by extension, this problem brings to the forefront the old tension between centralization and decentralization in the education system. What are the roles to be played by the key institutions of the different levels of the education system (government/QME, intermediary/SBs, and local/schools) as accountability has become the new managerial norm? This set of problems points to several choices within RBM's scope and in its instrumental deployment. Above all, it highlights the current tensions in the regulation of Quebec's education system.

2.4.2 Forms of Regulation

In a context of public action's changing modalities, we consider that regulation is definitely not just rules and procedures (translated by *réglementation* in French) and goes beyond the actions of control and administration stemming from the "top." In a broad sense, social regulation designates multiple processes, contradictory and sometimes conflictual, orienting actors' conduct and the definition of the rules of the game in a social or political system (Dupriez & Maroy, 2003). Regulation results from coordinated measures and actions in continuous interaction. It relies on varied institutional arrangements (rules and incentives established by public authorities, market mechanisms, evaluation devices, hierarchical control, or cognitive or normative schemes of reference) (Maroy, 2009).

The regulation of the French education system bears traces of a long history and, consequently, several institutional path-dependency marks. Those are also noteworthy in Quebec, mostly related to the long-existing SBs, primarily because a state-driven education system is much more recent. The adoption of New Public Management ideas may have been easier in Quebec, whereas they tend to remain discursive in France. However, both systems' strong neo-corporatist features and assertive central administration tend to hybridize those ideas and lead to different forms of accountability policies, far from what can be seen in the United States or England.

2.4.2.1 France: Bureaucracy, Comanagement, Ethos, and Discourses!

According to Agnès van Zanten (2008), the current regulation of the French education system was progressively established by various reforms in the nineteenth century and evolved incrementally until the end of the twentieth century. It is based on three main pillars: a neo-corporatist mode of decision-making centered on the interaction between state officials and teacher union representatives; a strong, centralized, and bureaucratic administration; and the importance given in that context to the charisma and ethos of both decision-makers and teachers. These three pillars (bureaucratic rule, co-management with professionals, and charisma) are associated with specific visions and uses of the knowledge that can be produced on the functioning of the education system. Neo-corporatism implies a focus on political negotiation skills for policy actors. This focus leads to a limited consideration of the knowledge produced by scholars or experts and a strategic use of it. To a considerable extent, central bureaucracy has led to the "endogenization" of expertise by the state through the action of ministerial cabinets acting as think tanks, institutions devoted to the collection and processing of statistical data aggregated at the national level, and professional bodies intervening at the national and local levels. Charisma and ethos mean that legitimate knowledge of education policies must be incarnated in "personalities," linked to their intellectual capacities and values, and used to "enlighten" and exert an influence.

These three pillars constitute more or less strong obstacles to the development of new forms of expertise and evaluation and to the implementation of a renewed performance-based accountability policy. They have also given rise to the proliferation of professional organizations and institutional actors who are used to participating in policy-making at every level (national, regional, and local) and who contribute to a relatively strong closure of this policy sector: unions of every category of staff (teachers, principals, and inspectors), associations of parents, associations of specialists (of a pedagogical movement, of a specific discipline, and so on), associations of students (in upper secondary education), one-issue organizations like the Observatory of Priority Education (OZP), etc. These pillars also justified the creation of specific bodies, either to organize the institutional consultation of these organizations—such as the Higher Curriculum Council—or to provide them and the ministry with "independent" expertise, such as the various higher councils of evaluation created since 2001.[20]

Nevertheless, since the middle of the 1970s, new regulation tools, such as projects, contracts, partnerships, and evaluations, have been adopted in France. They have only been partly studied by scholars whose conclusions largely converge. First, even if they are mentioned in official texts (like the 1989 and 2005 laws), their implementation is very uneven from one territory or period to another, as school evaluation illustrates (Buisson-Fenet & Pons, 2014). Their fundamental logics of implementation differ markedly from one school to another, as was frequently the case for school projects (Combaz, 2002; Derouet, 2000; Derouet & Dutercq, 1997; Devineau, 2001), and these tools have been regularly relaunched over the last decade, sometimes by combining new regulatory tools with older ones. This implementation strongly depends on the impulsions by state administrations themselves (Meuret, 2007) and on the convincing force of the institutional discourse on the topic (Maroy, 2006; Pons, 2010, 2014) so that, in France, there are regularly bureaucratic injunctions to post-bureaucratic changes. These tools are rarely linked to specific administrative, institutional, or financial sanctions or consequences, and their effective implementation is not always monitored. As a result, beyond their conformity to institutional injunctions, professionals remain relatively free to use them effectively and to integrate them into their practices and reflections (Mons & Pons, 2006; Pons, 2011).

These elements led some scholars to conclude that if these tools sometimes allowed professionals to improve their knowledge of the institution and their degree of communication (Cole, 2001, 2004), if they sometimes enriched specific professional cultures (Demailly, 1999), and if they sometimes gave power to local actors involved with local devices (Dutercq, 2000; van Zanten, 2001), they rarely reoriented effective practices and did not pave the way for a post-bureaucratic model of regulation but possibly for a neo-bureaucratic one (Maroy, 2006). These elements also led authors to define French accountability policy as a soft and reflexive one

[20] Haut conseil de l'évaluation de l'école (2001–2005), Haut conseil de l'éducation (2005–2013), and Conseil national d'évaluation du système scolaire (from 2013).

whose main driving force would remain professional identities and the ethos of policy actors (Dupriez & Mons, 2011; Maroy & Voisin, 2014).

2.4.2.2 Quebec: New Public Management and Community Regulation Model

In Quebec, it could be argued that the current regulation of the education system results from a blending of the principles of New Public Management with a pronounced emphasis on the state and a model of bureaucratic regulation that remains influential. Moreover, it can be argued that neo-managerial principles are mixed with the community regulation model (Dembélé, Goulet, Lapointe, & Deniger, 2013; Lessard et al., 2007). The rights and needs of local communities or individual users create horizontal spaces of regulation (the structures associated with school democracy or the participatory mechanisms for parents). These often overlap with the vertical regulation exercised by the school administration. The focus on results-based management is, therefore, closer to a "neo-statist" variant of New Public Management than a "neoliberal" variant that emphasizes market mechanisms (Clark, 2002). For our part, we refer to the work of Maroy and Voisin (2014) to argue that the current regulation of Quebec's education system is greatly influenced by a model of "neo-bureaucratic" accountability.

This form of regulation is closely associated with the strategic alignment of the various institutional actors. This tends to tilt the balance toward vertical and hierarchical regulatory mechanisms to the detriment of local and horizontal regulatory mechanisms. This policy establishes a system of contracts and planning tools. They work as top-down regulatory mechanisms that enforce a cognitive alignment of objectives and priorities between each level of the education system. These tools are associated with performance-based accountability and results monitoring to which all organizations are formally constrained by law. In addition, the RBM policy also emphasizes transparency as a regulatory mechanism. It implies making available and visible the performance of organizations so that stakeholders can be held accountable (this happens, in particular, with different bodies dedicated to this effect: school councils and boards of trustees). However, the stakes for school system actors remain relatively low. There are either symbolic accountability measures or informal consequences that are at stake within the organizations, at the discretion of the actors and according to their strategic positioning. In addition, monitoring and support are left to local actors (SBs and schools) and are not explicitly linked to accountability mechanisms. From that perspective, Maroy and Voisin (2014, p. 9) argue that "the theory of regulation in effect is based on the idea of a utilitarian actor responsive to the bureaucratic rules that are supposed to lead him to reposition his own practice to achieve the goals formalized in the RBM tools." In short, highlighting the performance of the organization, in conjunction with bureaucratic injunctions, is meant to encourage actors to self-regulate while also responding to their superiors' expectations. As we shall see, this may lead to some form of decoupling or leave room for different forms of intermediate regulation undertaken by SBs.

2.4.3 Policy Tools

Accountability policies in education rely heavily on a variety of policy tools. These tools have a significant impact on the implementation of policies. One of the peculiarities of French and Quebec policies is precisely the implementation of a relatively similar policy tools repertoire. In the following subsections, we describe the broad categories of policy tools encompassed in this repertoire (plans, contracts, accountability tools, and assessment tools), as well as the specific nature of the main tools developed in the two national contexts. In the following chapters, we will present an analysis of the cognitive and legal evolution of these tools and their articulations in evolving configurations (Chap. 5) and analyze some of their uses at the school level (Chap. 7).

2.4.3.1 Plans

Policy tools related to planning play an important role in NPM-driven education policies. Indeed, these policies strongly emphasize strategic planning. Planning tools aim at structuring the educational organizations' actions according to broad orientations (the so-called strategic dimension) with objectives (often measurable and assessable) to be achieved within a given time frame. Moreover, planning tools seek to modify the bureaucratic regulation of public action in order to make it more efficient. By relying on planning tools, school managers should depend less on bureaucratic rules and controls to guide their actions. In using planning tools, they have enacted a goal-oriented management that has adopted the broad orientation from above while being adaptable to diverse organizational contexts. From that perspective, planning also incorporates a second dimension associated with the empowerment of intermediate and local organizations. This autonomy-driven form of planning was already at the core of the school project tools. Those kinds of tools seek to help school actors (parents, teachers, and principals) to shape a specific vision of their school. In both policy contexts, projects are integrated with planning and, arguably, reshaped by it.

In France, the "project" is the main planning tool. It has been used both at the school level (since the end of the 1970s) and at the level of the *académies* (since the 1990s). The *académie*'s project acts mainly as a normative tool aimed at bringing institutions into conformity. The school project is part of a more decentralized vision of the school and is supposed to contribute to its empowerment, even if research has shown that this empowerment process varies in intensity over time, depending on the period, the types of schools, and their social composition (Combaz, 2002; Derouet, 2000; Derouet & Dutercq, 1997; Devineau, 1995). However, this tool also conveys the NPM vision of planning. As a steering by results tool, it is put forward as the first step in a new way of managing the school.

In Quebec, "strategic plans" are implemented in the SBs and "success plans" in the schools. The term "success plan" puts even more emphasis on its primary focus.

These tools are designed to improve school management's effectiveness. To this end, they aim to closely link the management orientation and use of the data (associated with the assessment tools, see below). Besides the strategic planning tools, the schools' "educational projects" are also integrated as results-based management tools. They keep their school empowerment focus but have to be operationalized by the school "success plan." Thus, the educational project becomes a local framework for action, with the means of achieving local objectives, while complying with the strategic planning of the SB.

2.4.3.2 Contracts

The contract is a tool implemented to formalize an agreement between two parties (by defining the terms of the contract and signing it). This agreement takes place between the organizations representing different levels of the education systems. Since there is a hierarchical asymmetry between the organizations, the upper level must provide resources and various forms of support in return for which the lower level commits to certain standards and goals (often in terms of students' academic performance). This instrument works to the extent that it is possible to assess those standards.

In France, the first contracts of that kind were signed in 1998 between the *académies* and the central administration of the ministry. While this process worked initially on the principle of voluntarism and favored a better communication within school administrations (Cole, 2001, 2004), with the steering by results policy, it became compulsory and better equipped in terms of statistical tools to evaluate the organizational action. The school also has what is referred to as an "objective contract" with the *académie*.[21] These contracts are aimed at setting up new forms of commitments by the actors. They are built to foster interorganizational collegial efforts. The contracts are linked to planning by being constructed as gateways for disseminating a strategic culture within school administrations.

In Quebec, contracts are the centerpiece of RBM policy; they are referred to as "agreements." As in France, contracts are signed between a SB and the Ministry of Education—"partnership agreements"—and between a school and a SB, "Educational Success and Management Agreements" (we will refer to the "management agreement" for the remainder of this book). Agreements are defined as a means to implement strategic planning. They combine the planning elements (in particular, the measurable targets) with a set of "means" (solutions) and ways to monitor them and track their outcome. This is what those representing each of the organizations agree on when they symbolically sign the convention.

[21] The local civil authorities can also participate in this contract, which makes it a three-way contract that does not have a counterpart on the Quebec side.

2.4.3.3 Accountability Tools

Accountability as a process relies on its own range of tools. Accountability tools aim at codifying the achievement of the various objectives set by the educational organizations. Therefore, those tools vary according to who is accountable to whom but also according to the topic and mode of justification. Assessment tools are integrated into most accountability tools to provide a quantitative judgment on the organization's performance (performance-based accountability). Accounts are rendered to different stakeholders. The accountability process is "administrative" when accounts are rendered to senior managers, but it can also be "political" when accounts are rendered to the citizen via their representatives (elected officials) (see Chap. 3).

French steering by results policy largely emphasizes administrative accountability. With the introduction of the LOLF, the purpose of this administrative accountability is to better link the traditional accounting relationship to the academic performances of schools and *académies* but without questioning the traditional bureaucratic regulation which remains strong in school administrations. The LOLF was the opportunity to rationalize the production and presentation of statistical indicators and to introduce new software applications at various policy levels.

Administrative accountability is also a common practice in Quebec. As a centerpiece of RBM policy, administrative accountability is mostly about the achievement of measurable objectives fixed in the agreements (see above). This focus shapes the accountability tools (agreements, plans, reports) around contexts, means, and indicators related to each target to follow. Those reports are completed at a lower organizational level and transmitted to a higher organizational level. It is on the basis of these monitoring reports that the accountability process occurs: the manager of the organization is called upon to explain achievement and failure but also ways for improvement.

Moreover, the pre-existing school democracy in Quebec (see Sect. 2.1.1.2 above) demands its own form of political accountability tools. At the same time, it also carries a key concept of New Public Management, namely, the need to put in place tools that promote organizational transparency for the users and the general public. Therefore, the RBM toolkit includes approval procedures (for projects, plans, and agreement) by representative democratic bodies. The administrative follow-up report will also be condensed in a simpler annual report (produced by each school and SB) which is transmitted to parents and available to all.

2.4.3.4 Assessment Tools

Assessment in the context of accountability policies incorporates a wide range of tools. For the most part, these are based on quantitative data and the use of statistical techniques. Assessment tools collect, organize, and process the data in order to generate a specific view of the organization. This knowledge leads to a "diagnosis" of

the organization and its actors. The different tools used to shape that diagnosis are especially useful in an accountability framework, because they are equipping other policy tools.

Since assessment tools are so diverse, we will only highlight those most commonly associated with the French steering by results and Quebec RBM. In both contexts, most of the data revolve around student academic performance. The data come from two main sources: (1) student performances and success rates in different exams during their school career and (2) the graduation rate before the age of 20 (for general or vocational programs) and, in contrast, the dropout rate.

In France, assessment tools are mostly constructed at the central government level and disseminated to *académies* and schools. Assessment is supposed to fulfill three functions: (1) to improve the available knowledge about the school system to inform the public debate and educational authorities' decisions; (2) to constitute a new method of steering the school system and support decision-making processes; and (3) to establish the improvement of results as the cornerstone of the education system, as something easily referred to and always visible to the stakeholder. Three assessment tools are commonly used and reflect those functions. Testing played an important role in earlier times but was clearly set aside (by the government) during our field investigation, even if the ministry still produced sample-based national tests to orient its policy. In addition, two sets of secondary school performance indicators (means-targets and value-added indicators) have been implemented since the 1990s. Lastly, statistical and data processing tools named "radar charts" were also developed. The radar chart is a computerized data visualization tool that allows the linking of various indicators to form a "spider chart" used to compare results of different organizations or groups (students, schools, *académies*, etc.).

In Quebec, the Ministry of Education produces a variety of indicators designed to provide a picture of the education system. The result and success rate at the provincial common exams—the "ministerial examinations"—are among the most common sets of data used to assess school performance. Many complementary tools are developed at the intermediate level for SBs through a nonprofit organization (GRICS).[22] Those are designed specifically to address the management needs of SBs (and their schools). A software (GPI) allows for the storage and transmission of data (exam results but also class attendance, place of residence, etc.). Yet the GRICS has also developed a complementary software (Lumix) in order to deal with the specific needs of the results-based management approach. This tool informs and shapes the management and partnership agreements and generates various graphic representations of school performances.

[22] The *Société de Gestion du réseau informatique des commissions scolaires* (GRICS) is a private nonprofit organization managed by school boards' managers since 1985. Its purpose is to offer information technology services and support to the school boards, as well as to other clients. In so doing, the GRICS develops and supports various types of software, such as Lumix and GPI, to help schools make use of their accumulated data.

In addition, SBs and schools are implementing a variety of other data gathering and processing tools, especially when managers need to collect qualitative data or specific information that is not automatically provided by school actors. For example, this might be a simple tool developed at the school level to track the number of extra classes given to students with learning difficulties or, alternatively, a commonly used "web questionnaire" (developed by the GRICS) that helps to provide qualitative data about a school climate and environment.

2.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to provide readers with the main elements of context and information about the French and Quebec education systems for them to better appreciate our comparison.

Based on a series of conventions, this contextual and morphological approach has several limitations, such as the generalizability of some assertions when providing a broad picture or the imbalance that sometimes appears in the description of some items of our grid in the two cases.

Nevertheless, it has three advantages. It shows the relevance of a multilevel and historicized approach to accountability policies, an approach that our theoretical framework intends to promote (see Chap. 3). Methodologically, it explicitly supports the "most different system design" of our comparison since we have two very dissimilar school systems in terms of their history, institutional foundations, and traditional modes of regulation (see Chap. 4). Lastly, it provides several key elements that must be kept in mind and re-examined when interpreting the final findings (see Chaps. 5, 6, and 7).

References

Bernard, P.-Y. (2011). *Le décrochage scolaire*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.

Bourdieu, P. (1989). *La noblesse d'État: grandes écoles et esprit de corps*. Paris: Ed. De Minuit.

Brassard, A. (2006). L'évolution de la gestion scolaire depuis les années 1950. *Le Point en administration scolaire, 8*(4), 25–27.

Brassard, A. (2010). La politique québécoise de décentralisation vers l'établissement: un changement important qui maintient l'instance intermédiaire en l'état. In G. Pelletier (Ed.), *La gouvernance en éducation. Régulation et encadrement dans les politiques éducatives* (pp. 87–100). Paris/Bruxelles, Belgium: De Boeck.

Brassard, A. (2014). La commission scolaire comme lieu de gouvernance autonome (1959 à 2013)? *Télescope, 20*(2), 17–34.

Buisson-Fenet, H., & Pons, X. (2014). *School evaluation policies and educating states: Trends in four European countries*. Berne, Switzerland: Peter Lang.

Charland, J.-P. (2005). *Histoire de l'éducation au Québec: de l'ombre du clocher à l'économie du savoir*. Saint-Laurent, Canada: Éditions du Renouveau pédagogique.

Charlot, B. (1994). *L'école et le territoire: nouveaux espaces, nouveaux enjeux*. Paris: Armand Colin.
Clark, D. (2002). Neoliberalism and public service reform: Canada in comparative perspective. *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique, 35*(04), 771–793.
Clément, P. (2013). *Réformer les programmes pour changer l'école. Une sociologue histoirique du champ du pouvoir scolaire*. PhD thesis, Université de Picardie Jules Verne, Amiens.
Cole, A. (2001). The new governance of French education? *Public Administration, 79*(3), 707–724.
Cole, A. (2004). La contractualisation vue par un observateur étranger. *Administration et Éducation, 104*, 107–114.
Combaz, G. (2002). Le projet d'établissement scolaire: vers une dérive du curriculum? Contribution à une sociologie des rapports État-école. *Revue Française de Pédagogie, 139*, 7–19.
Conseil des ministres de l'éducation du Canada-CMEC. (2013). *Measuring up, Canadian results of the OECD PISA study: The performance of Canada's youth in mathematics, reading and science: 2012, first results for Canadians aged 15*. Toronto, Canada: Council of Ministers of Education.
Corbo, C. (2002). *L'éducation pour tous: une anthologie du Rapport Parent*. Montréal, Canada: Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
Corbo, C., & Gagnon, R. (2004). *Le rapport Parent 1963–2003: une tranquille révolution scolaire*. Montréal, Canada: L'Association québécoise d'histoire politique.
Cros, L. (1968). L'autonomie de l'entreprise scolaire. *L'éducation nationale, 866*, 8–12.
Curtis, B. (2012). *Ruling by schooling Quebec: Conquest to liberal governmentality-a historical sociology*. Toronto, Canada: University of toronto Press.
Déloye, Y. (1994). *Ecole et citoyenneté: l'individualisme républicain de Jules Ferry à Vichy: controverses*. Paris: FNSP Press.
Demailly, L. (1999). L'évaluation et l'auto-évaluation des établissements: un enjeu collectif. Le cas des audits d'établissements scolaires de l'académie de Lille. *Politiques et management public, 17*(1), 37–58.
Dembélé, M., Goulet, S., Lapointe, P., & Deniger, M.-A. (2013). Perspective historique de la construction du modèle québécois de gestion scolaire axée sur les résultats. In D. C. Maroy (dir.), *L'école à l'épreuve de la performance:Les politiques de régulation par les résultats: trajectoires nationales, usages locaux*. DeBoeck.
Deniger, M.-A. (2012). Les politiques québécoises d'intervention en milieux scolaires défavorisés: regard historique et bilan critique. *Revue française de pédagogie. Recherches en éducation, 178*, 67–84.
DEPP. (2014). *L'état de l'école*. Paris: MEN.
DEPP. (2016). *L'état de l'école*. Paris: MEN.
Derouet, J.-L. (2000). *L'école dans plusieurs mondes*. Bruxelles, Belgium/Paris: De Boeck.
Derouet, J.-L., & Dutercq, Y. (1997). *L'établissement scolaire, autonomie locale et service public*. Paris: ESF éditeur & INRP.
Devineau, S. (1995). La construction des politiques d'éducation et de formation. In J. B. B. Charlot (Ed.), *L'effet projet d'établissement* (pp. 223–242). Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
Devineau, S. (2001). Les lycées et leurs images en France et en Grande-Bretagne. In C. Muller & R. Rouault (Eds.), *L'enseignement Privé en Europe (II)* (pp. 73–88). Caen, France: PUC.
Doray, P., Prévost, J. G., Delavictoire, Q., Moulin, S., & Beaud, J. P. (2011). Usages des statistiques et actions publiques: les politiques de lutte contre le décrochage scolaire au Québec. *Sociologie et sociétés, 43*(2), 202–221.
Dubet, F. (2004). *L'école des chances. Qu'est-ce qu'une école juste? (La République des idées)*. Paris: Seuil.
Dubet, F. (2011). *Le travail des sociétés*. Paris: Le Seuil.
Dupriez, V., & Maroy, C. (2003). Regulation in school systems: A theoretical analysis of the structural framework of the school system in French speaking Belgium. *Journal of Education Policy, 18*(4), 375–392.

Dupriez, V., & Mons, N. (2011). Introduction. Les politiques d'accountability. Du changement institutionnel aux transformations locales. *Éducation comparée, 5*, 7–16.
Dupuy, C., & Pons, X. (2013). *Le "pilotage par les résultats" en éducation en France. Genèse et trajectoire* (NewAge research report). Paris: OSC.
Durkheim, É. (1899). Note sur la morphologie sociale. *L'Année sociologique, 2*, 520–521.
Dutercq, Y. (2000). *Politiques éducatives et évaluations: querelles de territoires*. Paris: PUF.
Dutercq, Y. (2005). *Les régulations des politiques d'éducation*. Rennes, France: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
Forestier, Y. (2014). *L'École, exception médiatique. La presse face aux enjeux des changements pédagogiques, 1959–2008*. PhD thesis, Paris Sorbonne University, Paris.
Fortier, M. (2016, édition du 7 décembre). Les bonnes notes du Québec remises en question. *Le Devoir*.
Gellner, E. (1983). *Nations and nationalism*. Oxford, UK: Cornell University Press.
Green, A. (1990). *Education and state formation. The rise of education systems in England, France and the USA*. Houndmills, UK: Macmillan.
Halbwachs, M. (1938). *Morphologie sociale*. Paris: Armand Colin.
Henriot van Zanten, A. (1990). *L'école et l'espace local: les enjeux des Zones d'Education Prioritaires*. Lyon, France: Presses universitaires de Lyon.
Kessler, M.-C. (1986). *Les grands corps de l'Etat*. Paris: Presses de la FNSP.
Laborier, P., & Trom, D. (2003). *Historicités de l'action publique*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
Lelièvre, C. (1994). *Histoire des institutions scolaires (1789–1989)*. Paris: Nathan.
Lelièvre, C. (1999). *Jules Ferry: la République éducatrice*. Paris: Nathan.
Lelièvre, C. (2002). *Les politiques scolaires mises en examen. Douze questions en débat*. Paris: ESF.
Lessard, C. (2004). Conclusion synthèse. In C. Lessard & P. Meirieu (Eds.), *L'obligation de résultats en éducation* (pp. 295–309). Bruxelles, Belgium: De Boeck.
Lessard, C., & Carpentier, A. (2015). *Politiques éducatives: la mise en œuvre*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
Lessard, C., Henripin, M., & Larochelle, M. (2004). *Les politiques d'éducation au Québec: 1990–2003*. Montreal, Canada: Université de Montréal, LABRIPROFCRIFPE http://www.labripro.umontreal.ca/index2.html
Lessard, C., Henripin, M., Larochelle, M., Cournoyer, É., & Carpentier, A. (2007). *Inventaire des politiques d'éducation au Québec portant sur l'enseignement primaire et secondaire de 1990 à 2006: analyse et impacts des politiques scolaires canadiennes sur le personnel scolaire (Projet 2)*. Montréal, Canada: Chaire de recherche du Canada sur les métiers de l'éducation, Faculté des sciences de l'éducation, Université de Montréal.
Lessard, C., & Levasseur, L. (2007). L'école publique généraliste est-elle en train de voir sa vocation transformée? *McGill Journal of Education, 42*, 337–353.
Maroy, C. (2006). *École, régulation et marché: une analyse de six espaces scolaires locaux en Europe* (1st ed.). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
Maroy, C. (2009). Convergences and hybridization of educational policies around "Post-Bureaucratic" models of regulation. *Compare. A Journal of Comparative and International Education, 39*(1), 71–84.
Maroy, C., & Kamanzi, P. C. (2017). Marché scolaire, stratification des établissements et inégalités d'accès à l'université au Québec. *Recherches socio-graphiques, LVIII*(3), 579–600.
Maroy, C., & Voisin, A. (2014). Une typologie des politiques d'*accountability* en éducation: l'incidence de l'instrumentation et des théories de la régulation. *Education Comparée, 11*, 31–58.
Meuret, D. (2007). *Gouverner l'école: Une comparaison France/Etats-Unis*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Mons, N., & Pons, X. (2006). *Les standards en éducation dans le monde francophone. Une analyse comparative*. Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Institut de recherche et de documentation pédagogique.
Nique, C. (1990). *Comment l'école devint une affaire d'État: 1815–1840*. Paris: Nathan.
Normand, R. (2011). *Gouverner la Réussite Scolaire: Une Arithmétique Politique des Inégalités*. Lyon, France/Berne, Switzerland: ENSL, Peter Lang.
Obin, J.-P. (1991). Politique éducative et projet d'établissement. *Education et pédagogies, 11*, 20–26.
Pelletier, G. (2013). Finlande-Québec au temps d'une décennie PISA: regards croisés de deux systèmes éducatifs. *Recherches en éducation, 16*, 38–47.
Pons, X. (2010). *Evaluer l'action éducative (Education & Société)*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
Pons, X. (2011). *L'évaluation des politiques éducatives (Que sais-je ?)*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
Pons, X. (2014). Le pilotage par les résultats en éducation en France: archéologie d'une formalisation administrative. *Education comparée, 11*, 59–81.
Pons, X. (2016). Tracing the French policy PISA debate: A policy configuration approach. *European Educational Research Journal, 15*(5), 580–597.
Prost, A. (1968). *Histoire générale de l'enseignement en France. 1800–1967*. Paris: Armand Colin.
Prost, A. (1986). *L'Enseignement s'est-il démocratisé?* Paris: PUF.
Prost, A. (1997). *Education, société et politiques: une histoire de l'enseignement en France de 1945 à nos jours*. Paris: Seuil.
Proulx, J.-P., (avec la collaboration de J.-P. Charland). (2009). *Le système éducatif du Québec. De la maternelle à l'université*. Montréal, Canada: Chenelière Education.
Quebec's Ministry of Education (QME). (1991). *Notre force d'avenir l'éducation: orientations 1991–1993 (Education: driving our future: 1991–1993 orientations)*. Québec, Canada: Ministère de l'éducation Québec.
Quebec's Ministry of Education (QME). (1996). *Les Etats généraux sur l'éducation 1995–1996: rénover notre système d'éducation: dix chantiers prioritaires: rapport final de la Commission des Etats généraux sur l'éducation*. (Rapport Bisaillon-Demers): Québec Ministère de l'éducation.
Quebec's Ministry of Education (QME). (1997). *Prendre le virage du succès plan d'action ministériel pour la réforme de l'éducation (A new direction for success: Ministerial plan of action for the reform of the education system)*. Québec, Canada: Ministère de l'éducation.
Quebec's Ministry of Education (QME). (2009). *La convention de partenariat. Outil d'un nouveau mode de gouvernance. Guide d'implantation*. Québec, Canada: Gouvernement du Québec.
Quebec's Ministry of Education (QME). (2015). *Indicateurs de l'éducation. Éducation préscolaire, enseignement primaire et secondaire* (Édition 2014). Québec, Canada: Gouvernement du Québec.
Quebec's Ministry of Education (QME). (2016). *Statistiques de l'éducation. Édition 2015 Éducation préscolaire, enseignement primaire et secondaire*. Québec, Canada: Gouvernement du Québec.
Robert, A. D. (2010). *L'école en France de 1945 à nos jours*. Grenoble, France: Presses universitaires de Grenoble.
Robert, B. (2009). *Les politiques d'éducation prioritaire: les défis de la réforme*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
Robert, M., & Tondreau, J. (1997). *L'école québécoise: Débats, enjeux et pratiques sociales. Une analyse de l'éducation pour la formation des maîtres*. Anjou, France: CEC.
Rocher, G. (2004). Un bilan du Rapport Parent: vers la démocratisation. *Bulletin d'Histoire politique, 12*(2), 117–128.
Rocher, T. (2008). Lire, écrire, compter: les performances des élèves de CM2 à vingt ans d'intervalle 1987–2007. *Note d'information, 08.38*, 1–6.
Schnapper, D. (1994). *La communauté des citoyens*. Paris: Gallimard.

Statistical Institute of Quebec. (2017). *Quebec handy numbers.* Retrieved at: http://www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/quebec-chiffre-main/pdf/qcm2017_an.pdf
Taylor, C. (1997). *Multiculturalisme, différence et démocratie*. Paris: Flammarion.
Thiesse, A.-M. (1999). *La création des identités nationales. Europe XVIIIè–XXè siècles*. Paris: Le Seuil.
Tondreau, J., & Robert, M. (2011). *L'école québécoise: débats, enjeux et pratiques sociales*. Anjou, France: Éditions CEC.
van Zanten, A. (2001). *L'école de la périphérie. Scolarité et ségrégation en banlieue*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
van Zanten, A. (2008). Régulation et rôle de la connaissance dans le champ éducatif en France. *Sociologie et sociétés, XL*(1), 69–92.
van Zanten, A. (2014). *Les politiques d'éducation* (3rd ed.). Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
Vergnioux, A. (2014). *Grandes controverses en éducation*. Brussels, Belgium: Peter Lang.

Chapter 3
Theoretical Framework

Christian Maroy and Xavier Pons

3.1 Introduction

The goal of our research is to provide a multilevel empirical comparison of two accountability policies—in France and in Quebec—which we have characterized as "soft" or "reflexive." These policies receive less attention in the international literature than policies in English-speaking countries. In this chapter, we describe our theoretical framework and what we mean by a multilevel approach to educational policies. This approach intends to consider the global influences which have played a role in their genesis but in situating these influences in their interactions with other more deep-rooted national institutional or political processes. Such processes shape and affect their manifestation in a specific trajectory embedded in the more long-term temporality of national education institutions and policies. However, this *trajectory* leading to vernacular forms of globalization (rather than a convergence of policies deriving from irresistible global discourse or forces) is also shaped by the processes of policy implementation at the intermediate level (regulatory authorities falling between the central authorities and local schools) or at the local level. More precisely, the orientations and local meaning of the policy are developed through the *mediations* which occur at the level of school boards (SBs) in Quebec and *académies* in France, when they respond to institutional expectations or prescriptions to "steer" or "manage" schools based on their results. In addition, they are conditioned by the *instrumentation* of this policy and by local (non) usages of devices and tools developed in the schools, depending on local contexts and interpretation—significant and strategic—of the sense of the policy which is being developed. These

C. Maroy (✉)
University of Montreal, Montreal, QC, Canada
e-mail: christian.maroy@umontreal.ca

X. Pons
University of Eastern-Paris Creteil, Paris, France
e-mail: ponsx@wanadoo.fr

C. Maroy, X. Pons (eds.), *Accountability Policies in Education*, Educational Governance Research 11, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-01285-4_3

mediations and instrumentations are embedded in local contexts and configurations of actors. They are inscribed in pre-existing institutional arrangements and norms which may prove to be resources as much as constraints in implementing the policy. Over time, they will in turn shape the trajectory of the policy, which is not merely the fruit of an interface between the national and the global. National/regional/local mediations and the choices of instrumentation at an intermediate or local level are also significant in the orientation and meaning of these trajectories.

Thus, our analytical framework based on a three-way conceptual approach—trajectory, mediation, and instrumentation—can be further developed by, on the one hand, situating it with respect to the key analytical issues of accountability in education (Sect. 3.2) and, on the other hand, providing further details about our theoretical sources which together comprise our analytical "toolbox" (Sect. 3.3). Finally, in Sect. 3.3.1, we will develop the three conceptual strands proposed—trajectory, mediations, and instrumentation—before pointing out some limitations entailed by the use of such concepts (Sect. 3.3.2).

3.2 Accountability in Education

Having defined the generic notion of accountability, we will explore four research trends which have arisen around the analysis of accountability policies in education and are rarely articulated in the literature: (1) a typological approach to actual accountability policies in terms of their orientations and the tools employed, (2) an analysis of meanings and macrosocial or global sources of the transformations in the governance and regulation of education systems that these policies incur, (3) an econometric evaluation of some effects of accountability policies on academic performance in terms of efficacy or equity, and (4) an analysis of the implementation and reception of these accountability devices at the level of local or intermediate actors and organizations.

3.2.1 Accountability: A Multilayered Concept

Accountability is an "appealing but elusive concept" (Bovens, 2007, p. 447) which assumes many meanings and refers to various practices depending on the social field or the academic discipline concerned (political science, financial accounting, public administration, or education). Reviewing the literature, Lindberg (2013) has counted "over 100 different 'subtypes' and usages" of the term.

This English term is related historically and semantically to the term "accounting" (Bovens, 2007) and, as such, is difficult to translate into other languages such as French (Broadfoot, 2000) or Slavic languages (Veselý, 2013). Indeed, it has a long tradition in political science, where it refers to the idea that "when a decision-making power is transferred from a principal (e.g. the citizens) to an agent (e.g. the

government), there must be a mechanism in place for holding the agent accountable for their decisions, and tools for sanctions" (Lindberg, 2013, p. 203).

Thus, the political term is related to representatives' obligation to justify themselves to the constituencies who elect them (at least in democratic regimes). At the same time, higher administrative officers (and their agents following the chain of command) should be held directly accountable by the government (sometimes the legislature). In these terms, accountability becomes a democratic tool for monitoring and controlling government and, furthermore, the administration's actions.

This meaning of accountability has broadened and also become more ambiguous, both in the academic literature and in public discourse, as public administration reforms have been undertaken in various countries under the influence of New Public Management (Hood, 1991), which situates accountability as a central device of good governance. In this context, the notion of accountability has become very popular but also polysemous. It has either become a synonym for loosely defined political goals (such as "good governance" or "democracy") or has been related to various "mechanisms for controlling and ensuring quality in public institutions" (Veselý, 2013, p. 5). However, Bovens proposes considering accountability not as a virtue, but as an analytical tool defined as "a relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct, the forum can pose questions and pass judgments, and the actor may face consequences" (Bovens, 2007, p. 450).

The advantage of this definition is that it can be used as an analytical tool structured around five operational questions to analyze and classify accountability features and tools:

(1) Who is accountable? Who should render accounts? It could be organizations, such as political institutions (government and government administration), public sector organizations (schools), or individuals (politicians, higher officers, school principals, teachers, etc.).
(2) To whom (which forum) is the account to be rendered? In answer to this question, Bovens distinguishes various types of accountability: (a) political accountability, when the forum comprises political actors or institutions, such as governments or constituencies; (b) managerial or administrative accountability, when the forum is the administration or public service organization hierarchy; (c) professional accountability, when the forum is a professional body, an audit office, or "chartered accountants" and accountability relates an actor to a professional peer; (d) social (or market) accountability, when the forum comprises actors from civil society, users of a service, clients, or interest groups (stakeholders); and (e) finally, legal accountability, when the forum consists of courts.
(3) What is the relation (or the type of obligation) between the actor and the forum? A vertical relation refers "to the situation where the forum formally wields power over the actor, perhaps due to the hierarchical relationship between actor and forum" (Bovens, 2007, p. 460); horizontal accountability occurs when an account is given to stakeholders without formal obligation, as is the case in social accountability where relations are based on a social or moral obligation.

Finally, a diagonal relation is an intermediate form (as is the case of accounts due to an audit or inspection body, without direct hierarchical power over the actor who is being held to account).

(4) and (5) Which aspect of his conduct (financial, procedural, and so forth) is the actor obliged to explain and provide justification? It could be based on inputs, processes, outputs, or effects of the actions taken. Moreover, these aspects can be evaluated on the basis of different criteria (i.e., equity, effectiveness, efficiency, conformity, transparency, or democracy) and diverse methods.

This polysemous notion of accountability has been used in various ways in education, as in other fields, and has paved the way for different approaches. We distinguish four of them in this chapter, given the focus of our research.

3.2.2 A Typological Approach to Orientations of Accountability Policies in Education

The first approach focuses on the specific features of accountability policies in the education field and leads to precisions concerning, first, the content of the new accountability policies in education and, then, how these policies vary across systems and countries. While accountability often refers to a social practice—"to be held to account" (Broadfoot, 2000; Leithwood et al., 1999; Jaafar & Anderson, 2007; Kogan, 1988; Leithwood et al., 1999)—various accountability approaches and tools are defined or compared by raising the same questions as Bovens: Who is accountable? To whom is the account owed? What is being accounted for? What are the consequences of providing an account?

Thus, in 1988, Kogan (1988) proposed a typology of models of accountability in education, based partly on the entity which exercises control, the actors to whom accounts must be rendered, and partly on the values and principles underpinning the legitimacy of accountability. In the model of public and hierarchical control ("public state control and managerialism"), control is exercised by an institutional authority (elected political representatives, or bureaucrats) which "holds people responsible," and the accountability is justified in the name of "liberal democratic" principles (political or administrative responsibility in a democratic state). In the "professional" model, control is delegated to a professional group, due to their expertise, and this group is then held responsible for the self-regulation of its members. Finally, in the "consumerist" model, it is the users/partners or the clients who exercise the right of control, in the name of a liberal market philosophy.

In an international literature review, Leithwood (Leithwood & Earl, 2000; Leithwood et al. 1999) describe a large panorama of accountability approaches and tools: market-based, decentralized decision-making, professional, and managerial accountability. Accounts are to be given by teachers, principals, or schools to various forums (a professional order, a professional community, a local community, a district, a state, or parents) about either the processes or the outputs of education, with various consequences.

In these typologies, accountability can concern inputs and processes, as well as outputs. However, in recent policies, mostly in the USA and England, accountability in education is increasingly understood in a narrower sense. Accountability is related to accounts to be given by schools and teachers about *results and outputs*, taking into account targets (in terms of qualification rate and performances in external exams) and standards (related to curriculum or evaluation) determined at the central level (the ministry or state level). These accounts are to be given to the chain of command (district or state) or to parents, on the basis of school and student performance assessment, related to various indicators of results.

This "new" accountability in education or a "performance-based accountability" system (Carnoy & Loeb, 2002) implies a shift from input-based political regulation toward output-based regulation, where student results constitute the linchpin of accountability systems:

> In principle, focusing on student performance should move states away from input regulations—judging schools based on the number of books in the library and the proportion of certified staff, for example—toward a model of steering by results—using rewards, sanctions, and assistance to move schools toward higher levels of performance. In other words, the educational accountability should focus schools' attention less on compliance with rules and more on increasing learning for students. (Elmore et al. 1996, p. 65 in Linn, 2000, p. 12)

Thus, performance-based accountability includes four elements: (1) standards (what students should learn); (2) a testing system (or large-scale assessment system), usually administered by an external body; (3) public information about test results and an account explaining their sources or causes; and (4) positive or negative consequences for schools (Harris & Herrington, 2006).

These performance-based accountability systems share common features in reference to the questions proposed by Bovens:

- Accounts are to be given by individuals (teachers, principals, or administrators) or organizations (schools or districts) to various organizations in the chain of command, such as districts or states, or to specialized agencies, such as inspection bodies.
- The accountability relationship is vertical. Less frequently, the relationship can be horizontal, geared toward the local community.
- Accountability is mostly based upon results or outputs of organizations (qualification and/or retention rate, students' performances in external assessments in key grades and subjects, etc.). However, traditional objects of accountability (with respect to rules and procedures and the use of budgets) do not disappear.
- These outputs are evaluated according to certain standards and measurable objectives (indicators, targets, and benchmarks), and the actors held to account have to explain or justify potential gaps between their results and these standards to the forum.
- Finally, the actors might have to face various consequences (symbolic or material) following this account. In particular, the literature has often contrasted high-stakes and low-stakes accountability devices (Carnoy & Loeb, 2002).

According to Figlio and Loeb (2011, p. 385), "the most-developed accountability systems operate in the U.S., England, and Chile and they are also the systems on which the overwhelming majority of academic research has been based." However, in other parts of the world, similar policies have been given other labels, such as *steuerung* policies (Altrichter, Heinrich, & Soukup-Altrichter, 2011), "steering policies" (de Landsheere, 1994), "testing regimes" (Lingard, Martino, & Rezai-Rashti, 2013), and "evaluation policies" (Buisson-Fenet & Pons, 2014).

Various typologies have been developed to distinguish among these new accountability policies. Harris and Herrington (2006), for example, distinguish two types of accountability characterizing some aspects of educational policies adopted in the USA in the last decades (1990–2005): government-based accountability and market-based accountability. Government-based accountability corresponds to "government efforts to measure the outcomes of students and schools, especially on the basis of student test scores, and to provide explicit rewards and punishments based on these measures" (Harris & Herrington, 2006, p. 217). Market-based accountability corresponds to policies providing parents with greater school choice. The basic assumption is that giving parents greater choice regarding the school attended by their children is the best way to develop competition between schools and enhance the quality of public schooling. These types of accountability tend to be in addition to traditional local public accountability, where school principals are held to account by district administrations, and elected SBs are accountable to their constituencies.

The accountability policies established by various education systems in the USA were also differentiated according to the level of sanctions and incentives adopted to encourage or constrain schools and teachers to develop their educational capacities and improve their students' results (Carnoy & Loeb, 2002Harris & Herrington, 2006). "High stakes" or "strong" forms of accountability go hand in hand with sanctions or incentives with serious consequences for the actors[1]; conversely, when these mechanisms of sanctions are less severe or absent, the literature refers to this as "low stakes" or "soft" accountability. In particular, such distinctions are used to differentiate among various US policies, in order to analyze their effects.

In a broader sense, Nathalie Mons and Vincent Dupriez distinguish accountability policies based on the theory of regulation that they incorporate in their orientations. Thus, they contrast "hard" accountability systems based on high-stakes sanctions, typical of certain US states, with "softer" and "reflexive" systems of accountability (Dupriez & Mons, 2011). In these systems, developed especially in France, Austria, and Belgium, it is a matter of confronting the organization or the teaching professional with their results, based on evaluation devices applied to the education system or individual schools, and then encouraging them to reflect on

[1] For example, this could be due to the results of external exams affecting access to a superior level of education for students and their parents; the publication of results for parents in a context of free choice; the taking over the control of the school or school district by a higher regulatory level, the threat to close a school, or the replacement of staff or management in the case of continuously weak results and a lack of improvement; or individual or collective financial bonuses associated with pedagogical performance.

these and improve their practices through various professional training and support measures (Mons & Dupriez, 2010).

Maroy and Voisin (2014) and Maroy (2015) also propose a theoretical typology of the diversity of rationales and policy tools used by accountability policies in various education systems. This typology is based on four dimensions and is an attempt to combine the criteria used by earlier typologies. Two bear on the characteristics of policy tools deployed to implement policies (the degree to which measures are aligned and the implications of accountability for the actors) and two others on the theory of change embedded in policy tools (the conception of the actors targeted by the policy and the theory of change concerning their behavior).

Concerning the degree of alignment (strong or weak) between the tools and levels of action of education systems (central, intermediate, or local), there can be a tight and narrow coupling between tools and levels of action (when standards set criteria and provide guidelines that should orient local practices). In contrast, weak alignment involves instruments that are loosely coupled with one another and/or between levels of action. Another dimension to the tools is that of the nature and strength of the consequences faced by actors (high or low stakes).

The two other dimensions of the typology bear on the theory of change and regulation underpinning policies. This theory is not necessarily made explicit in a developed discourse, although this may sometimes be the case.[2] Change theories are often embedded in the policy tools by which the policy is operationalized (Lascoumes & Le Galès, 2004). Change theory involves, on the one hand, the conception of the actor that the policy intends to regulate (viewed as a rational and utilitarian actor or instead as a "reflexive" and socially embedded actor) and, on the other hand, the external or internal character of measures or dispositions by which an educational authority seeks to change or regulate the behavior of a local actor. In certain types of accountability policy, policy ontology makes external measures key factors in the process of change and regulation—they are the pragmatic supports that tend to condition the orientation of individual or collective conduct from the outside. In contrast, other types of accountability policies grant greater importance to the interiority of actors, their ethos, and internalized dispositions, as key vectors and mediations in the process of improving school performance (Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999; Mangez, 2001).

Combining these dimensions, Maroy and Voisin distinguish four approaches (see Table 3.1) underlying accountability policies: regulation through strict accountability, regulation through neo-bureaucratic accountability, regulation through reflexive responsibilization and accountability, and regulation through soft accountability.

[2] Besides the influence of NPM, networks of experts were able to play a key role in the formulation of these theories. Concerning "soft accountability," Claude Thélot has, for example, theorized about the "mirror effect" in France (Pons, 2010). The role of the inspectorate in the conception of "self-evaluation" has been important in the Scottish case (Ozga & Grek, 2012). In Canada and the USA, economic theory has been very influential in the conception of "high-stakes accountability," while the reflexive model has been influenced in Ontario by authors like Fullan, Rincon-Gallardo, and Hargreaves (2015).

Table 3.1 Four approaches to regulation by results

	Regulation through "strict" accountability	Regulation through neo-bureaucratic accountability	Regulation through reflexive responsibilization and accountability	Regulation through "soft" accountability
Stakes for actors	High	Moderate to low	Moderate to high	Low
Alignment of tools and levels of action	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak
Conception of actor	Utilitarian	Utilitarian	Reflexive and socially situated	Reflexive and socially situated
Central mediation for the expected change	External devices (information, evaluation, control, and support in case of a problem)	External devices (information, evaluation, control and support)	External devices (information, evaluation, control and support) and actors' dispositions	Actors' dispositions, evaluation, and support measures
Examples	Texas, England	Quebec	Ontario, Scotland	Belgium, France

Adapted from Maroy (2015)

Finally, from our perspective, performance-based accountability policies or steering by results policies (Linn, 2000) intend to modify (to a lesser or greater extent) the set of coordination and control mechanisms established by the state and educational authorities in order to orient or regulate the behaviors of local actors (e.g., teachers and school principals). In this sense, these policies entail new forms of political regulation[3] of the education system to improve the system's effectiveness or equity (Maroy, 2009). As such, accountability policies share four common traits (Maroy, 2013): (1) they are embedded in a new policy paradigm whereby the school is conceived no longer as a core institution within society, but as a performative system of production (Ball, 2003b); (2) operational objectives of the school policy and system may be expressed in quantifiable data, which, in turn, become the standards and targets for the system; (3) various tools to assess student achievement are central to evaluating the outputs of the system; and (4) individual or collective actors at different levels of the system are held accountable for these results, with various consequences for them. Moreover, accountability policies are based on common policy tools (standards, assessment and testing tools, accountability

[3] Regulation is to be understood here in the broader sense, as in the French term *régulation* which is more all-encompassing than the formal regulation in English, translated by *réglementation* in French. We take the view that "social regulation" denotes multiple, contradictory, and sometimes conflicting processes for orienting the behaviors of actors and defining the rules of the game in a social system (Maroy, 2008). "Political regulation" by public authorities is not only institutionalized in legal mechanisms (in this case, political regulation essentially means formal or statutory regulation) but also, more recently, in incentives, evaluation, emulation, consultation, and accountability mechanisms.

mechanisms, consequences, incentives, sanctions, and rewards), even if the features and range of instruments used for accountability purposes can vary widely from one education system to another.

These typological approaches were very useful for us in identifying the constitutive properties of accountability policies in education, as mentioned above, to reflect on the specificities of our cases and to better position our contribution to the international literature (for instance, by providing a multilevel analysis whereas, in this academic literature, new accountability systems are often related to macro and global changes). Nevertheless, if these typologies remain the main purpose of the research and if they are simplified in the analysis, they can indirectly and paradoxically contribute to impoverishing the interpretation of isolated cases and the lessons drawn from them. For instance, is the French accountability policy only "reflexive?" Is it sufficient to define France as a low-stake accountability system? Is France bound to be regarded as an exception or a marginal case or can we learn other things from its analysis? On the other hand, is the Quebec accountability policy only defined by neo-bureaucratic features related to the successive bills on RBM?

That is why we have considered this first body of literature as a strong invitation to go beyond the typological way of thinking about accountability policies. We will paint a more complex picture, taking into account the mediations and local uses of the policy tools, as well as their evolution related to the trajectories of the policies.

3.2.3 The Macrosocial and Global Sources of Transformations of Modes of Governance and Regulation of Education Systems

Accountability policies in education cannot be isolated from other public policies (such as decentralization, school autonomy, and school choice) adopted in many countries and education systems in the last two or three decades. These reforms of school governance and regulation should be related to major evolutions subjecting governments to pressures or demands, in an at least partially converging sense, especially in the OECD industrialized countries (Ball, 1998).

- The development of economic globalization has accentuated business demands for greater efficiency in public education systems but also for greater attention to the economy's needs for particular skills. In this context, discourse about the needs of the "new knowledge economy" has led to an emphasis on the need to improve the public education system's effectiveness and efficiency (Brown, Lauder, & Ashton, 2008).
- The welfare state's crisis of legitimacy and funding and the rise of neoliberal political paradigms have raised questions about bureaucratic modes of managing public action and have led to an adoption of managerial concerns, heretofore characteristic of the private sector (preoccupations with efficiency and accountability), into the public sector. Indeed, the principles of New Public

Management (Hood, 1996) have had a major influence on public administration reforms and the development of decentralization and accountability policies in education. Nevertheless, it should be noted that these models have been implemented and recontextualized in various ways (see below, Chap. 5).

- An increasing social demand on the part of the middle classes has also emerged, favoring more quality, choice, and the individualization of education pathways. Aside from the influence of the increasing individualization of social ties, this demand has its source in middle-class anxiety in the face of the erosion of their social and professional positions (Ball, 2003a).
- There is also a phenomenon of globalization of education policies, at least in the form of the diffusion of reference models by various bodies, feeding the construction of new policy tools (in particular NPM and diverse post-bureaucratic models of governance (Maroy, 2012). Such models sometimes serve to inspire and sometimes to legitimize the construction of national policies, notably through the circulation of ideas favored or initiated by transnational organizations (OECD, European Union, etc.) and policy networks (Ball, 2012; Rizvi & Lingard, 2000).

More broadly, a number of studies have attempted to characterize the direction and meaning of the ongoing changes in contemporary education policies and the factors and processes underpinning these changes, in connection with the development of a performance-based accountability policy. Thus, several researchers have insisted on the shift from government to governance and the development of data-based governance tools (Normand & Derouet, 2009; Ozga, 2009). Others stress changes in normativity and theorize about the emergence of an "obligation of results" (Demailly, 2001; Lessard & Meirieu, 2008) and a new moral "performative" economy which affects expectations toward education professionals (Ball, 2003a).

English-speaking literature emphasizes the rise of a neoliberal logic in the governance of education (Whitty, Power, & Halpin, 1998) that of an "Evaluative State" and accountability (Broadfoot, 2000), the globalization of educational governance, and the interpenetration of scales in an increasingly complex multigovernance (Dale & Robertson, 2002) or the changing nature of the state (from the *Keynesian welfare state* to a *Schumpeterian workfare state*; Ball, 1997).

Therefore, these works offer partially divergent and complementary interpretations of the reasons behind these transformations. These reports of accountability policies are interesting and heuristic but difficult to test empirically or to hierarchize. These works usually look at the macroscopic level or favor an analysis of the "discourse," referentials, or transnational policy paradigms which underlie the evolution of education policies. They do not document their concrete and progressive implementation in the systems concerned, which often involve significant hybridization and bricolage (Campbell, 2004; van Zanten, 2008).

Now, only such a detailed analysis of the construction and implementation of these policies in concrete education systems can reveal their recontextualization, the plurality of logics at work, and their tensions and inconsistencies, once these policies are examined over time and through the complexity of the mediations and usages at the intermediate or local level. Our research strives to achieve such an

analysis, based on the sociology of public action, attentive to the diversity of actors and levels which contribute to the fabrication of public action (Commaille, 2006) while looking closely at the institutional processes which might condition or filter the action.

In other words, these external or internal evolutions and demands propelling governments toward the development of performance-based accountability systems do not lead to a single model of accountability policies. This is due to many factors that we will examine in this book, especially in Chap. 5. First of all, transnational models of accountability policies are recontextualized and translated into national policies in various ways. The international model could be subjected to idiosyncratic normative and cognitive "bricolage" that adapts and hybridizes the "pure model" into more legitimate models in specific societal contexts (Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012). Moreover, there are political struggles concerning the model to put in place. Finally, the actual policy trajectory of accountability policies is often conditioned by the socioeconomic context of the country and the path dependencies to societal or local institutions (Streeck & Thelen, 2005).

3.2.4 The Econometric Evaluation of the Effects of Accountability on Academic Performance

A number of works, drawing on an econometric and systemic analysis of school systems, aim to highlight the impact of accountability devices on student results.[4] While the rhetoric surrounding the development of accountability policies brings up their supposed positive impact on effectiveness and equity in education systems, evidence from the research is rather controversial and not so clear-cut.

How effective are they in terms of improving performance? To what extent can they result in more equity in the school system? In order to have a more comprehensive picture, we will also discuss some unintended effects of high-stakes accountability policies highlighted by this literature. As we will see, it is difficult to give a clear-cut answer to these questions. In this regard, we agree with Lee's (2008) recommendation: "(…) educational policy makers and practitioners should be cautioned against relying exclusively on research that is consistent with their ideological positions to support or criticize the current high-stakes testing policy movement. They should become aware of potential biases arising from the uncertainty and variability of evidence in the literature" (p. 629).

Thus, we present the conclusions of extensive literature reviews and longitudinal or macro statistical studies based on the Federal National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in the USA, state-driven tests, district-driven tests (Chicago, New York), and meta-analyzes that try to isolate and discuss the impact of high-stakes accountability systems on student performance and achievement gaps.

[4] In this section, we use elements published in a "think piece" by UNESCO (Maroy & Voisin, 2017).

3.2.4.1 Effectiveness and High-Stakes Accountability Systems

Slight Positive Effects on Student Performance but Variable and Unstable Over Time

The main findings of US econometric studies suggest that high-stakes accountability systems, particularly "more stringent accountability systems" (Harris & Herrington, 2006), have a positive effect on student achievement (Figlio & Loeb, 2011; Hanushek & Raymond, 2005; Harris & Herrington, 2006; Jacob, 2005; Lee, 2008). Yet this effect remains moderate (Lee, 2008). Moreover, there are important variations with respect to school grades and disciplines (Carnoy & Loeb, 2002; Chiang, 2009; Figlio & Loeb, 2011; Jacob, 2005; Lee, 2008; Mons, 2009). Achievement gains are greater for higher school levels, possibly because these grades are offered the largest incentives in order to improve student performance (Jacob, 2005, p. 772). They also tend to be greater in mathematics than in reading or other disciplines tested (Jacob, 2005; Lee, 2008; Treisman & Fuller, 2001 in Mons, 2009; Dee and Jacob 2009 in Figlio & Loeb, 2011).

Furthermore, achievement gains do not remain stable over time (Chiang, 2009; Lee, 2008; Mons, 2009). In this respect, as pointed out by Lee (2008, p. 619): "the volatility of gain scores requires that one look at changes in performance over the long run."

Varied Results Depending on Specific Mechanisms and Tools

The impact on student achievement also differs depending on the specific mechanisms and tools at the heart of accountability systems. Three main instruments and mechanisms are usually studied: (1) the use of information for accountability purposes at the school level (Bruns, Filmer, & Patrinos, 2011), report cards, publication of test results, and ranking of schools; (2) the introduction of high-stakes testing; and (3) the system of incentives, sanctions, and rewards targeted at different levels (teachers, schools, and district levels).

Considering the effect of report cards (the publication of information regarding school results, possibly with student characteristics and breakdowns by subgroups), the assumption is that publishing student and school results allows the public to identify low-performing schools and districts and possibly leads to better performance. The "scarlet letter" effect "would suggest that educators wish to avoid and will respond to stigmatization regardless of other incentives" (Harris & Herrington, 2006, p. 220). However, analysis of the core literature leads to mixed conclusions: as an example, Bishop et al. (2006 in Harris & Herrington, 2006), Hanushek and Raymond (2005), and Carnoy and Loeb (2002) found that the gains in NAEP are greater for states that use report cards, but Harris and Herrington (2004 in Harris & Herrington, 2006) found no effect. Finally, it is difficult to reach a definitive conclusion on the positive effect of report cards on achievement gains.

Conversely, high-stakes testing, particularly promotion and graduation exams (PGE) and state high school exit examinations (HSEEs), seems to have a positive impact on student achievement (Carnoy & Loeb, 2002; Harris & Herrington, 2006; and Neill 1998 in Grodsky, Warren, & Kalogrides, 2009). For Harris and Herrington (2006) indeed, PGE is a "key player" in enhanced student achievement.

Research consistently shows that incentives, sanctions, and rewards for schools and individuals attached to high-stakes testing may have the potential to increase student achievement. This is the conclusion of system-wide studies carried out by Chiang (2009) and Reback (2008) (as well as Hanushek and Raymond's (2005) cross-state analysis and Harris and Herrington's (2006) literature review).

Nevertheless, there is strong evidence that the introduction of sanctions linked to high-stakes testing has also led to the development of certain strategic behavior at the school or individual levels. Consequently, many authors have expressed concerns about this mechanism.

3.2.4.2 Equity and High-Stakes Accountability Systems

One of the key objectives in the introduction of high-stakes accountability systems in the USA is also to reduce the achievement gap between students in a context of strong achievement inequalities (Carnoy & Loeb, 2002; Harris & Herrington, 2006), where underperforming groups are traditionally subgroups of students "defined by their race, income and disability status" (Figlio & Loeb, 2011, p. 395).

A Plausible Negative Impact with Variations Depending on Social and Ethnic Subgroups

Leaving aside some discrepancies among study conclusions, a consensus emerges regarding the lack of effect of high-stakes accountability policies to narrow the achievement gap (Figlio & Loeb, 2011; Hanushek & Raymond, 2005; Harris & Herrington, 2006; Lee, 2008). There is little evidence that accountability policy has a positive impact on equity. On the contrary, it even tends to increase the performance gap between schools and students, mostly between advantaged and disadvantaged. Hanushek and Raymond's (2005) conclusions show that the black-white achievement gap has widened since the introduction of high-stakes accountability systems, while Dee's (2002 in Carnoy & Loeb, 2002) conclusions highlight "reductions in educational attainment, particularly for black students."

In a market context, with competition between schools, high-stakes accountability mechanisms also tend to increase social and ethnic segregation between schools (Hanushek & Raymond, 2005) and, as a consequence, the stigmatization of low-performing schools and students. Studies have shown that such mechanisms lower the capacity of low-performing schools to attract and retain highly qualified teachers (Figlio & Loeb, 2011; Finnigan & Gross, 2007; Wolf & Janssens, 2007) and consistently increase staff turnover (Figlio & Loeb, 2011). Such evidence mat-

ters if we assume that teacher excellence is one of the key factors in the quality of schooling and that school segregation is negatively correlated with equity in education systems (Demeuse & Baye, 2009; Dumay, Dupriez, & Maroy, 2010).

3.2.4.3 Strategic Behaviors, Gaming Practices, and Unintended Effects

Many authors have also highlighted the fact that high-stakes accountability systems, particularly sanctions and rewards, lead to the development of strategic behaviors and provide incentives for actors (at the state, district, school, or individual level) "to game the system" (Heilig & Darling-Hammond, 2008; Lee, 2010). Under accountability pressure, actors tend to adopt gaming strategies to artificially improve test outcomes. These gaming strategies could range from the falsification of student and school results and the exclusion of low-performing students from testing and from school to the increase of student retention in lower grades, as well as the placement of weaker students in special needs education or "limited English proficiency" categories, resulting in their ineligibility for high-stakes testing (Figlio & Loeb, 2011; Ladd & Lauen, 2010; Linn, 2000; Mons, 2009; Webb, 2005).

In a context of high-stakes testing, "given the consequences attached to test performance in certain subjects, one might expect teachers and students to shift resources and attention toward subjects included in the accountability program" (Jacob, 2005, p. 786). The very well-documented phenomenon of "teaching to the test" consists of concentrating learning activities and taught contents on test preparation. It leads to a focus on short-term learning outcomes and a reduction of the taught curriculum, particularly for low-performing students. The shift could also result in increased attention paid to students who are more likely to improve their performance, the ones just below proficiency level (Ladd & Lauen, 2010). Moreover, the threat of sanctions also affects teacher motivation and increases teacher and student stress (Finnigan & Gross, 2007; Mons, 2009). These collateral effects of accountability policies could lead to a downward cycle.

In conclusion, we can say that finding strong evidence of the efficacy of these accountability policies remains problematic since (1) empirical studies are conducted from various theoretical and epistemological perspectives and (2) most comparative evaluation studies focus on the effects of high-stakes accountability systems, mainly in the USA. Moreover, because isolating the effects of system-wide reforms represents a methodological challenge, studies often focus on key-related tools such as high-stakes testing and incentives for actors; and (3) fewer studies have looked at *soft accountability* or *reflexive accountability* systems.

Furthermore, a number of these studies focus on the officially expected effects in the main subjects for which external "tests" exist (mathematics, sciences, and mother tongue); and some of the positive results of these policies could be related to unexpected or perverse effects of strategies to game the system adopted by students, teachers, or managers in school authorities, in a context of "high-stakes accountability" (Mons, 2009).

More broadly, while these studies identify some effects, they are incapable of theorizing about the processes through which performance-based accountability policies produce these changes in schools and classrooms. In other words, their only theory to explain the action of students or teachers is narrowly utilitarian and economic. Moreover, they assume that the same accountability policies are applied uniformly in all regions and localities of the same school system, although it would be important to contrast the policies according to their theories of action and their instrumentation and, above all, their local implementation.

Indeed, an entire research trend in the analysis of public action in education has shown that local interpretations and translations of a national policy at the intermediate level deserve attention (Cattonar, Lessard, & Maroy, 2010; Lessard & Desjardins, 2009; Maroy & Demailly, 2004). The same can be said for micro-social processes which contribute to shaping the local reception and enactment by a SB, a local administration in a French *académie*, or a school. Policies are not only constructed at the central level. Local and intermediate actors, both collective and individual, matter (Coburn, 2001). This activity of "sensemaking" of reforms is not only influenced by actors' representations, as well as their cognitive and normative frames (Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002), but also by organizational and social contexts: the modes of leadership and collaboration in the schools (Dumay, 2009) and the social and academic composition of schools. We will now turn to this type of research.

3.2.5 Analysis of the Implementation and Local Reception of Accountability Policies

These studies concentrate on the implementation of accountability policies. They draw on a variety of theoretical frameworks (micro-political, neo-institutionalist, or socio-cognitive) and adopt approaches that either claim to be neutral or, based on more normative stances, with critical perspectives or on the contrary, to advocate decision-making and implementation. These works develop a sufficiently broad framework to account for the processes by which accountability policies produce their effects at the local or intermediate level and, in this sense, go beyond econometric studies.

Thus, the policies of external evaluation and steering by results (*pilotage par les résultats*) were analyzed, especially in France, from a micro-political perspective focused on the power relationships among actors (Ball, 1987; Friedberg, 1993), because "evaluation is not merely a technical practice; it is a strategic and political practice" (Demailly, 2003, p. 116). Indeed, there are stakes for local actors who experience the advantages and disadvantages of the implementation and effects of such evaluation policies. Consequently, the implementation of evaluation and accountability devices is analyzed as a process of negotiation inscribed in power relationships. Thus, Demailly, Gadrey, Deubel, and Verdière (1998) observed the

implementation of an "audit" within the *académie* of Lille (France) and describe the use of evaluation by teachers, school heads, and inspectors. Barrère (2006) approached this topic from the viewpoint of school heads. Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe (1998) also applied a "micro-political" approach to the use of evaluation in schools in Flanders. Actors have multiple interests (material, professional, organizational, and cultural) which should be taken into consideration in order to understand why an inspectors' audit is well received or rejected. Such strategic studies of the reception of performance-based accountability policies allow for an analysis of collateral and unexpected effects on schools or their professionals. Power relationships are sometimes embedded in multiple interdependent networks that exist among intermediate actors. Such configurations of local public actions largely predetermine the form and intensity of the enrolment power of accountability instruments which are implemented, for example, in French *académies* (Buisson-Fenet & Pons, 2012).

Studies on the reception of soft accountability policies have emerged recently (in France, Belgium, and Switzerland). Following what has been labeled as the "implementation turning point" (Lascoumes & Le Galès, 2007; Lessard & Carpentier, 2015; van Zanten, 2014), they focus on teachers and management at the school level. The heart of the question is often the nature of teachers' experience and their relationship to reforms, external evaluation, and accountability (Cattonar, Dumay, & Maroy, 2013; Yerly, 2014). In addition, studies also examined school heads' strategies, their use of new policy tools, their adoption or rejection of new pedagogical roles toward teachers (Barbana, Dellisse, Dumay, & Dupriez, 2016; Barrère, 2006; Barrère, 2009; Dupriez & Malet, 2013), the analysis of public controversies around external evaluation practices and their local repercussions (Dutercq, 2001; Dutercq & Lanéelle, 2013), and, more broadly, the effects of New Public Management on professionals (Demazière, Lessard, & Morrissette, 2013).

More rarely has the role of actors at the level of intermediate regulatory bodies been investigated, especially to demonstrate that voluntary and incremental enrolment of schools can be more effective than bureaucratic coordination in fostering efficient implementation of the policy, in particular from the perspective of pedagogical monitoring by school heads following external evaluations (Dumay, Cattonar, Maroy, & Mangez, 2013; Maroy, Mangez, Dumay, & Cattonar, 2012).

Generally, these French studies assume an axiologically neutral stance, even if their relationship to the reforms and policies may vary. A number of more critical works have also emerged in recent years (Garcia & Montagne, 2011). Sometimes claiming to stem from a new "critical sociology," they tend to consider accountability policies as proof of the submission of education to the principles of neoliberalism, according to which the state itself acts at the behest of the market. This submission would be accompanied by a mishandled education institution's internalization of the social norm of capitalism, according to which schools must now produce students equipped with the skills expected by the labor market, rather than train the autonomous citizens of tomorrow (e.g., Laval, Vergne, Clément, & Dreux, 2012). Another approach consists of revealing the phenomena of domination at

work in New Public Management, as well as the perverse effects of this doctrine, on the basis of empirical studies or through more philosophical reflections.[5]

A very great number of studies on the implementation or the enactment of various accountability policies have been conducted and published in the English-speaking literature.[6] Therefore, we will restrict ourselves to merely indicating broad trends, without undertaking a comprehensive literature review (for a review, see Falabella, 2014; Verger & Parcerisa, 2017).

North American studies analyze diverse strategies for implementing accountability policies, with a focus on the intermediate level (school districts and intermediate bodies), on school management, or on the reception and cognitive and practical appropriation of these policies by teachers.

Therefore, the roles of intermediate levels, of states or school districts and their managers in the management and monitoring of change expected by US federal policies—in particular the *No Child Left Behind Act*, *Race to the Top*, or *Comprehensive School Reform Program*—have been the subject of numerous studies, especially from the perspective of improving their efficacy (Shannon & Bylsma, 2004). Thus, Sykes and colleagues stress the multiple roles (policy initiators, interpreters, and enactors) that districts can play in the implementation of policies and the improvement of students' learning (Sykes, Schneider, & Plank, 2009), while others raise questions about how individuals in districts make sense of evidence-based practices promoted in schools or districts by current US policies (Coburn & Talbert, 2006). Amanda Datnow stresses the varying coordination of a number of policies and levels of power (federal, state, and district) and its impact on the implementation of accountability policies, especially as concerns "underperforming" schools. She shows that the desirable "co-construction" of policies by these different levels of power may not happen (Datnow, 2006; Datnow & Park, 2009). From an analysis of micro-policy games, Betty Malen notes the diversity in school districts' strategies for implementing a governmental policy (Malen, 2006). James Spillane and colleagues also stress the importance of the "sensemaking" of reforms by school district managers and their variable significance (Spillane et al., 2002; Spillane, Reiser, & Gomez, 2006). Meredith Honig draws theoretical conclusions from such studies, highlighting the complexity of policy implementation and the necessity of adopting a contingent and dynamic approach which simultaneously takes account of the local contexts, the actual populations concerned, and the content of the policy (Honig, 2006).

[5] Issue number 2010/1–2 of the journal *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie* entitled "Ce qu'évaluer voudrait dire. Variations anthropologiques et sociologiques sur l'évaluer'" provide a number of major contributions to this type of discussion.

[6] Indeed, it is noteworthy that *policy implementation* or the analysis of "strategies of educational change" constitutes completely distinct fields of research in North America, as indicated by studies or handbooks which try to produce an appraisal of the available knowledge from a perspective of practical assistance for change and decision-making (Hargreaves, Lieberman, Fullan, & Hopkins, 2010; Honig, 2006; Sykes et al., 2009). This research domain has not been as clearly defined as such in the Francophone world.

Moreover, the analysis of the role of school heads in the implementation of reforms has also been widely analyzed, especially in research on "school effectiveness" and "school improvement." In particular, through either normative or empirical analysis, attention is brought to the exercise of instructional or transformational leadership which principals are supposed to be developing in a context of increasing accountability (Leithwood (2001), Hallinger (2003), and Scheerens (2012)). Thru the presentation of a large range of national case studies (Asian, European, Oceania, American countries), Easley II and Tulowitzki (2016) are questioning national accountability policies from the point of view of the challenges and possibilities they offer for school leadership. Other studies question whether accountability policies disseminated by inspectorates contribute to improving the functioning of schools and of leadership (Altrichter & Kemethofer, 2015). The role of school heads as mediators between external expectations or pressures (quality, accountability, competition) and internal context of schools has been emphasized in the US context (Spillane & Kenney, 2012), in Nordic countries (Moos, 2009; Skedsmo & Mausethagen, 2016), in Chile (Weinstein, Raczynski, & Hernández, 2016), and in the European context (Ball & Maroy, 2009). The process of sensemaking by school leaders has been emphasized (Spillane et al., 2002).

More recently, it is the mediation of organizational instruments and routines (Spillane, 2012) put in place at the school level that are the focus of attention, in terms of their effects on the process of change and policy implementation. More specifically, databases and their uses are the center of increasing attention (Coburn & Turner, 2012; Spillane, Parise, & Sherer, 2011). Indeed, the role of "data infrastructure" and "social technologies" (as large-scale assessment and accountability systems) is also more and more recognized as key drivers of change within various global or national policies (Sellar, 2015; Imsen, Blossing, & Moos, 2017, for Nordic countries).

The context of the school is also the object of studies underlining the differentiated effects of accountability policies on the response of the schools, according to their status (in probation or well performing) (Diamond & Spillane, 2004; Mintrop, 2004; Mintrop & Suderman, 2009 in US context) or the market position or the intake of the school (in Chile, Falabella, 2014; in Francophone Belgium, Barbana et al., 2016).

Some recent research conducted by Braun, Ball, and Maguire has both an empirical and theoretical goal. Conducting four school case studies in England, they aim to produce "a theory of the policy enactment," showing the active role of local actors in the interpretation and the translation of competing policies, among them accountability policies. Beyond the active "interpretation" of discourses by local actors, they insist on the translation of the policies into moving local texts, tools, and artifacts. Various positions of actors and the role of local school contexts (intake, professional, institutional) are also underlined (Ball, Maguire, Braun, & Hoskins, 2011; Braun, Maguire, & Ball, 2010; Braun, Ball, & Maguire, 2011; Braun, Ball, Maguire, & Hoskins, 2011; Maguire, Braun, & Ball, 2011).

As for the most critical works on accountability policies (in the USA, the UK, or Europe), they underscore the significance of the implementation and monitoring of

"instruments of surveillance" (Bushnell, 2003; Ranson, 2003) and of regulation by numbers (Ball, 2015; Grek, 2008). These devices are based, to varying degrees, on hierarchical and vertical relations or may be more widely distributed among all the actors. For instance, certain studies highlight an approach whereby inspection bodies stigmatize underperforming schools (Thrupp, 1998), while others stress the stakes and symbolic violence at play in the more insidious process of collective self-evaluation from which schools cannot escape (Ozga, 2009; Ozga & Grek, 2012).

A number of studies have also examined the effects of accountability policies on teachers' professionalism, in particular, the usage by teachers of evaluations of their students' results, and their actual effects on pedagogical practices. In a qualitative meta-synthesis of studies in the high-stakes US context, Au shows a predominant trend toward the contraction and fragmentation of the taught curriculum and also teacher-centered pedagogy (Au, 2007). Other literature reviews stress negative impacts as teaching to the test, and cheating, and, to varying degrees, tighter coupling (or decoupling) of institutional expectations and practices (Hellrung & Hartig, 2013; Maier, 2010; Rozenwajn & Dumay, 2014). Other studies focus on the redefinition of the roles and identities which institutions expect of teachers but also of school leaders, both in North America (Anderson & Cohen, 2015; Hall & McGinity, 2015) and in the EU (Ball, 2003a; Braun et al., 2010; Czerniawski, 2011; Evetts, 2008; Gewirtz, Mahony, Hextall, & Cribb, 2008; Muller & Hernandez, 2010; Osborn, McNess, Broadfoot, 2000). Similar research is emerging in the Francophone European context (Dupriez & Malet, 2013; Dutercq & Maroy, 2017).

This type of analysis emphasizes the normative transformations of teaching professionalism and, more broadly, shifts in the meaning of local educational action resulting from the interplay of discourses from central authorities, as well as artifacts for the local enactment of tools of governance (Maguire et al., 2011). The transformations of actors' social relations and identities are here considered as the product of shifts, both cognitive and normative, which affect actors' possible and legitimate fields of action and, therefore, their ability to act in their daily professional lives.

Therefore, these studies all have something to contribute since they underscore the need to analyze the enactment of accountability policies to enhance our understanding of their modus operandi. They attach great importance to the strategic, cognitive, and normative dimensions of the processes at work in the implementation of performance-based accountability policies, taking also into account the school's contexts. Moreover, the effects investigated concern the instrumental aspect and efficacy of school systems and organizations (especially with the question of coupling/decoupling) in the case of research oriented toward an effective improvement of the school (and student learning), while more critical research, or that inspired by neo-institutionalist sociology or the sociology of professional groups, emphasize the transformation of the institutional foundations of education and the transformation and reshaping of professional identities that these transformations entail for education personnel. More broadly, this critical approach also examines the political and policy significance of new modes of governance that these policies entail. In fact, this research stresses a key dimension of the analysis: evaluation or account-

ability practices involve political conceptions of governance of the school system, visions of the management of a local school, and normative conceptions of education in general (goals, means, and conceptions of justice and of efficacy) which are enacted by the discourses and practices of agents responsible for their implementation.

Nonetheless, these studies suffer from a twofold limitation. The first is that they are usually centered on a single level of analysis (intermediate or local) and tend sometimes to be satisfied with a summary presentation of the content of the policy and of the institutional environment under analysis. This could either result in exaggerating the changes under way (or underestimating them) or in attributing most of the process of change to a single level of analysis and action, thus neglecting part of the picture.

Another shortcoming is that some of them adopt a normative stance—either critical or one of problem-solving to help improve the decision-making, which tends then to either accentuate the effects of certain transformations in order to denounce them or minimize the change and focus attention on all the obstacles to change. The analysis of the sensemaking processes or the mediations of organizational tools or routines necessary for successful policy implementation could be flawed in being to some degree "value-free." They study cognitive and institutional mediations concerning the policy implementation, without always asking about the political, social, and educational effects or meanings of the changes at play.

3.3 The Theoretical Ambition of a Multilevel Approach

3.3.1 Challenges and Analytical Issues

Our overview of the literature on the issue has brought out the fact that research on changes in modes of governance at the global level has remained relatively macroscopic and centered, above all, on paradigms inspiring the policies. The weakness part of this research lies in the reification or simplification of the processes of change which are apprehended as top-down movements while overlooking the mediations at work at all levels—especially at the intermediate and local level—and the various paths to effective change of organizations and education institutions. Sometimes generalizing from particular national cases, especially cases from English-speaking countries, they are also not sufficiently attentive to the empirical diversity of current policies, which existing typologies nevertheless serve to highlight. The latter, on the other hand, have a static character which tends to neglect or overlook the processes at work in policy paradigms' shifts, or the transformations of instruments and implementation processes.

As for the qualitative studies, they contextualize and complexify the analysis of the implementation/enactment of these policies, emphasizing the role of local actors, the sensemaking of school leaders and teachers, and the role of schools'

contexts on the attended or unattended effects of the policy. They underline the effects of the policies on pedagogical practices or curriculum or on the professional identities or social relations within schools. However, they are usually limited to the most local reception of the policy or are concentrated on a single level of change, even though some researchers try to articulate theoretically the interplay of various levels of analysis (Braun, Ball, & Maguire, 2011; Braun, Ball, Maguire, et al., 2011). Furthermore, they are rarely comparative (Muller & Hernandez, 2010 or Maier, 2010 being exceptions) and do not allow us to consider variations in these policies and their forms in different educational and policy contexts.

For their part, critical studies are sometimes flawed in seeking to illustrate on a local level a dynamic of macrosocial transformation (the discourse of neoliberalism, of New Public Management, etc.) which is then overestimated. Thus, an entire literature insists on multiple turning points[7] affecting the world of education while overestimating the homogeneity of the local impact or unequivocal character of such turning points.

Finally, econometric studies shed no much light on the modus operandi and conditions of the legitimacy and efficacy of different types of accountability policies, and they often remain quite controversial when it comes to their effects, in terms of both equity and efficacy.

Our research project aims to go beyond these limits and offer a comparative analysis of the implementation processes of performance-based accountability in the French and Quebec secondary school systems since the early 2000s. The comparison will allow us to highlight the role of national, intermediate, and local mediations in shaping the direction (orientation and meaning) of these policies.

We intend to propose a sufficiently generic theoretical framework that will be applicable to different empirical contexts, allowing all possible flexibility, to be able to take into account any particularly strong dimension (e.g., the professional dimension of the instrumentation in France). This framework is structured so as to consider a number of levels of analysis.[8] Thus, it aims to go further than static and

[7] Here we refer, among others, to the "shift" to a "performance evaluation nexus" (Clarke, 2004), the "move" from "regulative" to "inquisitive" and "meditative" practices (Jacobsson, 2006), the "comparative turn" (Martens, 2007), the "quality turn" (Segerholm, 2012), the "topological turn" (Lury, Parisi, & Terranova, 2012), etc.

[8] Nonetheless, our multilevel analysis intends to distinguish itself with regard to the notion of "multilevel governance." In political science, this notion is especially used as a descriptive tool to (1) go beyond the debate between supranationalists and intergovernmentalists to reflect on the European construction (Jeffery, 1997) and highlight the bargaining between the commission and member states (Marks, 1992, 1993); (2) introduce, through a generic notion, an empirical analysis of a given sector such as agricultural and rural policies (e.g., Le Pape & Smith, 1998) or a reflection on the evolution of the political responsibility (Papadopoulos, 2001); (3) stress the emergence of a decisive new scale of the implementation of public action such as regional and infranational governments in the European Union (Hooghe, 1995) or like the role of national bodies in a bottom-up approach to European construction (Jeffery, 1997); or even (4) insist on new modes of structuring actors in the policy process, in networks, for example (Le Galès & Thatcher, 1995). With just a few exceptions (Palau, 2011; Smith, 2004), this notion has seldom been conceptualized, perhaps because, for many authors, it stems from a pleonasm.

typological analyses, emphasizing trajectories, in which factors behind inertia or path dependencies, as well as factors and actors behind change—both in terms of institutions and of the actors in the game—are all taken into account.

3.3.2 A Plural Toolbox

We use a plural theoretical toolbox for the analysis of education policy (making and implementation), combining two main perspectives.

The first is the French *sociologie de l'action publique* which tends to emphasize actors' games at various levels and scenes that matter for the making and implementation of policy, underlining that these actors have various interests, sources of power, and identities, that they could interpret and make sense of the policy in various ways, and that in the policy process, political processes—impositions, compromises, struggles, etc.—are very important. Being sometimes regarded as the French version of policy analysis in political science (Halpern, Hassenteufel, & Zittoun, 2018)—even if it is developing in several European countries—this sociology of public action integrates many different theoretical approaches of the policy process, which all have in common an extension of policy analysis from the action of governments to the numerous policy actors contributing to producing public action. This shift led French researchers to profoundly ground their analysis in the sociological tradition. Initially strongly focused on cognitive and organizational processes (Smith, 1999), this rapidly diversified from the 1980s and, since the end of the 1990s, covered a growing number of policy sectors such as education (Buisson-Fenet, 2007; Commaille & Jobert, 1998; Maroy & Doray, 2008; Muller, 2000; van Zanten, 2014).

The second one is the North American neo-institutionalist approach, either organizational or sociohistorical. It stresses that institutions—understood broadly as rules, norms, and cognitive frames (Scott, 1995)—matter, due to the obstacles or barriers that they can represent for certain policy solutions or political games while at the same time supplying resources for action. Institutional arrangements are constraints, resources, and objects of public action.

The tension between these two analytical traditions,[9] which we hope proves productive, has allowed us to identify three research issues in order to take account of variations in performance-based accountability in each education system through a comparative analysis of (1) the *trajectory* of these policies; (2) *mediations* in their national, regional, or local construction; and (3) *policy tools* used to operationalize the public action or policy. These objectives lead to *three conceptual and empirical entry points for investigation* (trajectories, mediations, and instrumentation) which are developed in the following Sect. (3.3.1). More specifically, as concerns the *trajectory* of these policies, we have paid close attention to the internal processes of the

[9] Moreover, this could actually be done within an analytical tradition. From now on, the sociology of public action draws upon a number of analytical frameworks of neo-institutionalist approaches.

political systems (cognitive and policy bricolage; political games and alliances but also institutional processes) which have affected the national translation and hybridization of transnational models (Maroy, 2006; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004), in each society's particular, historical context. The analysis of *mediations* conditioning the implementation of performance-based accountability draws on Francophone research concerned with the usage and local reception of external evaluation policies and studies giving due importance to strategic and normative dimensions of local actors' behaviors. We will also refer to North American theories concerning the "implementation of educational policies" (Honig, 2006), with an emphasis on micro-political theories (Malen, 2006) and a neo-institutionalist framework, which theorize the conditions, stages, and actors engaged in the processes of deinstitutionalization/reinstitutionalization of organizational or pedagogical practices (Greenwood, Suddaby, & Hinings, 2002; Powell & Di Maggio, 1991) and their conditions of local legitimization (Suchman, 1995). Finally, the analysis of instrumentation is based on a plural sociology of policy instruments (Lascoumes & Le Galès, 2004; Pons, 2010). Indeed, accountability policies are strongly equipped and based on tools which appear as techniques: tests, indicators, "practical guides," but also "conventions" and "contracts" between the partners of public action. Now, all these tools must not be considered merely from a functional perspective, reducing them to neutral techniques or management tools, but as components of public action. Certain of these tools (indicators and quantified evaluations of school results) constitute what Pons and van Zanten (2007) refer to as "knowledge-based regulation tools" which, in the field of education, become instruments of "governance by numbers" (Ozga, 2009). These tools should be analyzed in their constitutive dimensions (content, cognitive, and normative orientations) but also in their uses by actors at different levels of action (Akrich, Callon, & Latour, 2006).

3.4 Three Conceptual and Empirical Entry Points

Our theoretical framework is based on three concepts, the construction and stabilization of which have required drawing upon various analytical notions and traditions. Each conceptual entry point allows us to further our study and comprehension of the other two. We could even contend that, according to the questioning chosen, each is liable to subsume the others: for example, it is necessary to work on the processes of mediation and instrumentation to grasp the trajectory of a policy of accountability; it is difficult to interpret the processes of mediation at work without situating them in the trajectories of public action deployed at different levels, since the researcher risks forgetting an important dimension of the analysis of the processes of instrumentation of accountability at the school level if account is not taken of mediations at work at all system levels (e.g., the policy choices of intermediate authorities, etc.). Thus, this theoretical framework is not conceived as a "succession" of three conceptual entry points but rather as their articulation, if possible, dialectical.

3.4.1 Trajectory

Our research first rests on the concept of education policy trajectories (Ball, 1994; Ball, 1997). This approach[10] aims to grasp the various processes and mechanisms by which networks of national and transnational actors piece together and reconstruct institutional and practical principles from the national repertoire, selectively and each time anew. Along with these principles, they may also choose elements from the transnational repertoire of ideas and public action tools, such as the "quasi-market" and "New Public Management" (Hood, 1991). From a methodological point of view, this public policy trajectory approach "trace(s) through the development, formation and realization of those policies from the context of influence, through policy text production, to practices and outcomes" (Ball, 1997, p. 266). The trajectory of public policy is, thus, observed within a given political context and school system, increasingly transnational in scope (Dale, 2006). Yet a trajectory is also comprised of effective policy orientations, from the policy's gestation period to its daily, local implementation. These orientations are the product of multiple recontextualizations of the policy's "text" by actors situated at several levels of action. The policy's trajectory is, therefore, tied to its successive interpretations and to its outcomes, particularly in terms of social justice and equality.

We argue that a policy's trajectory depends on the combination of three processes, often intertwined empirically but separate from an analytical standpoint: (1) path dependence on earlier choices, due not only to the viscosity of institutions (Pierson, 1994; Pierson, 2001) but also to actor mobilizations (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010; Pierson, 1994); (2) a bricolage construction, whereby education action is developed in the context of negotiations and struggles among actors; and (3) the interpretation, by certain national actors, of policy ideas and instruments circulating on a transnational level. These three factors help to explain the singularity of education policy at a time of globalization and transnational circulation.

First, public action in education is linked to specific, evolving domestic problematization and to the sedimentation of tools that may have various sources and are part of long-term transformations. As in other policy sectors, education policy construction is shaped by existing institutions: formal rules and shared norms but also ideas and cognitive categories (Scott, 1995). Paul Pierson's groundbreaking 1994 research showed that the initial choices made when a policy is introduced restrict the breadth of choices available later, making marginal or incremental changes more likely than radical ones. This self-reinforcement of initial choices, or policy lock-in, results from institutional locks, such as formal decision-making tools or vetoes capable of blocking the decision-making process, which may anticipate the change. In addition to the powers of formal institutions, the political costs of change are another obstacle to its realization. It has been documented that voters are more sensitive to the costs of a given policy change—that is, to the losses to which a change may lead—than to a policy's potential benefits. In this sense, politicians are

[10] In this section, we present again elements that have already been published in an earlier article (Maroy, Pons, & Dupuy, 2017).

more often dissuaded electorally from introducing policy change than the reverse. Finally, policy lock-in is also tied to actions of those in favor of conserving the status quo (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010). These actors are diverse in nature, coming from inside administrations as well as outside: users, beneficiaries, union representatives, etc. In sum, if public policy may be characterized by change, then choices made in the initial period of its implementation are likely to influence the definition of change trajectories and will play a role in shaping them (Pierson, 2001).

Next, when we look closely at development and change in public action, it becomes clear that domestic policymaking is often a continuous bricolage. For Claude Levi-Strauss (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, p. 27), the latter is made by handymen whose "instrumental universe is enclosed" and whose "universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his game are always to make do with 'whatever is at hand', that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always finite and is also heterogeneous because what it contains bears no relation to the current project, or indeed to any particular project, but is the contingent result of all the occasions there have been to renew or enrich the stock or to maintain it with the remains of previous constructions or destructions." In policy analysis, bricolage means that public action is a dynamic assembly of heterogeneous elements in their natural or evolving state; such elements are not necessarily designed to be tied together. Examples include existing institutional arrangements, institutional change incited by certain actors, new managerial tools, discursive formalizations, competing policy narratives, and ideas taken from repertoires and transnational reference sources. This composite construction is related to the strictly political process of struggle and negotiation inside different arenas (political, scientific, and administrative) or social spaces within civil society. In these spaces, public problems are defined and developed, and policy is meant to deal with them and offer "solutions." Indeed, for Philippe Zittoun (2013), this bricolage is a key stage of the political process of policymaking, and it consists of performing five main coupling operations when providing a policy solution: designating the policy solution and its owners; identifying its consequences and its public; linking this solution to a pre-existing policy problem; including it in a policy which is expected to change; and associating it with guiding values and principles. Theories of change and guidelines for public action are developed, and these ideas are transformed into actual policy instruments. Actors from the political, institutional, and academic fields—or other "stakeholders" in the education sphere—hold sway in these forums (Fouilleux, 2000). Finally, this bricolage may involve a kind of innovation whereby existing elements are combined in an innovative fashion on the basis of tools, practices, discourse, or institutional principles and are driven by an instrumental logic of efficiency and/or by a symbolic search for legitimacy and social acceptance (Campbell, 2004). Bricolage may thus be cognitive, institutional, or political, depending on the elements it incorporates and assembles.

Lastly, in an increasingly transnational context, bricolage is not based on exclusively national repertoires of ideas, tools, or objectives. It is also based on the translation of ideas, narratives, instruments, and approaches discussed or introduced elsewhere and which lead to redefinitions or rearticulations in light of rules, values, conventions, and practices which have already been institutionalized (Callon, 1986; Campbell, 2004; Dale, 2006). These elements may be used voluntarily by certain

national actors in a bilateral borrowing process or by learning from other systems (Dale, 1999), but additional processes may also be at work given growing transnational interdependence. Recontextualizations and translations of these tools and models may lead to "hybridization" (van Zanten, 2002), tied to the trajectory of public action and, more broadly speaking, to existing institutions (rules, norms, and cognitive categories).

Consequently, public policy is made up of compromises and "assemblages"—more or less stable arrangements that have been reworked, tweaked, and pieced together in the wake of complex processes of political actions, writing, dissemination, and translation, which end up in practice as something new (Ball, 1998). The trajectory of education policy—here, accountability policy—is, thus, the product of empirically intertwined dynamics of path dependence, bricolage, and interpretation. The resulting combination of change mechanisms and inertia makes way for trajectories which may lead to gradual but significant change[11] or trajectories which tend toward marginal change (Streeck & Thelen, 2005). More rarely, the trajectory may also be marked by a decisive turn.

3.4.2 Mediation

The second concept that we draw upon is that of "mediation." The fundamental idea behind this notion is that education policies, here accountability policies, are co-constructed on a permanent basis and at all levels of public action by different actors and organizations who participate in their conception and in their implementation. These actors and organizations transfer, translate, and contextualize these policies, depending on (1) the policy trajectories in which they are embedded and (2) the policy tools at their disposal—the other two concepts of our theoretical framework. In addition, mediation also depends on the "local educational orders" (Ben Ayed, 2009) in which they evolve and which themselves depend on (1) the institutional context and environment, (2) actors' dominant professional ethos, (3) local problematizations of education issues and policies, and, finally, (4) local configurations of actors (interests, power relations, and multiple interdependencies).

So, we have to comprehend this idea of mediation in a dual sense: not only is each actor potentially an intermediary between others in a context of densification

[11] Obviously, theoretically, a policy trajectory may move through more drastic or disruptive changes. In his article on the use of path dependence concept in historical sociology, for instance, James Mahoney (2000) mentions several notions used in the neo-institutionalist literature to capture this kind of radical change: "critical junctures," "decline," "path breakpoint," "exogenous shock," and "critical threshold point." We could also add the notion of "revolutionary change" proposed by John Campbell (2004). The "transitology" movement in political science also provided several analytical tools to conceptualize these changes such as those of "bifurcations" or "crisis" (Dobry, 2000). Our aim in this chapter is not to ignore them but, consistently with our empirical findings, to focus on more gradual changes which are *in fine* more relevant in our case study.

and complexification of public action, but, in addition, more fundamentally, each proceeds to a specific task of mediation which aims to orient the conduct of the actor's interlocutors in various ways and, thus, produces a form of autonomous regulation in the system of public action (Reynaud, 1988). Christian Maroy has highlighted this on a number of occasions in his work on intermediary regulations in European school systems. In his view, these intermediary regulations "emanate from public authorities or steering bodies and/or networks of actors (private and/or public) which seek to orient the conduct of families, school principals or teachers, in various ways, often within a designated area. Their regulatory action can bear on diverse objects. […] These actions may be understood as control regulations which entail translations and transfers between the central regulations and the schools. They may also be considered as autonomous regulations" (Maroy, 2006, p. 18). Nonetheless, this reasoning may be applied to all levels of the school system since mediations are also at work at the central national level among different groups of actors, as well as, at the school level, among local actors.

The issue is then to understand accountability policies "as they are enacted" and the diverse logics behind the co-construction of public action by the various stakeholders (Datnow & Park, 2009). More specifically, for us, it is a matter of determining (1) how national policies fit more or less successfully in the pre-existing spaces of autonomous regulation and configurations of local public action; (2) the logics of mediation at work; (3) the role of routines (institutional, organizational, professional, cognitive, etc.) in the translation and implementation of accountability actions and tools; and, finally, (4) the arguments, ideas, and knowledge mobilized to effect these mediations. To this end, we have combined three complementary types of research.

First, a set of studies which we mobilize in a dual micro-political and institutionalist perspective has allowed us to conceptualize the logics behind institutional mediation at work during the implementation of performance-based accountability policies by agents of intermediate regulation (Maroy, 2006)—Quebec SBs and French *académies*—and by actors at the school level. We formulated two structuring hypotheses to examine how these agents and actors "respond" to "institutional change mechanisms" of which they were the main recipients, whether these mechanisms are coercive,[12] normative,[13] or mimetic[14] (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

[12] Then it is a matter of ministries' power of constraint with regard to intermediate entities, pushing them to comply with the legislation and the regulation in effect (regulatory authority, mechanisms to control the objectives and outputs, threats of retaliation in other areas, etc.).

[13] Pressures to conform to normative expectations or new norms originating from various professional or social organizations which tend to define these norms (e.g., "success for all students," efforts to lower the dropout rate, and more responsibility to schools) and formalize them and ensure that professionals in compulsory education comply with them.

[14] In a situation of uncertainty, there is an inclination to adopt practices used elsewhere (mimetism) when the actor or organization does not know which practice is most appropriate from a rational perspective seeking effectiveness. Faced with this uncertainty, there is a tendency to do what others are doing, in another organization; thus, they can be inspired by what is presented as or what is supposed to constitute "good practices" or "good technologies" to employ to ensure effectiveness.

The first hypothesis considers that the institutional pressures for change lead to an isomorphism of intermediary bodies. However, the elements of similarity effectively resulting from such isomorphism remain to be further studied (e.g., isomorphism in the goals, operational objectives, tools, etc.). The second hypothesis considers that these pressures give rise to a diversity of mediation logics. Two typologies were especially used to account for this diversity: the typology developed by Boxenbaum and Jonsson (2008) which distinguishes five possibilities of strategic responses on the part of actors and organizations with respect to external institutional pressures (conformity or acquiescence, compromise, avoidance, defiance, and manipulation) and, to a larger extent, the typology developed by Betty Malen (2006), which describes four logics of organizational response to a policy (dilution, appropriation, nullification, and amplification).

Second, the research on "gaming" strategies of actors facing the introduction of performance indicators, especially Christopher Hood's work (Hood, 2006; Hood, 2007 and Hood, 2012), has allowed us to position our case vis-à-vis different types of management by numbers (the target system, ranking system, and intelligence system), different behaviors typical of actors considered in the literature ("saints," "honest triers," "reactive gamers," and "rational maniacs"), and, finally, different types of organizational culture (hierarchical, individualistic, or egalitarian).

While these works have allowed our research team to frame a collective reflection and have served in the investigation as valuable safeguards (in developing an interview grid, analyzing empirical material, etc.), they were not all drawn upon to the same degree, depending on the particular phases of the inquiry and the specific contexts under study.

Hood's contributions were only mobilized to some extent for particular local situations in the empirical analytical phases of our cases (for intermediate entities or schools), for instance, when analyzing the gaming strategy deployed by a category of actors in an *académie*, in the implementation of a particular public action instrument. However, in the context of this research, they did not allow for a great degree of generalization or a positioning of the French and Quebec cases within the proposed typologies.

The micro-political and institutionalist approach, in contrast, clearly allowed us to position our cases (intermediate entities and schools) within broad analytical categories (logic of amplification, dilution, appropriation, etc.). In this sense, it has opened up horizons for analysis, in sometimes allowing unexpected groupings (e.g., a specific SB with a specific *académie*), leading us to delve further in our analysis of factors explaining certain observed mediation approaches. Yet it has not always provided sufficient avenues to fully account for these factors. Consequently, we had to supplement this analysis with investigations into the professional ethos of actors or local configurations[15] of public action to understand the structuring of local educational orders.

[15] According to the classic work of sociology of Norbert Elias (1991), a configuration refers to the particular arrangement of multiple interdependencies between individuals. To illustrate his point, the German sociologist multiplies examples (the use of pronouns, football, tribe, state, etc.); the

3.4.3 *Instrumentation*

The third concept at the heart in this research is that of instrumentation. This stems from the notion of policy instrument which corresponds to an "identifiable method through which collective action is structured to address a public problem" (Salamon, 2002, p. 19) or to a "an apparatus that is both technical and social, that organizes specific social relations between the state and those it is addressed to, according to the representations and meanings it carries" (Lascoumes & Le Galès, 2004, 13). The notion of policy instrument appeared in political science thanks, in particular, to the works of Christopher Hood (1986) who distinguishes two broad types of tools: "detecting tools" which allow governments to collect information emanating from society and "effecting tools" which aim to influence the functioning of the latter.

The notion of policy instrument has given rise to various conceptions (concerning the definition of the instrument and its links to other similar notions, such as tool, technique, or even device)[16] and to a multitude of typologies which we will not develop here for two main reasons. On the one hand, these definitions and category distinctions are rarely logically consistent, and above all, they have little relevance for the professionals themselves. On the other hand, their heuristic value resides rather in the processes that they highlight: in particular the growing weight of these instruments (especially statistics), in a context of technologization of public action and pluralization of the high ideals and values structuring school policies and practices (Derouet, 2000).

More than the instruments themselves, it is then a matter of reflecting on the dynamics and effects of processes of instrumentation. The latter may be defined as "the set of problems posed by the choice, [the implementation] and the usage of instruments ([tools,] techniques, means of operating, and devices) which allow governmental action to materialize and be operationalized" (Lascoumes & Le Galès, 2004, p. 12). For these authors, instrumentation is likely to produce a number of effects on the course of public action such as effects of inertia, the process whereby these issues are turned into policy problems and, finally, a particular problematization of the latter. These effects echo the two other conceptual entry points which we have retained for our research (trajectory and mediation).

---

most famous is probably the game of chess. As was argued elsewhere (e.g., Buisson-Fenet & Pons, 2014), this concept may be fruitfully used in a policy analysis' perspective to investigate how local interdependencies between policy actors may shape local public action.

[16] Christopher Hood (1986) does not precisely define the notion of tool and tends, in fact, to reduce it to its instrumental dimension. Lester M. Salamon (2002) develops a productive and mercantile vision of the instrument, defined as a "package" which contains "a type of good and activity," "a deliverable vehicle," "a delivery system," and a "set of rules, whether formal or informal, defining relationships among the entities that comprise the delivery system" (p. 20). The approach of Lascoumes and Le Galès (2004) proves to be more Foucauldian, the policy instrument being defined as "a technical device with a generic vocation with a concrete conception of the relationship between the political realm and society and supported by a conception of regulation" (p. 14). Thus, for them, "each policy instrument constitutes a condensed and finalized form of knowing about social power and the ways to exercise it."

To study the instrumentation of accountability policies in France and in Quebec, we therefore had to:

1. Carry out a constitutive analysis of these tools and instruments, their evolution, their forms, and their content, especially from the point of view of the cognitive and normative frameworks that they incorporate (instrument morphologies).
2. Discern their usages, reappropriations, and reorganizations by the various actors concerned with their implementation at different levels of public action while asking ourselves to what ends, with what modalities of implementation, and with what forms of monitoring in managerial or pedagogical practices (careers of instruments) they are implemented.
3. Study the controversies surrounding the tools, especially where there are deviations from the norm, unusual uses, and debates on the choice of tools, their hierarchy, their usages, their effects, or the content of tools, to question the bases of their legitimacy (legitimacy of instruments).
4. Finally, analyze the social and cognitive effects on the internal social relationships and on the knowledge, qualification, and highlighting (zones of transparency or opacity) of educational, pedagogical, and organizational realities of the school (the social significance of instruments).

To do so, we made two main theoretical choices. First, we dismissed three approaches of instrumentation often criticized in the specialized literature (Lascoumes & Simard, 2011). The first one, normative, aims to define the modalities of an effective implementation of instruments and of "good" public governance. The second, functionalist, aims to choose among available instruments those which will permit the effective resolution of problems. The third, cybernetic, considers the instruments principally from the perspective of improving the capacities to control and regulate a system.[17]

Then we deliberately opted for a pluralist and multifactorial approach to instrumentation, aiming to combine three main analytical traditions (institutionalist, cognitive, and professional), rather than develop one of them in depth, which usually involves focusing on one key explanatory variable, at the risk of minimizing the impact of others.

The first tradition of analysis is institutionalist. For Lascoumes and Simard (2011), this approach requires considering the instrument:

> in its most informal, symbolic and cognitive dimensions. The instrument as an institution is […] approached from a perspective of analysis of power, of the shaping of social realities it involves, but also of the pedagogical and framing actions and sometimes the manipulation it entails. These works show to what extent these instruments have cognitive and behavioral control effects. This literature strives to retrace their history and their impacts based on discourses and most of all, on practices. From this perspective, sociological institutionalism

[17] This approach, which inspired C. Hood (1986), is based on a certain number of postulates or problematic orientations from a sociological point of view, such as a failure to take into account the distinctive features of the available systems, the priority given in the analysis to the improvement of the effectiveness of the control exercised over the system, the strict and little relevant distinction between the government and the society it controls, etc.

> leads to an emphasis on two phenomena. On the one hand, it considers the question of the cognitive frameworks, both general and specific, to which the instrument is related. The latter is embedded in a general ruler/ruled power relationship, which it establishes to ensure an operational regulation of particular sectoral domains. […] On the other hand, this perspective strives to characterize the development and the regular renegotiation of conventions on which the instrument is based. The analysis of the degrees and forms of this plasticity is based on an examination of the internal properties of the instrument (its technical and logical constraints), as well as that of the expected and unexpected effects arising from its appropriations by various actors. From this perspective, public action is a sociopolitical space constructed as much by instruments and techniques of regulation as by actors' beliefs and strategies. (Lascoumes & Simard, 2011, p. 17)

This approach provides a number of advantages: it is consistent with our other conceptual entry points (trajectory and mediation) and with the general theoretical framework, and it allows us to draw productively and cumulatively upon a great number of conceptual tools.

Moreover, it can easily be articulated with a second related approach, the cognitive approach. The latter considers processes of instrumentation in the light of the properties and dynamics of the production of ideas, representations, images, knowledge, discourse, categories of public action, etc. from which they stem and which they contribute to redefining. Then, instrumentation is mainly seen as the result of political struggles between actors (organized in "coalitions," "epistemic communities," and so on) to define the ideas, representations, discourse, etc. which are dominant relative to this instrument or combination of instruments.

However, the combination of the institutionalist and cognitive approaches risks masking or minimizing the role of other types of explanatory factors of instrumentation, in particular, in school systems such as in France where, for a number of reasons, these policies are less formalized and codified. This is why we felt the need to combine these two approaches with a third tradition which brings to the fore the weight of professional groups (their identities, their skills, their modes of legitimization, and their struggles for territory or jurisdiction) in understanding local (non) usages and appropriations of instruments. In some education systems marked by neo-corporatism, the understanding of competition between professional groups may prove central to retracing more or less convergent dynamics of the instrumentation of an accountability policy (Pons, 2010). This perspective invites us to raise questions about the margins of maneuver provided by instrumentation to the different work collectives and "established" professional groups. Certain instruments may be inseparable from, indeed consubstantial with, the actors which in return they contribute to make exist and those who elaborate them and those who control their implementation. Moreover, we may go so far as to consider the emergence of "new professions" around taking charge of new specific instrumentation (such as statistical services) or at least take account of the reconfigurations occurring within established professions. In contrast, other instruments support a (re) distribution of power among professionals or at least their rearrangement (Buisson-Fenet & La Naour, 2008).

Let us make clear that these different approaches to instrumentation were drawn upon to varying degrees, depending on the particular case. For example, the approach emphasizing the professional dimension seemed more relevant in the

French case. This option is consistent with our desire to adopt a pluralistic approach, so as not to neglect the specificities of each school system. Yet it involved choices in the presentation of the following chapters, to ensure a balanced comparison of cases.

3.5 Implementation of the Theoretical Framework

Our theoretical framework is based on three interrelated conceptual entry points (trajectory, mediation, and instrumentation) which are the focus of the analysis and which are each constructed from a combination of multiple theoretical approaches. The latter may sometimes converge strongly (as in the case of neo-institutionalist analyses) and sometimes much less except in a deep analytical deconstruction of the process of public action by the researcher.

This is of interest for at least two reasons. The first, empirical, is that of simultaneously complexifying and systematizing the analysis of the implementation of accountability policies in the two school systems under study. The second, more theoretical, is to confront—we hope in a productive tensioning—two theoretical traditions: one, neo-institutionalism, which, despite the plurality of its variants (sociohistorical, sociological, discursive, related to rational choice, etc.), often allows us to track structural effects common to different school systems, and the other, the sociology of public action, which indeed provides tools to reflect on phenomena of convergence or isomorphism but which also and above all offers numerous conceptual instruments to study the many processes of fragmentation and differentiation of public action.[18]

However, the application of such a framework and, further still, its restitution in a "linear" fashion in this book are not easy. Since this theoretical framework is fundamentally interactive, it would require to constantly interlinking the various analytical dimensions in the writing process itself, at the risk of making each one, and the objects to which it applies, difficult to comprehend. This risk is even greater given that our research is multilevel, resulting in a double entry table (see Table 3.2).

Therefore, in this book, we have chosen to focus on three cells in this table, corresponding to three important stages of the analysis: the study of the trajectory of two accountability policies at the national level (Chap. 5); the analysis of mediation processes at play at the intermediate level of *académies* (France) and SBs (Quebec) (Chap. 6); and, finally, the study of the local implementation of tools and policy instruments that constitute the policy at the school level (Chap. 7).

This choice has the advantage of avoiding the repetitions inevitable in a presentation structured by levels of public action or by conceptual entry point and, therefore, of contributing to a more accessible presentation of a nine-dimensional research.

[18] Please see, for example, the different analytical breaks that the sociology of public action implies for Lascoumes and Le Galès (2007) from the existing thinking of political phenomena that prevailed in the literature.

Table 3.2 Theoretical structure of the book

		Dimensions of the theoretical framework		
		Trajectories	Mediations	Instrumentations
Levels of public action	National	Chapter 5		
	Intermediate		Chapter 6	
	Local			Chapter 7

Nonetheless, it has the major drawback of reproducing, at least indirectly or implicitly, a top down vision of public action in the realm of accountability (and the forms of globalization that this accountability favors), quite the contrary of our research intention. This is why, in the very writing of these chapters, without renouncing the benefit of the demonstration of a constitutive dimension in our theoretical framework at the level of a given public action, as much as possible, we stress the interactions at play with other levels and dimensions. In theoretical terms, these links will be facilitated by our conceptual choices. For example, studying the interpretation at the national level of international or supranational watchwords and imperatives invites, in fact, an examination of mediation processes, mechanisms of path dependency, and incremental institutional changes which characterize a trajectory of accountability policy which often involve policy instruments and, therefore, require thinking also in terms of instrumentation. Instruments condense power relationships, and their implementation involves various mediation processes concerning their purposes and properties and, beyond that, the policy on the whole. Finally, and more empirically, these links sometimes appear on their own. On a number of occasions, for example, the national trajectory of accountability policies underwent bifurcations due to the evolution of the policy at subnational levels; it is impossible to consider the instrumentation of these policies at the school level without linking them to political and administrative mediations by intermediate authorities, mediations which are themselves a function of a certain trajectory of the national policy, etc. However, these links in the analysis depend on possibilities offered by the investigative methodology selected, which we will describe in detail in the next chapter.

References

Akrich, M., Callon, M., & Latour, B. (2006). *Sociologie de la traduction. Textes fondateurs*. Paris: Presses des Mines.

Altrichter, H., Heinrich, M., & Soukup-Altrichter, K. (Eds.). (2011). *Shulentwicklung durch Shulprofilierung ? Zur Veränderung von Koordinations-mechanismen im Schulsystem*. Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Verslag.

Altrichter, H., & Kemethofer, D. (2015). Does accountability pressure through school inspections promote school improvement? *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 26*(1), 32–56. https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2014.927369

Anderson, G., & Cohen, M. I. (2015). Redesigning the identities of teachers and leaders: A framework for studying new professionalism and educator resistance. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 23*, 1–29.

Au, W. (2007). High-stakes testing and curricular control: A qualitative metasynthesis. *Educational Researcher, 36*(5), 258–267.
Ball, S. J. (1987). *The micro-politics of the school: Towards a theory of school organization*. London: Methuen.
Ball, S. J. (1994). *Education reform: A critical and post-structural approach*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
Ball, S. J. (1997). Policy sociology and critical social research: A personal review of recent education policy and policy research. *British Educational Research Journal, 23*(3), 257–274.
Ball, S. J. (1998). Big policies/small world: An introduction to international perspectives in education policy. *Comparative Education, 34*(2), 119–130.
Ball, S. J. (2003a). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy, 18*(2), 215–228.
Ball, S. J. (2003b). *Class strategies and the education market*. London: Routledge Falmer.
Ball, S. J. (2012). *The micro-politics of the school: Towards a theory of school organization*. London: Routledge.
Ball, S. J. (2015). Education, governance and the tyranny of numbers. *Journal of Education Policy, 30*(3), 299–301. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2015.1013271
Ball, S. J., Maguire, M., Braun, A., & Hoskins, K. (2011). Policy actors: Doing policy work in schools. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 32*(4), 625–639.
Ball, S. J., & Maroy, C. (2009). School's logics of action as mediation and compromise between internal dynamics end external constraints and pressures. *Compare. A Journal of Comparative and International Education, 39*(1), 99–112.
Barbana, S., Dellisse, S. B., Dumay, X., & Dupriez, V. (2016). Vers un recouplage politique/pratique ? Études de cas dans l'enseignement secondaire belge francophone. Cahiers de recherche du Girsef, (105).
Barrère, A. (2006). *Sociologie des chefs d'établissement*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
Barrère, A. (2009). Les directions d'établissement scolaire à l'épreuve de l'évaluation locale. *Carrefours de l'éducation, 28*(2), 199–214.
Ben Ayed, C. (2009). *Le nouvel ordre éducatif local*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
Boltanski, L., & Chiapello, E. (1999). *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme*. Paris: Gallimard.
Bovens, M. (2007). Analysing and assessing accountability: A conceptual framework. *European Law Journal, 13*(4), 447–468.
Boxenbaum, E., & Jonsson, S. (2008). lsomorphism, diffusion and decoupling. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, R. Suddaby, & K. Sahlin (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational institutionalism* (pp. 78–97). London: Sage.
Braun, A., Ball, S. J., & Maguire, M. (2011). Policy enactments in schools introduction: Towards a toolbox for theory and research. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 32*(4), 581–583.
Braun, A., Ball, S. J., Maguire, M., & Hoskins, K. (2011). Taking context seriously: Towards explaining policy enactments in the secondary school. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 32*(4), 585–596.
Braun, A., Maguire, M., & Ball, S. J. (2010). Policy enactments in the UK secondary school: Examining policy, practice and school positioning. *Journal of Education Policy, 25*(4), 547–560.
Broadfoot, P. (2000). Un nouveau mode de régulation dans un système décentralisé: l'État évaluateur. *Revue française de pédagogie, 130*, 43–55.
Brown, P., Lauder, H., & Ashton, D. (2008). Education, globalisation and the future of the knowledge economy. *European Educational Research Journal, 7*(2), 131–156.
Bruns, B., Filmer, D., & Patrinos, H. A. (2011). *Making schools work. New evidence on accountability reforms*. Washington, DC: World Bank Publications.
Buisson-Fenet, H. (2007). L'éducation scolaire au prisme de la science politique: vers une sociologie politique comparée de l'action publique éducative? *Revue internationale de politique comparée, 14*(3), 385–397.

Buisson-Fenet, H., & La Naour, G. (Eds.). (2008). *Les professionnels de l'action publique face à leurs instruments*. Toulouse, France: Octares Edition.
Buisson-Fenet, H., & Pons, X. (2012). L'européanisation de l'École française en débat: le cas contrasté de l'évaluation des établissements scolaires. *Politix, 2*, 129–146.
Buisson-Fenet, H., & Pons, X. (2014). *School evaluation policies and educating states: Trends in four European countries*. Berne, Switzerland: Peter Lang.
Bushnell, M. (2003). Teachers in the schoolhouse panopticon – Complicity and resistance. *Education and Urban Society, 35*(3), 251–172.
Callon, M. (1986). Some elements of a sociology of translation: Domestication of the scallops and the fisherman in St Brieuc Bay. In K. Knorr-Cetina & A. V. Cicourel (Eds.), *Advances in social theory and methodology: Toward an integration of micro and macro-sociologies* (pp. 196–223). Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
Campbell, J. L. (2004). *Institutional change and globalization*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Carnoy, M., & Loeb, S. (2002). Does external accountability affect student outcomes? A cross-state analysis. *Educational Evaluation & Policy Analysis, 24*(4), 305–331.
Cattonar, B., Dumay, X., & Maroy, C. (2013). Politique d'évaluation externe et recomposition des professionnalités dans l'enseignement primaire: un cas de responsabilisation (accountability) douce. *Education et sociétés, 32*(2), 35–51.
Cattonar, B., Lessard, C., & Maroy, C. (2010). La professionnalisation de l'enseignement primaire et secondaire, une comparaison entre la Belgique francophone et le Québec (1990–2010). *Les Dossiers des Sciences de l'Éducation. Revue Internationale des Sciences de l'Éducation, 24*, 39–52.
Chiang, H. (2009). How accountability pressure on failing schools affects student achievement. *Journal of Public Economics, 93*(9–10), 1045–1057. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2009.06.002.
Clarke, J. (2004). *Changing welfare, changing states: New directions in social policy*. London: Sage.
Coburn, C. E. (2001). Shaping teacher sensemaking: School leaders and the enactment of reading policy. *Educational Policy, 19*(3), 476–509.
Coburn, C. E., & Talbert, J. (2006). Conceptions of evidence use in school districts: Mapping the terrain. *American Journal of Education, 112*(4), 469–495.
Coburn, C. E., & Turner, E. O. (2012). The practice of data use: An introduction. *American Journal of Education, 118*(2), 99–111. https://doi.org/10.1086/663272
Commaille, J. (2006). Sociologie de l'action publique. In L. Boussaguet, S. Jacquot, & P. Ravinet (Eds.), *Dictionnaire des politiques publiques* (pp. 415–423). Paris: Les presses de Sciences Po.
Commaille, J., & Jobert, B. (1998). *Les métamorphoses de la régulation politique*. Paris: LGDJ.
Czerniawski, G. (2011). Emerging teachers-emerging identities: Trust and accountability in the construction of newly qualified teachers in Norway, Germany, and England. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 34*(4), 431–447.
Dale, R. (1999). Specifying globalization effects on national policy: A focus on the mechanisms. *Journal of Education Policy, 14*(1), 1–17.
Dale, R. (2006). From comparison to translation: Extending the research imagination? *Globalisation, Societies and Education, 4*(2), 179–192.
Dale, R., & Robertson, S. L. (2002). The varying effects of regional organizations as subjects of globalization of education. *Comparative Education Review, 46*(1), 10–36.
Datnow, A. (2006). Connection in the policy chain : The "co-construction" of implementation in comprehensive school reform. In M. I. Honig (Ed.), *New directions in education policy implementation* (pp. 105–122). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
Datnow, A., & Park, V. (2009). Conceptualizing policy implementation. In *Handbook of education policy research* (pp. 348–361). New York: Routledge.
de Landsheere, G. (1994). *Le pilotage des systèmes d'éducation*. Bruxelles, Belgium: De Boeck.

Demailly, L. (2001). Evaluer les politiques éducatives: Sens, enjeux, pratiques. In L. Demailly (Ed.), *Enjeux de l'évaluation et régulation des systèmes scolaires*. Bruxelles, Belgium: De Boeck.

Demailly, L. (2003). L'évaluation comme apprentissage et négociation. *Revue française de pédagogie, 142*, 107–121.

Demailly, L., Gadrey, N., Deubel, P., & Verdière, J. (1998). *Evaluer les établissements scolaires: enjeux, expériences, débats*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Demazière, D., Lessard, C., & Morrissette, J. (2013). Introduction. Les effets de la Nouvelle Gestion Publique sur le travail des professionnels: Transpositions, variations, ambivalences. *Education et sociétés, 32*(2), 5–20. https://doi.org/10.3917/es.032.0005.

Demeuse, M., & Baye, A. (2009). Indicateurs d'équité educative. Une analyse de la ségrégation académique et sociale dans quelques pays européens. *Revue française de pédagogie, 165*, 91–103.

Derouet, J.-L. (2000). *L'école dans plusieurs mondes*. Bruxelles, Belgium/Paris: De Boeck.

Diamond, J. B., & Spillane, J. P. (2004). High-stakes accountability in urban elementary schools: Challenging or reproducing inequality? *Teachers College Record, 106*(6), 1145–1176.

DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organisational fields. *American Sociological Review, 48*(2), 147–160.

Dobry, M. (2000). Les voies incertaines de la transitologie: choix stratégiques, séquences historiques, bifurcations et processus de path dependence. *Revue française de science politique*, 50e année(4–5), 585–614.

Dumay, X. (2009). Que sait-on de l'efficacité des écoles ? In X. Dumay & V. Dupriez (Eds.), *L'efficacité dans l'enseignement. Promesses et zones d'ombre* (pp. 73–88). Paris: De Boeck.

Dumay, X., Cattonar, B., Maroy, C., & Mangez, C. (2013). The local institutionalization of accountability in education: Network and bureaucratic modes of implementation. *International Journal of Sociology of Education, 2*(2), 99–141. https://doi.org/10.4471/rise.2013.26.

Dumay, X., Dupriez, V., & Maroy, C. (2010). Ségrégation, effets de composition et inégalités de résultats. *Revue Française de Sociologie, 51*(3), 461–480.

Dupriez, V., & Malet, R. (Eds.). (2013). *L'évaluation dans les systèmes scolaires. Accommodements du travail et reconfiguration des professionnalités*. Bruxelles, Belgium: De Boeck.

Dupriez, V., & Mons, N. (2011). Introduction. Les politiques d'accountability. Du changement institutionnel aux transformations locales. *Éducation comparée*, *5*, 7–16.

Dutercq, Y. (2001). *Comment peut-on administrer l'école? Pour une approche politique de l'administration de l'éducation*. Paris: PUF.

Dutercq, Y., & Lanéelle, X. (2013). La dispute autour des évaluations des élèves dans l'enseignement français du premier degré. *Sociologie, 4*(1), 44–62.

Dutercq, Y., & Maroy, C. (Eds.). (2017). *Professionnalisme enseignants et politiques de responsabilisation*. Bruxelles, Belgium: De Boeck.

Easley II, J., & Tulowitzki, P. (2016). *Educational accountability: International perspectives on challenges and possibilities for school leadership*. New York/London: Routledge.

Elias, N. (1991). *La société des individus*. Paris: Fayard.

Elmore, R. F., Abelmann, C. H., & Fuhrman, S. H. (1996). The new accountability in state education reform: From process to performance. In H. F. Ladd (Ed.), *Holding schools accountable: Performance-based reform in education* (pp. 65–98). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

Evetts, J. (2008). The management of professionalism. A contemporary paradox. In S. Gewirtz, P. Mahony, I. Hextall, & A. Cribb (Eds.), *Changing teacher professionalism. International trends, challenges and ways forward* (pp. 17–30). New York: Taylor & Francis.

Falabella, A. (2014). The performing school: The effects of market & accountability policies. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 22*(70), 1–29.

Figlio, D., & Loeb, S. (2011). School accountability. In E. A. Hanushek, S. Machin, & L. Woessmann (Eds.), *Handbooks in economics* (Vol. 3, pp. 383–421). Amsterdam: North-Holland.

Finnigan, K. S., & Gross, B. (2007). Do accountability policy sanctions influence teacher motivation? Lessons from Chicago's low-performing schools. *American Educational Research Journal, 44*(3), 594–629.
Fouilleux, È. (2000). Entre production et institutionnalisation des idées. La réforme de la Politique agricole commune. *Revue française de science politique, 50*(2), 277–306.
Friedberg, E. (1993). *Le pouvoir et la règle*. Paris: Le Seuil.
Fullan, M., Rincon-Gallardo, S., & Hargreaves, A. (2015). Professional capital as accountability. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 23*(15), 1–17.
Garcia, S., & Montagne, S. (2011). Pour une sociologie critique des dispositifs d'évaluation. *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales, 189*(4), 4–15. https://doi.org/10.3917/arss.189.0004
Gewirtz, S., Mahony, P., Hextall, I., & Cribb, A. (2008). *Changing teacher professionalism. International trends, challenges and ways forward*. New York: Taylor & Francis.
Greenwood, R., Suddaby, R., & Hinings, C. R. (2002). Theorizing change: The role of professional associations in the transformation of institutionalized fields. *Academy of Management Journal, 45*(1), 58–80.
Grek, S. (2008). From symbols to numbers: The shifting technologies of education governance in Europe. *European Educational Research Journal, 7*(2), 208–218.
Grodsky, E., Warren, J. R., & Kalogrides, D. (2009). State high school exit examinations and NAEP long-term trends in reading and mathematics 1971–2004. *Educational Policy, 23*(4), 589–614.
Hall, D., & McGinity, R. (2015). Conceptualizing teacher professional identity in neoliberal times: Resistance, compliance and reform. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 23*, 1.
Hallinger, P. (2003). Leading educational change: Reflections on the practice of instructional and transformational leadership. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 33*(3), 329–352. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764032000122005
Halpern, C., Hassenteufel, P., & Zittoun, P. (2018). *Policy analysis in France*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press.
Hanushek, E. A., & Raymond, M. E. (2005). Does school accountability lead to improved student performance? *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 24*(2), 297–327. https://doi.org/10.2307/3326211.
Hargreaves, A., Lieberman, A., Fullan, M., & Hopkins, D. (Eds.). (2010). *Second international handbook of educational change. (Part 1 & 2)*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands/Heidelberg, Germany/London/New York: Springer.
Harris, D. N., & Herrington, C. D. (2006). Accountability, standards, and the growing achievement gap: Lessons from the past half-century. *American Journal of Education, 112*(2), 209–238.
Heilig, J. V., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2008). Accountability texas-style: The progress and learning of urban minority students in a high-stakes testing context. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 30*(2), 75–110.
Hellrung, K., & Hartig, J. (2013). Understanding and using feedback – A review of empirical studies concerning feedback from external evaluations to teachers. *Educational Research Review, 9*, 174–190.
Honig, M. I. (Ed.). (2006). *New directions in education policy implementation. Confronting complexity*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
Hood, C. (1986). *The tools of government*. Chatham, UK: Chatham House.
Hood, C. (1991). A public management for all seasons? *Public Administration, 69*, 3–19.
Hood, C. (1996). Exploring variations in public management reform of the 1980s. In H. A. G. Hans, M. Bekke, J. L. Perry, & T. A. Toonen (Eds.), *Civil service systems in comparative perspective* (pp. 268–287). Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.
Hood, C. (2006). Gaming in targetworld: The targets approach to managing British public services. *Public Administration Review, 66*(4), 514–521. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2006.00612.x.

Hood, C. (2007). Public service management by numbers: Why does it vary? where has it come from? What are the gaps and the puzzles? *Public Money & Management, 27*(2), 95–102. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9302.2007.00564.x

Hood, C. (2012). Public management by numbers as a performance-enhancing drug: Two hypotheses. *Public Administration Review, 72*(1), 85–92.

Hooghe, L. (1995). Subnational mobilisation in the European Union. *West European Politics, 18*(3), 175–198.

Imsen, G., Blossing, U., & Moos, L. (2017). Reshaping the Nordic education model in an era of efficiency. Changes in the comprehensive school project in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden since the millennium. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 61*(5), 568–583.

Jaafar, S. B., & Anderson, S. (2007). Policy trends and tensions in accountability for educational management and services in Canada. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 53*(2), 207–227.

Jacob, B. A. (2005). Accountability, incentives and behavior: The impact of high-stakes testing in the Chicago Public Schools. *Journal of Public Economics, 89*(5–6), 761–796. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2004.08.004

Jacobsson, B. (2006). Regulated regulators: Global trends of state transformation. In M.-L. Djelic & K. Sahlin-Andersson (Eds.), *Transnational governance. Institutional dynamics of regulation* (pp. 205–224). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Jeffery, C. (1997). L'émergence d'une gouvernance multi-niveaux dans l'Union européenne: une approche des politiques nationales. *Politiques et management public, 15*(3), 211–231.

Kelchtermans, G., & Vandenberghe, R. (1998). *Internal use of external control and support for quality improvement. The response to a national policy by primary schools* (Evaluation of a national policy for qulity improvement in schools: External requirements versus local implementation patterns). Leuven, Belgium: University Leuven.

Kogan, M. (1988). *Education accountability: An analytic overview*. London/Dover, NH: Hutchinson Education.

Ladd, H. F., & Lauen, D. L. (2010). Status versus growth: The distributional effects of school accountability policies. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 29*(3), 426–450. https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.20504

Lascoumes, P., & Le Galès, P. (2004). *Gouverner par les instruments*. Paris: Presses de la fondation nationale des sciences politiques.

Lascoumes, P., & Le Galès, P. (2007). *Sociologie de l'action publique*. Paris: Armand Colin.

Lascoumes, P., & Simard, L. (2011). L'action publique au prisme de ses instruments. *Revue française de science politique, 61*(1), 5–22.

Laval, C., Vergne, F., Clément, P., & Dreux, G. (2012). *La nouvelle école capitaliste*. Paris: La Découverte.

Le Galès, P., & Thatcher, M. (1995). *Les réseaux de politique publique: débat autour des policy networks*. Paris: Editions L'Harmattan.

Le Pape, Y., & Smith, A. (1998). Décentralisations et agricultures: Analyse comparée de deux régions françaises. *Politiques et management public, 16*(4), 53–73.

Lee, J. (2008). Is test driven external accountability effective Synthesizing the evidence from cross state Causal comparative and correlational studies. *Review of Educational Research, 78*(3), 608–644.

Lee, J. (2010). Trick or treat: New ecology of education accountability system in the USA. *Journal of Education Policy, 25*(1), 73–93.

Leithwood, K. (2001). School leadership in the context of accountability policies. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 4*(3), 217–235.

Leithwood, K., & Earl, L. (2000). Educational accountability effects: An international perspective. *Peabody Journal of Education, 75*(4), 1–18.

Leithwood, K., Edge, K., & Jantzi, D. (1999). *Educational accountability: The state of the art*. Gutersloh, Germany: Bertelsmann Foundation Publishers.

Lessard, C., & Carpentier, A. (2015). *Politiques éducatives: la mise en oeuvre*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.

Lessard, C., & Desjardins, P.-D. (2009). Chapitre 7. Les commissions scolaires québécoises: des acteurs stratégiques attentifs à leur environnement. In G. Pelletier (Ed.), *La gouvernance en éducation* (pp. 127–145). Brussels, Belgium: De Boeck Supérieur.

Lessard, C., & Meirieu, P. (2008). *L'obligation de résultats en éducation: évolutions, perspectives et enjeux internationaux*. Brussels, Belgium: De Boeck Supérieur.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1962). *La pensée sauvage*. Paris: Plon.

Lindberg, S. I. (2013). Mapping accountability: Core concept and subtypes. *International Review of Administrative Sciences, 79*(2), 202–226. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852313477761

Lingard, B., Martino, W., & Rezai-Rashti, G. (2013). Testing regimes, accountabilities and education policy: Commensurate global and national developments. *Journal of Education Policy, 28*(5), 539–556. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2013.820042

Linn, R. L. (2000). Assessments and accountability. *Educational Researcher, 29*(2), 4–16.

Lury, C., Parisi, L., & Terranova, T. (2012). Introduction: The becoming topological of culture. *Theory, Culture & Society, 29*(4–5), 3–35.

Maguire, M., Braun, A., & Ball, S. (2011). Where you stand depends on where you sit': The social construction of policy enactments in the (English) secondary school. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 36*(4), 485–499. https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2014.977022.

Mahoney, J. (2000). Path dependence in historical sociology. *Theory and Society, 29*(4), 507–548.

Mahoney, J., & Thelen, K. (2010). *Explaining institutional change: Ambiguity, agency, and power*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Maier, U. (2010). Accountability policies and teachers' acceptance and usage of school performance feedback: A comparative study. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 21*(2), 145–165.

Malen, B. (2006). Revisiting policy implementation as a political phenomenon. In *New directions in education policy implementation* (pp. 83–105). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Mangez, E. (2001). Régulation de l'action éducative dans les années quatre-vingt-dix. *Education et sociétés, 8*, 81–96.

Marks, G. (1992). Structural policy in the European community. In A. Sbragia (Ed.), *Europolitics: Institutions and policy-making in the "New" European community* (pp. 191–224). Washington, DC: Brookings Institute.

Marks, G. (1993). Structural policy and multilevel governance in the EC. The Maastricht debates and beyond, 392.

Maroy, C. (2006). *École, régulation et marché: une analyse de six espaces scolaires locaux en Europe* (1st ed.). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Maroy, C. (2008). Vers une régulation post-bureaucratique des systèmes d'enseignement en Europe? *Sociologie et sociétés, 40*(1), 31–55.

Maroy, C. (2009). Convergences and hybridization of educational policies around "Post-Bureaucratic" models of regulation. *Compare. A Journal of Comparative and International Education, 39*(1), 71–84.

Maroy, C. (2012). Towards post-bureaucratic modes of governance: A European perspective. In G. Steiner-Khamsi & F. Waldow (Eds.), *World yearbook of education 2012. Policy borrowing and lending in education* (pp. 62–79). London/New York: Routledge.

Maroy, C. (Ed.). (2013). *L'école à l'épreuve de la performance. Les politiques de régulation par les résultats*. Bruxelles, Belgium/Paris: de Boeck.

Maroy, C. (2015). Comparing accountability tools and rationales. Various ways, various effects. In H.-G. Kotthof & E. Klerides (Eds.), *Governing educational spaces. Knowledge, teaching and learning in transition* (pp. 35–58). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense publishers.

Maroy, C., & Demailly, L. (2004). Les régulations intermédiaires des systèmes éducatifs en Europe. Quelles convergences? *Recherches Sociologiques, 35*(2), 5–24.

Maroy, C., & Doray, P. (2008). Présentation du numéro thématique. Les nouvelles politiques d'éducation et de formation. *Sociologie et sociétés, 40*(1), 11–29.

Maroy, C., Mangez, C., Dumay, X., & Cattonar, B. (2012). Processus de traduction et institutionnalisation d'outils de régulation basés sur les connaissances dans l'enseignement primaire en Belgique. *Recherches Sociologiques et Anthropologiques, 43*(2), 95–120.

Maroy, C., Pons, X., & Dupuy, C. (2017). Vernacular globalisations: Neo-statist accountability policies in France and Quebec education. *Journal of Education Policy, 32*(1), 100–122. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2016.1239841

Maroy, C., & Voisin, A. (2014). Une typologie des politiques d'accountability en éducation: l'incidence de l'instrumentation et des théories de la régulation. *Education Compare, 11*, 31–58.

Maroy, C., & Voisin, A. (2017). *Think piece on accountability in education* (Background paper prepared for the 2017/8 Global Education Monitoring Report. Accountability in education: Meeting our commitments). Paris: UNESCO.

Martens, K. (2007). How to become an influential actor: The 'Comparative Turn' in OECD education policy. In *Transformations of the state and global governance* (pp. 40–56). London: Routledge.

Mintrop, H. (2004). *Schools on probation. How accountability works (and doesn't work)*. New York/London: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Mintrop, H., & Suderman, G. L. (2009). Predictable failure of federal sanctions-driven accountability for school improvement- and why we may retain it anyway. *Educational Researcher, 38*(5), 353–364.

Mons, N. (2009). Effets théoriques et réels des politiques d'évaluation standardisée. *Revue française de pédagogie, 169*, 99–139.

Mons, N., & Dupriez, V. (2010). Les politiques d'accountability. *Recherche et Formation, 65*, 45–59.

Moos, L. (2009). Hard and soft governance: The journey from transnational agencies to school leadership. *European Educational Research Journal, 8*(3), 397–406.

Muller, J., & Hernandez, F. (2010). On the geography of accountability: Comparative analysis of teachers' experiences across seven European countries. *Journal of Educational Change, 11*(4), 307–322.

Muller, P. (2000). *Les politiques publiques*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.

Normand, R., & Derouet, J.-L. (2009). *Quelles politiques pour l'égalité ? Savoirs, gouvernances et obligation de résultats. Réflexions croisées anglo-américaines*. Lyon, France: INRP.

Osborn, M., McNess, E., Broadfoot, P., (with Pollard, A. & Triggs, P.). (2000). *What teachers do. Changing policy and practice in primary education*. London/New York: Continuum.

Ozga, J. (2009). Governing education through data in England: From regulation to self-evaluation. *Journal of Education Policy, 24*(2), 149–162.

Ozga, J., & Grek, S. (2012). Governing through learning. School self-evaluation as a knowledge-based regulatory tool. *Recherches Sociologiques et Anthropologiques, 43*(2), 35–52.

Palau, Y. (2011). *La gouvernance et normativité. La gouvernance des sociétés contemporaines au regard des mutations de la normativité*. Québec, Canada: Presses de l'Université Laval.

Papadopoulos, Y. (2001). Transformations du style de l'action publique et responsabilité politique. *Politiques et Management Public, 19*(1), 165–183.

Pierson, P. (1994). *Dismantling the welfare state? Reagan, Thatcher and the politics of retrenchment*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Pierson, P. (2001). *The new politics of the welfare state*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Pons, X. (2010). *Evaluer l'action éducative* (Education & Société). Paris: Presses universitaires de France.

Pons, X., & van Zanten, A. (2007). *Knowledge circulation, regulation and governance, deliverable 4 literature review project KnowandPol* (pp. 9–38). Brussels, Belgium: 6th FPRD EU.

Powell, W. W., & Di Maggio, P. J. (Eds.). (1991). *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ranson, S. (2003). Public accountability in the age of neo-liberal governance. *Journal of Education Policy, 18*(5), 459–480. https://doi.org/10.1080/0268093032000124848

Reback, R. (2008). Teaching to the rating: School accountability and the distribution of student achievement. *Journal of Public Economics, 92*(5–6), 1394–1415. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2007.05.003

Reynaud, J.-D. (1988). Les régulations dans les organisations: Régulation de contrôle et régulation autonome. *Revue Française de Sociologie, 39*(1), 5–18.

Rizvi, F., & Lingard, B. (2000). Globalization and education: Complexities and contingencies. *Educational Theory, 50*(4), 419–426.

Rozenwajn, E., & Dumay, X. (2014). Les effets de l'évaluation externe sur les pratiques enseignantes: une revue de la littérature. *Revue française de pédagogie, 189*, 105–137.

Salamon, L. M. (Ed.). (2002). *The tools of governance. A guide to the new governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Scheerens, J. (Ed.). (2012). *School leadership effects revisited. Review and meta-analysis of empirical studies*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.

Scott, W. R. (1995). *Institutions and organizations: Toward a theoretical synthesis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Segerholm, C. (2012). The quality turn: Political and methodological challenges in contemporary educational evaluation and assessment. *Education Inquiry, 3*(2), 115–122.

Sellar, S. (2015). Data infrastructure: A review of expanding accountability systems and large-scale assessments in education. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 36*(5), 765–777.

Shannon, G. S., & Bylsma, P. (2004). *Characteristics of improved school districts : Themes from research*. Olympia, WA: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Skedsmo, G., & Mausethagen, S. (2016). *Accountability policies and educational leadership-a Norwegian perspective*. London: Routledge.

Smith, A. (1999). Public policy analysis in contemporary France: Academic approaches, questions and debates. *Public Administration, 77*(1), 111–131.

Smith, A. (2004). *Le gouvernement de l'Union européenne. Une sociologie politique*. Paris: LGDJ.

Spillane, J. P. (2012). Data in practice: Conceptualizing the data-based decision-making phenomena. *American Journal of Education, 118*(2), 113–141. https://doi.org/10.1086/663283

Spillane, J. P., & Kenney, A. W. (2012). School administration in a changing education sector: The US experience. *Journal of Educational Administration, 50*(5), 541–561. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578231211249817

Spillane, J. P., Parise, L. M., & Sherer, J. Z. (2011). Organizational routines as coupling mechanisms: Policy, school administration, and the technical core. *American Educational Research Journal, 48*(3), 586–619. https://doi.org/10.2307/27975303.

Spillane, J. P., Reiser, B. J., & Gomez, L. M. (2006). Policy implementation and cognition. The role of human, social, and distributed cognition in framing policy implementation. In M. I. Honig (Ed.), *New directions in education policy implementation. Confronting complexity* (pp. 47–64). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Spillane, J. P., Reiser, B. J., & Reimer, T. (2002). Policy implementation and cognition: Reframing and refocusing implementation research. *Review of Educational Research, 72*(3), 387–431.

Steiner-Khamsi, G. (2004). *The global politics of educational borrowing and lending*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Steiner-Khamsi, G., Waldow, F. (2012). *World yearbook of education 2012. policy borrowing and lending in education* (World yearbook of education) London/New York: Routledge.

Streeck, W., & Thelen, K. (2005). *Beyond continuity. Institutional change in advanced political economies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Suchman, M. C. (1995). Managing legitimacy: Strategic and institutional approaches. *Academy of Management Review, 20*(3), 571–610.

Sykes, G., Schneider, B., & Plank, D. N. (Eds.). (2009). *Handbook of education policy research*. New York/London: AERA & Routledge.

Thrupp, M. (1998). Exploring the politics of Blame: School inspection and its contestation in New Zealand and England. *Comparative Education, 34*(2), 195–208.

Treisman, P. U., & Fuller, E. J. (2001). Comment on "Searching for indirect effects of statewide reforms". In D. Ravitch (Ed.), *Brookings papers on education policy* (Vol. 1, pp. 208–218). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

van Zanten, A. (2002). Educational change and new cleavages between head teachers, teachers and parents: Global and local perspectives on the French case. *Journal of Education Policy, 17*(3), 289–304.

van Zanten, A. (2008). Régulation et rôle de la connaissance dans le champ éducatif en France. *Sociologie et sociétés, XL*(1), 69–92.

van Zanten, A. (2014). *Les politiques d'éducation* (3rd ed.). Paris: Presses universitaires de France.

Verger, A., & Parcerisa, L. (2017). *Accountability and education in the post-2015 scenario: International trends, enactment dynamics and socio-educational effects* (Background paper prepared for the 2017/8 Global Education Monitoring Report. Accountability in education: Meeting our commitments). Paris: UNESCO.

Veselý, A. (2013). Accountability in Central and Eastern Europe: Concept and reality. *International Review of Administrative Sciences, 79*(2), 310–330. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852313477762

Webb, P. T. (2005). The anatomy of accountability. *Journal of Education Policy, 20*(2), 189–208.

Weinstein, J., Raczynski, D., & Hernández, M. (2016). Confiances multiples (et parfois dissociées) des enseignants chiliens. Une étude dans les écoles primaires de la région de Valparaíso. *Revue internationale d'éducation de Sèvres, 72*, 77–89.

Whitty, G., Power, S., & Halpin, D. (1998). *Devolution and choice in education: The school, the state and the market*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.

Wolf, I., & Janssens, F. J. G. (2007). Effects and side effects of inspections and accountability in education: An overview of empirical studies. *Oxford Review of Education, 33*(3), 379–396.

Yerly, G. (2014). *Les effets de l'évaluation externe des acquis des élèves sur les pratiques des enseignants*. PhD thesis, Université de Fribourg, Fribourg.

Zittoun, P. (2013). *La fabrique politique des politiques publiques*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.

Chapter 4
Methodology

Xavier Pons, Samuel Vaillancourt, and Christian Maroy

4.1 Introduction

As an international colloquium organized in October 2014 by the Centre of International Research and Study from the University of Montreal (CERIUM) pointed out, comparisons by social scientists of France and Quebec have multiplied in recent decades.[1] According to its organizers, this proliferation raises several issues.

First, these works tend to focus on specific topics, such as the nation-state, models of secularity, or social and urban policies, and to neglect others, such as social institutions, political parties, or social movements. In this landscape, works on education and education policies in a broad sense (including higher education) seem to be in an intermediate position.

Second, this selective development is not only the consequence of the evolution of academic disciplines themselves. It is also linked to particular political and social uses of the comparison: since the end of the 1970s, comparing Quebec with France instead of with other Canadian provinces, for instance, does not always come from a purely academic concern; it may also be a part of a wider political purpose. Conversely, in France, Quebec is often perceived by political leaders and administrative elites as an "easily understandable America."[2] Thus,

[1] The papers from this colloquium were published in the volume 4(120) of the French-speaking selective review of political science entitled *Politix* in 2017.

[2] Fabien Desage, interview given to the French embassy in Quebec, October 15, 2014. See: http://www.consulfrance-quebec.org/Si-loin-si-proches-la-comparaison (consulted March 16, 2017).

X. Pons (✉)
University of Eastern-Paris Creteil, Paris, France
e-mail: ponsx@wanadoo.fr

S. Vaillancourt · C. Maroy
University of Montreal, Montreal, QC, Canada
e-mail: samuel.vaillancourt@umontreal.ca; christian.maroy@umontreal.ca

C. Maroy, X. Pons (eds.), *Accountability Policies in Education*, Educational Governance Research 11, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-01285-4_4

there may be various political assumptions in the French-Quebec comparisons, and education should be no exception.

Third, although Quebec and France appear close, as exemplified by their common French language, their apparent similarities may hide significant differences on the two sides of the Atlantic, with regard to their academic traditions and methods but also the design of some policy sectors. Hence, the risk from this kind of comparison is in underestimating certain challenges.

The purpose of this chapter is precisely to make explicit the epistemological and methodological choices of the two national teams involved in this research. The first section comes back to its academic origins. The second describes the overall design of the comparison. The third details the various analytical conventions to be defined throughout the research process, and the last two deal with the data and materials collected and how they were analyzed.

4.2 The Origins: The (New)AGE Project

This book is based on 4 years of qualitative research conducted between March 2012 and December 2015. This research was funded by the French national research agency, ANR,[3] and by the Quebec research institute for society and culture, FQRSC,[4] within the context of a selective call for projects specifically devoted to France-Quebec comparisons in general (not only in the education sector).

It is important to underscore that there were never any political objectives beyond the greater understanding of policy processes at work in France and Quebec. The ANR-FQRSC program was strictly devoted to the advancement of knowledge, even if the application forms required a prediction of the research's social impact. Furthermore, the funding organizations never intervened in the research, either in its design or its targeted dissemination.

The topic, accountability policies, was chosen by the directors of the project as a continuation of former research/publications and collaboration. Indeed, several members of the project had already worked on the question of accountability, governance, and evaluation, both individually and in collaboration in earlier European research projects. Our idea was to benefit from this specialization and the internal epistemological and methodological coherence of a small team of researchers who had already worked together and who shared similar theoretical approaches, to extend and accumulate knowledge on accountability issues and processes.

We should also specify that this project was not based on normative assumptions concerning the need to improve accountability mechanisms in each system, for instance, or on the desire to modernize these accountability policies. The title of the project, (New)AGE, for "(New) Accountability and Governance in Education," was conceived to stress the ambivalence of these so-called novelties. Moreover, the

[3] *Agence nationale de la recherche* (grant number ANR 11 FRQU 001 01).

[4] Fonds de recherche du Quebec—Société et Culture (grant number FQRSC 2012-QF-163746).

research teams were careful not to reproduce implicit assumptions, sometimes taken for granted by our interlocutors, on the position that France or Quebec should adopt in this comparison. For example, on the French side, it was not assumed that France, in which the accountability policy is less codified overall, should take the Quebec path, and on the Quebec side, that Quebec policy should be regarded as a policy model that should be exported to France.

4.3 General Design of the Comparison

Our overall research strategy is based on the disconfirmation of a most likely case (Gerring, 2007; Lijphart, 1971). As argued elsewhere (Maroy, Pons, & Dupuy, 2017), globalization is often depicted as a relatively uniform top-down, instrumental, normative, and mainly cognitive process, imposed "from above" upon the traditional education authorities which would pave the way for (1) new policy scapes, (2) the neoliberalization of education, and (3) new scalar politics on a global level (Lingard & Rawolle, 2011). Our strategy consists in testing this theory, or more precisely this series of theories, by choosing a policy—accountability policy—which can be seen as a typical example of education policy promoted by transnational organizations and showing that, even in this most likely case, governing changes at work are not unilateral but fundamentally multilevel and depend on the policy trajectory of each system, on a series of mediation processes occurring at various levels, and on the different logics of instrumentation at stake. If these aspects are empirically proven, then it can be argued that it is also true in least likely cases.

Our strategy of comparison was more oriented to cases rather than variables (Ragin, 1987). The idea was to analyze two cases in-depth, through an inductive, qualitative, comprehensive, and interpretative approach; to understand the complexity of each case and highlight its dynamic links, rather than adopt a deductive, quantitative, statistical, and explanatory approach to marginal effects; to confirm or inform a previous theory; or to rank or even eliminate explanatory factors (Giraud, 2003). The goal was to seriously consider this complexity and offer new, or at least different, complex causal relations to the theory. This kind of comparison risks resulting in merely a juxtaposition of case studies, on the basis of rather inconsistent analytical categories, and not venturing beyond the particularities of cases to reflect on universal or transversal aspects. That is why we always chose to present our cases through analytical dimensions across France and Quebec.

Last, we decided to compare policy in two different national contexts in terms of political foundations, structures, potential exposure to international influence, and dominant regulatory modes. The French education system is characterized by a high degree of administrative centralization, an emphasis and reliance on ministerial circulars as a mode of interdepartmental communication and regulation, and resistance to external influence, especially that of New Public Management (Bezes, 2009). By contrast, in Quebec, while the main administrative, curricular, and published pedagogical guidelines were centralized at the state level more recently

(1960), the local governing bodies (school boards) were present at the inception of the educational initiative and have always had room for maneuver. Quebec society emphasizes education as a tool for individual and collective development, which is related to the objective of sustaining a distinct society within Canada (Rocher, 2004). This is also linked to the aim to reinforce the role of the state in education, in comparison to other Canadian provinces. However, there is no such thing as a resistance to transnational "public management" discourse within Quebec public administration (Dufour, 2012). The variations between these two cases will allow us to test the explanatory capacity of the three dimensions of our theoretical framework (trajectory, mediation, and instrumentation).

Choosing these two systems allowed us to design a most different system comparison (especially on the topics of multilevel governance) but also to extend the empirical coverage of the international literature on accountability in education, which tends to focus on systems where accountability mechanisms are highly developed, such as the USA, England, or Chile, by exploring cases where accountability is still a low-stakes issue (Maroy, 2015).

4.4 Research Conventions

Comparison depends on comparability. The latter was progressively shaped by a series of research conventions we adopted as a team.

4.4.1 Toward a Common Language

It was first necessary to agree upon a common language. The research was done in a French-speaking context, and it was not always possible to find a direct equivalent of accountability as a notion, as a process, and as a policy. As a concept, it was finally decided to think of accountability as a relationship, as Mark Bovens (2007, 2010) invites us to do.[5] This definition was particularly useful in studying the concrete forms taken by accountability mechanisms which are effectively implemented in Quebec and France, without overestimating the importance of a particular theoretical model or accepting at face value profuse policy speeches on the topic. As a process, we rapidly focused on specific accounts: the outcomes, results, or performances of the school system and not other forms of accounts that the actor may justify in an accountability process, such as financial choices or process compliancy, for instance. As a policy, we finally defined accountability policies as policies whose purpose is to favor the implementation of governance, or more

[5] For him, accountability can be defined as "a relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct, the forum can pose questions and pass judgment, and the actor may face consequences" (Bovens, 2007, p. 450).

precisely an institutional regulation, based on results (*politique de gouvernance par les résultats*). This orientation rapidly led some members of the project to work on a new typology of accountability policies which more effectively took into account the diversity of accountability systems and the role of tools and instruments in these policies (Maroy & Voisin, 2014).

4.4.2 Identifying Comparable Empirical Objects

The key challenge, then, was to clearly define the empirical focus of the research in each system. In Quebec, accountability policy, as defined above, clearly referred to the "results-based management" (RBM) that has been explicitly and regularly implemented in public administrations (not only in education).

Results-based management appeared on the political agenda in the early 2000s and was soon converted into a reform bill (Bill 82).

From that perspective, we see RBM as an "institutional change mechanism." In other words, RBM is promoting new institutional features, among which the most important are new public policy tools. Temporalities are at the center of our analysis since the changes (or non-changes) we were seeking could only be observed over time. From that perspective, we analyzed the "genesis" and the "trajectory" of the RBM policy in education. Through documentary analysis and a review of the literature, we looked for the gradual emergence of ideas, values, and rules linked to the RBM policy. We then saw how multiple policy actors were (co)constructing the policy itself through different "forums" (Fouilleux, 2000).

For the second research axis, we turned our lens toward policy implementation at the intermediate and local level of the school system. Even if we establish a methodological demarcation line, we consider that the implementation process is embedded in the policy co-construction process. In other words, the policy itself is not considered a "final product" when implementation occurs. We were still looking for changes, specifically what we call "mediation logic" by the intermediate actors (see Chap. 3).

Finally, we extended our research to a third axis complementary to the previous two: RBM policy tools. Those tools are well defined in the Education Act and their use is mandatory. Therefore, we quickly identified a core set of policy tools to investigate at each level—mostly based on the plan/contract/accountability report classical process. However, at the stage of defining the research problem, we found that we must add to these "official" tools all the mechanisms developed at the intermediate level in order to collect the data and monitor the organization's performances. From our perspective, this broader range of tools constitutes the RBM toolset. We emphasized those policy tools at each level because they can be considered as change trackers (see Table 4.1). Most tools are artifacts that enable a diachronic analysis and, therefore, their study complements the other data examined. Yet, above all, policy tools can be studied on their own as "institutions" encompassing their own sets of ideas, values, and rules and interacting with organizational actors.

Table 4.1 Studying Quebec "results-based management"

		Case studies	
		Organizations[a]	Policy tools
Policy levels	Central	Quebec Ministry of Education	Contract (with SB), Ministry's strategic plan, performance indicators
	Intermediate	Four school boards	Contract (with QME and schools) and accountability reports to QME, strategic plan, performance indicator, RBM-oriented software
	Local	Four public secondary schools (Francophone) and two public secondary schools as complementary fieldwork	Contract (with SB) and accountability reports to SB, success plan, performance indicator, RBM-oriented software

[a]To maintain the anonymity of these interviewees and organizations, we gave a nickname to each SB and school studied. School boards: Southern SB, Eastern SB, Western SB, and Northern SB. School: Mountain School, Waterfall School, Borough School, and Meadow School

In France, there was no obvious equivalent to the Quebec experience. The French accountability policy is not so formalized and codified, especially because there is still a burning policy debate among institutional actors on the legitimacy of imposing an obligation of results on professionals. Consequently, the translations of accountability available in the French policy debate all have their particularities and political meanings. As a set of press dispatches illustrates (see Sect. 4.5), the expression "obligation of results" is used from a rather critical perspective by professionals or scholars; "results-based regulation" remains an academic expression without any institutional implications; "administrative responsibility" refers to various—and often past—processes of accountability and not to current transformations; pleas for "responsibilization" in the policy debate do not refer to an accountability process but rather reflect moral indignation, etc. Finally, it was the notion of "steering by results" that seemed to be the best equivalent to the Quebec policy and to other forms of accountability policies in English-speaking countries. Nevertheless, this notion is mainly an administrative one, and it is not always explicitly integrated into a formal policy. The implementation of the different policy tools (projects, contracts, and evaluations) at the origin of this "steering by results" is very uneven from one period and territory to another. This explains why French field research consisted of the systematization of several case studies and the analysis of various elements falling within the main research subject (see Table 4.2).

4.4.3 Designing Field Research Studies

Another series of conventions concerns the design of the research fields at the intermediate and local levels. In both France and Quebec, the two teams selected intermediate authorities and schools. We first set up criteria for the desired diversity for

Table 4.2 Studying the French "steering by results": its constituent elements

		Case studies	
		Entities	Instruments-mechanisms
Policy levels	Central-national	Central administration of the ministry	Contracts with *rectorats*, LOLF, indicators of performance
	Intermediate	Three *académies*	Projects, contracts, evaluations, LOLF, indicators of performance
	Local	Six public *lycées* and three private ones	Projects, contracts, evaluations, SSBR[a], indicators of performance

[a]Secondary schools' budget reform (*Réforme du cadre budgétaire et comptable*)

Table 4.3 Designing the research fields

		Academic results[a]	Socioeconomic level	Involvement in accountability
	Eastern *académie*	Below average	Disadvantaged	Low
French académies	Southern *académie*	Above average	Advantaged	Average
	Western *académie*	Average	Average	High
Quebec school boards[b]	Southern SB	Average	Advantaged	NA
	Eastern SB	Above average	Slightly disadvantaged	NA
	Western SB	Below average	Slightly disadvantaged	NA
	Northern SB	Above average	Very advantaged	NA

[a]France: Average success rate of *académies* on the national *baccalauréat* exam. Quebec: Gap in the success rate of the ministry exam versus the average of public schools (means for the years 2005–2014)

[b]Ethics conventions in Quebec require us to respect the anonymity of school boards, which is not the case for the French *académies*

each of the organizations studied (see Table 4.3) in terms of (1) the academic results and (2) the socioeconomic characteristics of its student population. Furthermore, their different stance on accountability policy was also taken into account in the French cases. The process of selecting the organizations was another matter and differs widely between our two national cases. In Quebec, this process was a little more haphazard due to field accessibility problems (especially at the school level). However, in both cases, we were able to meet the original diversity criteria to a considerable extent.

In Quebec, since the SBs govern the schools under their jurisdiction, we have made them our first point of entry into the field. We have chosen to confine ourselves to the SB of the Francophone network in order to facilitate comparison with the French cases and because it is this network which provides schooling to the vast majority of students. We contacted a sample of 30 Francophone SBs (out of 60 in

total). Some SBs were set aside in order not to hinder other similar research being conducted simultaneously or due to their atypical characteristics (notably the size of the organization). Moreover, a factor of relative geographical proximity (related to our ability to send research teams) guided this first selection.[6] The SBs participated on a voluntary basis. In the end, 4 out of 30 SBs agreed to participate in the research. We used our preliminary analysis of the genesis of the law within the Quebec political field as a framework to guide our empirical choices, both to frame our interviews and for our interpretation of the data.

When selecting schools, only the Northern SB gave us full access to their secondary schools and staff. We were able to access schools that are all performing relatively well, with a few socioeconomic and demographic variations: a rural and economically advantaged school, a privileged suburban school, and a slightly disadvantaged suburban school. We were also able to interview several Southern SB teachers in further research on teachers' perceptions of RBM. However, we were unable to obtain official access to those schools from the SB authority. Access to teachers was made possible by the local teachers' unions. In one case (Meadow School), we completed our case study with an interview previously done with the school principal, but, in the other two schools, it was impossible to interview school principals. Therefore, we only selected Meadow School for our Southern SB sample; the two other school interviews are referred to as contextual elements. Despite our best efforts and previous agreements with the Eastern and Western SB, we were denied access to their schools. Obviously, this was not our initial plan.

Those difficulties in three SBs out of four can be explained by the sensitive aspect of the research on RBM in education. RBM has encountered much resistance from teachers but also from some principals. In certain SBs, as shown in the interview with middle managers, the implementation process was particularly tense. Moreover, while we were conducting our fieldwork, the teachers' unions were negotiating their collective labor agreement, adding another level of sensitivity. Teachers' union representatives, SB officials, and school principals were all trying to control the narrative on RBM implementation. Despite those difficulties and the various channels of access to the field,[7] the four schools used as case studies were rich in information, especially from the point of view of the use of tools, and actors' interactions with tools, as we were able to see plenty of either positive or negative interactions. Moreover, in all cases, we triangulated data collected from interviews with both staff and managerial teams, in addition to documentary sources. In the

[6] All of the SBs contacted were located in the following regions: Capitale-Nationale, Mauricie, Montérégie, Estrie, Lanaudière, Laval, Montréal, Center-du-Quebec, Outaouais, and Laurentides.

[7] The Northern SB managers were promoting RBM, and this SB was arguably able to negotiate its implementation well enough (but by no means without tensions, especially in Mountain School) that they were confident in providing us access to their schools. In contrast, the Southern SB seemed less successful at implementing RBM locally. But the Meadow School principal was in the forefront of the "culture change" sought by some Southern SB managers. Still the teachers of this school were fiercely opposed to most of those changes and were eager to talk about them. This probably led the local teachers' unions to accept our proposal to interview teachers of the Southern SB.

end, the data gathered gave us the empirical material needed for this last stage of the research.

In France, the selection of local and intermediate organizations was relatively complex because there are a lot of administrative levels corresponding to different responsibilities in primary and secondary education. Which is the relevant intermediate authority: the *rectorat* at the regional level or the former *inspection d'académie* at the departmental one? Three *rectorats d'académie* were selected according to the criteria mentioned above (results, population, and accountability policy) but also according to the location of the team members and the institutional links they could have developed with regional authorities. In each *académie*, three *lycées* (upper secondary schools) were selected, two from public education and one from the private sector.

These choices raise two major issues. The first concerns the very different scales of the intermediate authorities in France and Quebec. For example, the Western *académie* alone has as many students in primary and secondary education as Quebec as a whole (more than one million). Second, the French team focused on upper secondary education (compulsory or post-compulsory), whereas the results-based management in Quebec was a comprehensive policy covering both primary and secondary education.

Nevertheless, despite differences between primary and secondary education and differences in size, this comparison remained optimal for various reasons. First, a multilevel approach within French *académies* that would have taken into account both primary and secondary education, as well as the local, departmental, and regional levels, was not realistic within the research project format (five scholars working on the French policy for 4 years). The three *académies* encompass nine departments, and there are about a hundred local districts in primary education in the Eastern *académie* alone. Thus, it was very difficult to design a qualitative field study that would have embraced all these levels, even on the basis of relevant and representative sampling processes. It was even less feasible as negotiations would have had to be undertaken with the relevant authorities at every institutional level in order to access data. This was all the more problematic as the implementation of accountability policy tools is very uneven from one territory or period to another.

Second, since 2012, there has been a strong movement of reconcentration of powers at the regional level of the *académies* within French school administrations, so that the *rectorats* are now the key institutional intermediate level of the system. And specifically, we wanted to focus on the decisive intermediate level in mediation in each system. So even if, empirically, these intermediate levels are institutionally very different in their status and size, theoretically, they should play the same key institutional mediation role in the implementation of policies.

Third, it is in upper secondary education that performance indicators and accountability mechanisms are most developed: even if it is always interesting to study cases in which accountability measures are less intensively implemented, it was relevant to focus on this level for the purpose of comparison. Fourth, this focus on *rectorats-lycées* did not prevent us from studying the implementation of accountability tools at other levels since, according to the internal governance

frameworks of each *académie*, powers may be given to the directors of departmental services.

4.4.4 Organizing the Academic Dialogue Within the Project

To adopt this common language, identify comparable objectives, develop similar research field designs, and then implement the research consistently, we had to adopt a specific method of coordination and academic dialogue between and within each national research team. Beyond the traditional and expected annual meetings of the teams and the numerous videoconferences that we organized, we decided to provide and disseminate a series of internal academic documents. The latter were necessary to systematize communication among members of the project, disseminate its key orientations, and agree on provisional conclusions or findings.

For each theoretical dimension of the project (see Chap. 3), the directors provided a theoretical note to frame the field research. These notes recalled the grid of theoretical questions mentioned in the project and stressed the main components of the theoretical framework adopted, as well as their general implications for the field research study. These notes were always discussed collectively so that different members of the project could enrich the global conceptualization of the research according to their areas of expertise.

Consequently, these notes were very helpful in developing methodological documents within each team, such as interview grids. These collective documents disseminated within and between each national team specified (1) the theoretical questions retained; (2) their implications for fieldwork, for instance, the necessity, when studying the instrumentation of an accountability policy, of stressing the various institutional and technical steps of the implementation of a specific mechanism, even if this is sometimes boring and distasteful; (3) the strategy of research adopted, for example, in interviews asking people to first talk about their professional trajectory and their everyday work to give them due recognition and build mutual confidence; and (4) the list of questions (interview grids, for instance).

The field research on mediation and instrumentation processes (the second and third research dimensions) resulted in a series of national case studies (for schools and intermediate authorities) that were systematically sent to the other national teams (sometimes in summary form) with additional documents, such as formal descriptions of the role of these intermediate authorities within the school system and summaries of the main statistical indicators available or of the cases themselves. These documents were systematically commented upon by a person from the other national team to ensure a comparative aspect in the conception of each case study.

These elements were discussed throughout the project in various internal seminars but also in two international symposiums that we organized in Paris in May 2015 and in Montreal in May 2016. The latter provided opportunities to compare the *(New)AGE* main findings with recent research on that issue in other countries or policy fields.

4.5 Data and Materials

In Quebec and France, we used different qualitative methods to collect appropriate data: analyses of various types of documents (official texts, institutional documents, parliamentary debates, press releases, and newspaper articles), observations in schools and school administrations (when possible), and interviews with actors at different institutional positions within the education system. As mentioned above, the implementation of such methods was based on various methodological framing notes to make comparison possible. Nevertheless, given the specificity of each policy and each system, on the one hand, and the particular administrative conditions of access to schools and school administrations on the other, differences were introduced in our methodological plan so that totally symmetrical datasets were impossible.

In Quebec, the RBM is a highly formalized policy based on several legislative texts. Thus, it was logical to center a significant portion of our methodology on the origin and political life of these laws.

First, we reviewed the literature (1988–2000) on the development of results-based management in Quebec and its precursors. The choice of documentary corpus for the synthesis of the empirical literature on RBM was carried out in several stages. We first did extensive subject-matter research. We consulted fellow experts to help us define this corpus. We then selected the most representative texts of the period (according to expert input and our own research topic—see Sect. 4.6). The final corpus contains a total of 23 references: research reports and articles in both academic and professional journals. To this corpus, we added the evolution of the law on education since its last revision (1988).

Yet, the key period for the development of results-based management in education is that of the 2000s. Our main objective for that period was to gain an understanding of which ideas and actors were influential in the construction of the policy. For this purpose, we focused on a dataset consisting of three kinds of primary sources: (1) the transcript of the political debates in parliamentary committees and in the National Assembly[8] concerning RBM education bills (124 in 2002 and 88 in 2008) (we focused on speeches given by the representatives of the three political parties (the governing party and two opposition parties) in charge of education-related issues (7 selected in total for the whole period)); (2) the memoranda submitted by the profes-

[8] The legislative authority in Quebec.

sional and parent associations concerning these bills (13 were selected from 8 different associations representing the most influential groups); and (3) the official legislative documents, that is, both the bill submitted and the bill adopted which modified the law. We consider that those data sources incorporate most of the debate in what we call the "political forum" driving policy construction.

Finally, we also used a corpus of articles and op-ed pieces for the 2000–2012 period to analyze the debate outside the political forum, especially how RBM-related issues appeared on the political agenda. Through those articles, we were looking for a common basis of the discourse on RBM policy in education, embodying in some way the "production of ideas" (which explains the specific analytical method used for this data; see Sect. 4.6). Three major French-language dailies, *Le Devoir*, *La Presse*, and *Le Soleil*, were selected for consistency but also for practical issues of accessibility to sources and materials. Text sampling was based on an incremental keyword selection process (by adding specific keywords to narrow down the sample) by means of a computer search engine. We then revised the entire corpus selected in order to eliminate texts that were not relevant for the analysis. Three hundred forty-five texts were selected in this way.

At the intermediate level, the data were collected in the four SBs previously selected. The data come mainly from semi-directive interviews ($n = 57$) conducted with key stakeholders in the administrative and political structure of each SB (see Table 4.4). Interviews were conducted over a 14-month period. Interview guides were derived from a set of 15 common topics:

- The general presentation of the SB
- The evolution of the SB context
- The organizational structure of the SB
- Perception of educational success
- Overall perception of the results-based management policy
- Policy tools content
- Policy tools construction
- Implementation of RBM
- Data production and use
- Accountability processes
- SB results monitoring and evaluation by the Ministry of Education
- School results monitoring and evaluation by the SB
- Assessment tools
- Perception of the parents
- Perceptions of SB democracy

In order to reflect the professional reality of each actor and reach our own empirical objectives, we focused on specific topics for each stakeholder, topics related to their organizational function or knowledge (see Table 4.4). In rare cases (Southern SB and Western SB), we were also able to make some observations on the deliberation mechanism related to RBM.

Finally, we also had access to the content of the various policy tools central to the implementation of RBM at the intermediate level. We did a content analysis of the

Table 4.4 Intermediate and local level interviews: sample composition

Stakeholders	Sample	Specific topics[a]
School board level: n = 57		
Director general/deputy director general	13	SB management and strategic planning
		SB accountability
Administrators	14	SB educational management
		SB human resources
Political stakeholders (commissioners, parent's representatives)	11	SB political accountability
Employees responsible for processing and analyzing data	3	SB statistical tools
Union representative	3	Union's perception of RBM implementation
Pedagogic counselors	13	Educational link with the schools
		Uses of data related to their work
		Perception of accountability tools' impact on teachers' performance
School level: n = 31		
School principals	4 + 3	School accountability
		School implementation strategy and history
		Perception and uses of tools
		Management link between SB and schools
Deputy principals	4	Perception and uses of accountability tools
Teachers[b]	20	Perception of accountability impact on their work
		Description of accountability tools in the school

[a]Topics specific to some stakeholders

[b]We interviewed teachers from those four schools for complementary findings. Even if (New)AGE project is not focusing on teachers' policy reception, we used those interviews as contextual data, especially for Chap. 7 focusing on the implementation and use of policy tools at the school level

current strategic planning (at the time of the inquiry) of each SB studied. In some cases (when available; Eastern SB and Northern SB), previou s strategic plans were also included in the analysis. In addition, we included in our policy tools dataset the Partnership Agreements of the SBs.

At the school level, we mainly focused on the context of the school, the specific RBM implementation strategy, and, in particular, the "policy tools" axis of our research (see Chap. 3). Besides the four semi-directive interviews designed for the SB level, conducted with school principals at the Southern SB and Northern SB in the first stage of our research, we also conducted another series of semi-directive interviews with school principals and assistant principals ($n = 7$) of the Northern SB's secondary schools to which we had access. Those schools were examined as case studies in their own right. We analyzed different policy tools from those schools: their management agreements with the Northern SB, their annual public reports, and a sample of the representation of significant academic performance

issues for those schools (mostly in the form of bar graphs and results spreadsheets). Moreover, the teachers' interviews (Northern and Southern SB) were also used to analyze the RBM policy tools in use and the impact on their work.

In France, as we will see, steering by results led to less concentrated, more widely spread public action. Studying it involved going back and examining the origin of various instruments and ideas but also measuring its empirical effectiveness beyond the different types of discourse, whose actual institutional base may vary in strength. That is why we started first at the national level, with the analysis of a group of 621 dispatches on questions of governance by results. These were published between March 1998 and July 2012 by a press agency specializing in education (AEF).[9] In addition, a collection of 493 articles published in institutional and professional journals was also studied.[10] These were selected based on three criteria: their status, their role in rendering visible certain problems related to our subject, and the characteristics of their readership. We also examined a corpus of official texts from the French Ministry of National Education, part of which (the ministerial circulars issued at the start of the new school year) was analyzed using lexicometry (with *Lexico* software). Moreover 19 in-depth interviews were carried out with national actors on the question of steering by results. These actors were identified in the corpus. This material also allowed for an analysis of the trajectory of steering by results in France and made it possible to examine its implementation through a case study: the implementation of a contract between the Ministry of National Education's central administration and the *rectorats*.

The same kind of research design was reproduced at the intermediate and local levels. As far as intermediate administrative authorities within *académies* are concerned, 30 interviews with administrative senior managers and office holders were cross-checked with (1) three datasets of AEF press dispatches[11]; (2) an academic literature review of research specifically devoted to these territories; (3) the collection of various ministerial documents on the three *académies* (their profiles, their projects, their contracts, their key statistical features, sometimes their history, their evaluation by general inspectors, and so on); (4) some local archives when they were relevant; and (5), when possible, various observations of management meetings. At the public school level, we conducted 32 semi-structured interviews with principals, teachers, bursars, and education counselors. These interviews were triangulated with observations of council meetings (boards of trustees and education councils), numerous institutional documents (official circulars edited by the

[9] We updated this dataset for the purpose of this book. It now includes 722 press dispatches published between March 1998 and June 2017.

[10] The articles came from the following publications: *L'éducation nationale* (1945–1968), *L'éducation* (1968–1980), *Les amis de Sèvres* (1949–1988), *Courrier de l'éducation* (1975–1981), *Administration et éducation* (1979–2012), *L'éducation Hebdo* (1980–1982), *Cahiers de l'Éducation nationale* (1982–1986), *Éducation et pédagogies* (1989–1993), *Éducation et mangement* (1989–2009), *Nouveaux regards* (1994–2012), and *Revue internationale d'éducation de Sèvres* (1994–2012).

[11] Three hundred and thirty-eight for Eastern *académie*, 345 for Southern *académie*, and 244 for Western *académie*, all for the period from April 1998 to April 2015.

rectorats, administrative files conceived for the steering procedures, contracts, projects, evaluation reports, and statistical indicators), and, when relevant, datasets of local press articles.

The success of a qualitative inquiry of this kind in various territories depends greatly on the ability of researchers first to access the field of investigation and then, if possible, to control the sources of bias throughout the research process. In France, surprisingly, this access was easy to obtain at all levels of the system. This is, for instance, illustrated by the fact that the team could carry out observations, which are in general a sensitive topic. This may be the result of the research team's choice of always negotiating this access at the top decision-making level in a given administrative environment, the confidence inspired by the members of the project who have sometimes specialized in these issues for several years and have established a professional network with respect to these topics, or, more simply, the willingness of the ministry to communicate its recent initiatives and get feedback from the research team in a system in which such feedback is scarce.

In Quebec, as stated above, several pitfalls related to access to our research fields appeared in the course of our investigation. Teachers were in the period of renewal of their collective labor agreement which made certain stakeholders more reluctant to engage in our research project and compromised access to several schools. Moreover, the research topic, education accountability, was sensitive among stakeholders themselves. Finally, this topic was not directly helpful for either SB managers or school principals. In other words, the *(New)AGE* project was intended as fundamental research on accountability, with no immediate benefits for participating actors. Even if the SB's officials were aware of that when agreeing to participate in the research, it might have made it harder to sell it to all stakeholders. Combining sensitive research topics and a busy schedule for the SBs (which, in addition, were suffering from harsh budgetary cuts) and the fieldwork becomes difficult. However, those issues do not in any way minimize the investment in the project of a large number of individuals or lessen the quality of the information we managed to collect.

4.6 Data Analysis

In France, the analytical process can be divided into three stages. The first is encoding. The interviews were nearly all recorded and were either transcribed in their entirety or summarized in chronothematic tables. All the interviews were then encoded and synthesized in transversal thematic files ("governance," "instrumentation," "policy speeches on results," and so on) for purposes of analysis and comparison. The same method was used for observations: all the significant passages of the observation reports were encoded and integrated in the same transversal thematic files. The ministerial circulars that we analyzed with the *Lexico* software were divided into various sections (one section per circular) and codified with five keys (date, minister in power, signatories, number of pages, and the prevalence of

governance by results in the structure of the text). They were then formatted for software analysis (orthographic checking, syntax checking, change of specific signs, and so on). In contrast, the press dispatches were simply listed and directly integrated into overall chronologies.

The second stage is data analysis itself. As far as the French interviews and observations are concerned, we limited ourselves to the grid of questions identified in the academic project and repeated in the various theoretical framing notes mentioned in Sect. 4.4.4 (see also Chap. 3). The press dispatches enabled us to analyze policy trajectory at various institutional levels, to map the policy debate on accountability, to be informed of some key policy documents, and to identify relevant interlocutors. The lexicometric analysis of ministerial circulars remained modest: we only produced the contingency table, simple tabulations of specific graphic forms, qualitative analysis of the environment's surrounding key terms, and cross-tabulated results according to key variables, such as the date. This is due principally to the infrequent occurrence of our key terms ("steering," "results," "project," "contract," and so on) which prevented us engaging in more complex methods of classification and suggested a more literary and qualitative approach. Thirdly, we produced a series of internal working documents in which we detailed our methodology and synthesized our main intermediate findings: two research reports on the national policy trajectory in each system, seven case studies on the implementation of the two accountability policies by intermediate policy actors (three *académies* and four SBs), and six public school case studies in France and four more in Quebec. These documents were structured on the basis of our grid of theoretical questions, but their formal presentation was adapted to the specificities of each national context. In France, since the *académies* as territories and as policy producers have been largely neglected by scholars and since the implementation of accountability mechanisms was uneven from one territory and period to another, it was necessary to have a comprehensive approach and to analyze the history, the morphology, and the general features of these *académies*, to trace the evolution of the steering processes since the end of the 1990s, to synthesize the governance at work at the time of the fieldwork, to appreciate the degree of instrumentation of the accountability policy, to recapitulate the main policy speeches on the topic, and to resituate all these elements in the overall regulation of the *académies* which may or may not follow an increasing accountability trend. The choices made for the analysis of school policies are similar. We started with a general presentation of each school (geographical context, history, size, population, curriculum, and results) and focused on the institutional regulation of each individual school (by the *académie* and by its leader through a specific local school policy), on the more or less strong instrumentation of its policy and on the accountability relationships within the school and their more or less effective integration in systems of broader work relations.

Lastly, as mentioned above, we decided to systematize the collective discussion of each working document during meetings and internal seminars and to always introduce this collective reflection with a discussion of the contribution by a mem-

ber of the other national team in order to favor comparison building and improve the presentation of results.

In Quebec, different methods of analysis were employed to process the selected material. The analysis of the corpus of empirical research texts on RBM for the period 1988–2000 focuses on the synthesis and evaluation of each text based on an analytical reading grid. The reading grid of this corpus aimed at identifying the main elements of each text: research objectives, thesis, the central issues, and the principal elements of the argument. The analytical grid developed earlier was drawn upon to identify elements of interpretation. Selected texts were considered as working material. They served as a basis for our analysis of the policy trajectory. This work was an exegesis: we were putting forward ideas, extending others, and questioning some interpretations. Our goal here was to offer a general perspective on the orientations of Quebec policies and the context in which RBM emerged, while being careful not to overestimate the coherence of this policy network. Finally, we carried out content analysis of specific articles of the Education Act at different points in time (articles related to governance topics mostly in the decade 2000), allowing us to follow RBM trajectory (even though there is much more to it than simply its legalistic aspect).

The analysis of the RBM policy production through the "policy forum" is centered on its cognitive and strategic dimension. This leads to various analytical methods. We used NVivo to do a thematic analysis of the spoken and written data concerning the RBM-related bills. We first analyzed the different "policy narratives" (Radaelli, 2000) used in the education policy forum. Policy narratives are structured around a set of key elements: the main problems of the education system as framed by the actors, the development of set actions and solutions, and a set of anticipated consequences arising from the actual implementation or non-implementation of these solutions. This structure guided our NVivo coding. We then used this coding to reconstruct the main emerging narrative about RBM. This was done by aggregating the different points addressed by the actors on RBM-related topics. Several themes and sub-themes emerged; each sub-theme could relate to the different "phases" of the narrative (problem, action/solution, and consequence). Each theme was a puzzle piece contributing to one causal story representing one policy narrative. The shared visions of actors on specific themes, as well as their opposing positions, were highlighted in this process.

At the same time, we carried out a "strategic analysis" (based on interests and perceived wins and losses) of the main actors' positions within the Education Policy Forum. To complement this analysis, we performed a content analysis of the evolution of Bills 124 and 88 (from inception to the final stage of adoption) to see how they evolved and, especially, which actors had more weight in promoting those changes during the adoption process. The strategic reading of actors' positions also made it possible to discern tensions between different "advocacy coalitions" (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993). The identification of those coalitions was done through highlighting positional fractures among actors and cross-referencing those fractures to different stakes/issues related to RBM.

For the intermediate level, we mostly focused on our extensive set of interviews to elaborate case studies for each SB. Using NVivo software again, we developed a descriptive coding grid based on the interview guide and an analytical coding grid grounded in the new institutionalism and micro-political theoretical approach (discussed in Chap. 3). This coding was, thus, based on the empirical goals associated with the interview guide: (1) determining the organizational and institutional context of each SB and (2) highlighting the process of implementing RBM by the SBs. Following the coding, we produced analytical memos to describe the coding categories for each of the actors interviewed. These were the basis of our case studies. They were complemented by content analysis of the SBs' strategic planning and an analysis of contextual data (academic performances and socioeconomic levels) for each SB. The purpose of the case studies was to highlight the policy mediation logics at work within SBs and the social and organizational features that may influence SB responses to the ministry requirements linked to RBM.

Finally, we used a similar analytical strategy regarding the policy tools. We relied on the interviews conducted with the Northern SB schools and Southern SB Meadow School teachers and principals. We used the same dual coding grid in order to isolate the different elements of the interview and then to analyze them using a second coding grid. In this case, we focused on actors' perceptions and uses of policy tools. In considering policy tools as institutions, we tried to discern their cognitive dimension (the comparisons they suggest and the ideas they contain) and their normative dimensions (the specific forms of "justice" they entail and the various forms of accountability for different school actors they rely on). We replicated this grid to analyze the policy tools themselves. We also did a standard content analysis of each tool. We then extended our interview coding grid to try to understand the tools in use within the school. More specifically, we focused our analysis on the interactions involved in the implementation of these tools. We looked for different forms of interactions, especially understood as a test for an actor. Those tests are public and could arguably be linked to some sort of reflection or critique. We attempted to isolate those reflections in the discourse of the interviewees. Finally, our last analytical goals were to identify any effects of those tools for the actors and the organization. We distinguished pragmatic effects (influences on action) from cognitive effects (influences on representation).

4.7 Controlling the Processes, Refreshing Perspectives

Finally, as far as methodology is concerned, this comparative research involved constantly formalizing and controlling, through specific collective processes, the progressive production of a comparative view of research subjects (governance, accountability, evaluation, contracts, and so on) that we had already analyzed frequently, using national perspectives or specialized approaches. This helped us to make our research focus more explicit, to test hypotheses, to highlight surprising regularities (such as, for instance, the reinforcement of state power in both cases;

see Chap. 5), and to discuss the relevance of a series of theories on globalization, governing changes, and the effects of New Public Management. Yet more fundamentally, it clearly led us, individually and collectively, to distance ourselves from classical, immediate, or traditional classifications about our own cases and to renew our appreciation of our own education system. In this methodological process, the collective elaboration of theoretical notes, the choice made to discuss national results by members from the other team as often as possible, and the constitution of binational teams of researchers when presenting results all played a decisive role.

References

Bezes, P. (2009). *Réinventer l'État*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.

Bovens, M. (2007). Analysing and assessing accountability: A conceptual framework. *European Law Journal, 13*(4), 447–468.

Bovens, M. (2010). Two concepts of accountability: Accountability as a virtue and as a mechanism. *West European Politics, 33*(5), 946–967.

Dufour, C. (2012). *L'institutionnalisation du management public au Québec* (Collection Enseignement supérieur). Québec, Canada: Presses de l'Université du Québec.

Fouilleux, È. (2000). Entre production et institutionnalisation des idées. La réforme de la Politique agricole commune. *Revue française de science politique, 50*(2), 277–306.

Gerring, J. (2007). Is there a (viable) crucial-case method? *Comparative Political Studies, 40*(3), 231–253.

Giraud, O. (2003). Le comparatisme contemporain en science politique: entrée en dialogue des écoles et renouvellement des questions. In M. Lallement & J. Spurk (Eds.), *Stratégies de la comparaison internationale* (pp. 87–106). Paris: Paris Éditions du CNRS.

Lijphart, A. (1971). Comparative politics and the comparative method. *American Political Science Review, 65*(3), 682–693.

Lingard, B., & Rawolle, S. (2011). New scalar politics: Implications for education policy. *Comparative Education, 47*(4), 489–502. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2011.555941

Maroy, C. (2015). Comparing accountability tools and rationales. Various ways, various effects. In H.-G. Kotthof & E. Klerides (Eds.), *Governing educational spaces. Knowledge, teaching and learning in transition* (pp. 35–58). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Maroy, C., Pons, X., & Dupuy, C. (2017). Vernacular globalisations: Neo-statist accountability policies in France and Quebec education. *Journal of Education Policy, 32*(1), 100–122. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2016.1239841

Maroy, C., & Voisin, A. (2014). Une typologie des politiques d'*accountability* en éducation: l'incidence de l'instrumentation et des théories de la régulation. *Education comparée, 11*, 31–58.

Radaelli, C. (2000). Logiques de pouvoir et récits dans les politiques publiques de l'Union européenne. *Revue française de Sciences politiques, 50*(2), 255–276.

Ragin, C. (1987). *The comparative method: Moving beyond qualitative and quantitative strategies*. Berkeley, CA/Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Rocher, G. (2004). Un bilan du Rapport Parent: vers la démocratisation. *Bulletin d'Histoire politique, 12*(2), 117–128.

Sabatier, P. A., & Jenkins-Smith, H. (1993). *Policy change and learning: An advocacy coalition approach*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Chapter 5
Trajectories

Christian Maroy, Xavier Pons, and Claire Dupuy

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the trajectory of performance-based accountability policies in the Quebec and French education systems. In the specialized literature, accountability is often associated with policies promoting new forms of regulation for decentralized organizations (districts, schools, etc.) that are expected to account for their results and outputs based on targets (e.g., qualification rates, results on external exams) and standards (curriculum or evaluation) defined at the central level. From this perspective, decentralized organizations are accountable, either to the chain of command (intermediate bodies or state) or to parents.

In contrast to this homogenizing description of accountability in education, this chapter demonstrates that performance-based accountability policy is not inevitably neoliberal. In fact, in Quebec and France, we observe a neo-statist form of accountability policy that strengthens the role of the political center. This distinction is borrowed from Clark (2002, p. 772), who argues "there is no single model of public service reform associated with neoliberal ideological realignment." He claims that beyond a general reference to NPM, "it is possible to identify two conceptually distinct variants reflecting underlying differences in the political philosophy inspiring the reform" (Clark, 2002, p. 772).

C. Maroy (✉)
University of Montreal, Montreal, QC, Canada
e-mail: christian.maroy@umontreal.ca

X. Pons
University of Eastern-Paris Creteil, Paris, France
e-mail: ponsx@wanadoo.fr

C. Dupuy
Sciences Po, Grenoble, France
e-mail: claire.dupuy@sciencespo-grenoble.fr

C. Maroy, X. Pons (eds.), *Accountability Policies in Education*, Educational Governance Research 11, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-01285-4_5

In order to account for this diverging type of accountability in education policy, the chapter highlights three processes that are often intertwined empirically but distinct from an analytical standpoint: *path dependence* on earlier choices which may be accompanied by gradual institutional changes (e.g., Mahoney & Thelen, 2010); *bricolage*, as specific education policy work consisting of assembling heteroclite preformatted elements; and *translation*, by some actors, of policy ideas and instruments circulating at other levels, especially the international and transnational ones.

Empirically, the chapter compares the trajectories of accountability policies in the French and Quebec education systems from their beginning to the end of the school year 2016–2017. It focuses on the national level, which remains the key level of policy orientation in this case. However, consistent with our multilevel approach—which is itself a continuation of the perspective proposed by Stephen Ball on policy trajectory (1994, 1997)—we will also comment on evolutions at other policy levels when they have significant effects on the dynamics of national public action.

The risk when presenting such a multilevel and multidimensional approach, especially in a concise format, is to take the contextual data and the historical facts supporting the analysis for granted and not make them sufficiently explicit. That is why we first describe the historical evolution of the two national policies: "results-based management"[1] (RBM) in Quebec and "steering by results"[2] in France. We recapitulate the main official texts at the origin of each policy, the key historical periods and the general policy design in Quebec and France. The idea here is not to provide the reader with a linear chronological presentation of the history of each policy but rather, following Foucault's genealogical method,[3] to contemplate policy as a moving construction of speeches, tools, and social relations whose configuration changes over time (Sect. 5.2).[4] Then we document the path dependence, bricolage, and translation processes at work in each empirical case (Sect. 5.3). Lastly, the conclusion compares the empirical results, paying particular attention to the reinforcement, in both cases, of public authorities further to the development of what we will call a "neo-statist" accountability policy.

[1] "Gestion axée sur les résultats" in French.

[2] "Pilotage par les résultats" in French.

[3] Foucault (1971) defines the genealogical approach as a patient historical investigation as opposed to the unicity of historical narratives and to the quest for origin. The idea is not to go back in time to re-establish the continuity of history but rather to work on the basis of diverse, dispersed, and discontinuous events to stress their singularity.

[4] For additional elements on historical and institutional contexts, see Chap. 2.

5.2 Accountability Policies in France and Quebec: An Historical Overview

In both France and Quebec, accountability policies in education, as such, were explicitly formulated and implemented starting in the 2000s. The chronology and, to a considerable degree, the policy design itself are relatively similar. In both cases, indeed, from the 1970s onward, various initiatives were taken to confront the new challenges that emerged in the previous decade (after the *Parent Commission* in 1963–1964 in Quebec or the "May 68" events in France). They led to the implementation of various new policy tools with different purposes. These tools are sometimes identical on both sides of the Atlantic, such as the school projects initiated in 1975 in France and in 1979 in Quebec. The issues raised by their implementation, as well as the new institutional challenges of steering autonomy in a decentralized education system, whether historically decentralized (Quebec) or decentralizing since the 1980s (France), paved the way for a new performance-based accountability system which progressively rested on similar policy tools: plans or projects, contracts or conventions, statistical indicators, and evaluation devices.

Nevertheless, as we will see throughout this chapter, beyond these apparent formal similarities, the degree of codification of each policy, its explicit and consistent insertion in a set of other policies, its effective implementation, and its institutional consequences are very different from one case to another. That is why we present them separately, in order to preserve the internal consistency of each national history.

5.2.1 Quebec: A Cumulative History?

This section provides a historical summary of results-based management (RBM) in Quebec's education system. We first present the key dates and the laws that constitute the principal rules and normative ingredients framing the "modern" education system in Quebec since the so-called Parent Commission. These institutional frames were, indeed, key resources or constraints in the political construction of RBM (Bills 82, 124, 88, and finally 105) occurring in the decades 2000/2010 (see Sect. 5.3). The purpose of this section is also to provide the reader with a clear vision of the chronology of the main legislation related to RBM. Therefore, at first glance, this presentation could give the impression that the trajectory of RBM in Quebec is fairly linear. This false impression will be challenged in the second part of this section, where we will emphasize that some tools (such as school projects and external exams) were initially implemented and legalized in isolation from the other RBM tools (plans, contracts, and targets) which were institutionalized later and are at the heart of the policy. Moreover, we will insist on the changing repertoire, names, meanings, relations, and content of the tools related to RBM in Quebec. In the second section of this chapter, these changes will be understood in light of the main

processes of translation, bricolage, and path dependence involved in the construction of these bills and RBM tools.

5.2.1.1 Genesis and Chronology of RBM Bills

As we saw in Chap. 2, in Quebec, education was historically in the care of faith-based organizations (Catholic or Protestant) in the form of school boards (SBs) organized through local territorial elections and linked to religious hierarchies. Education was transferred to the state once and for all in the wake of the Quiet Revolution and the Parent Commission (1963; see the timeline in Fig. 5.1). Aside from the key formal structures of the current education system (the creation of the education ministry and the development of public primary and secondary schools with relatively unified curricula and pedagogical systems), this change brought about two widely shared societal conventions: promoting the aim of modernizing Quebec society via "national" education policy and rendering education accessible to all (Corbo, 1994).

As school access was extended, the ideal of education for all was progressively attained during the 1980s and 1990s, with the notion of "educational success," a key term that became preponderant during the Estates General on Education in 1996, another crucial moment in the education debate in Quebec (Deniger, 2012). From then on, equal education was no longer seen merely as equality of opportunity to "access" school (free education and an equal distribution of schooling) but was also seen as equality of opportunity to "succeed." The reform resulting from the Estates General formulated this as "success for all" (*réussite pour tous*).

Another significant policy issue was the debate surrounding school autonomy and "decentralization," which emerged during the 1970s and 1980s in the wake of internal criticism of excessive centralization brought about by the new education ministry, but also in the context of growing international models in favor of "school-based management" (Brassard, 2007). Several laws consolidated and secularized the SBs (there were 800 of them in 1971/1972 and only 72 language SBs in 1997). Yet the question of school autonomy was raised at several junctures and, with it, the revalorization of local education steering, in keeping with the long tradition of local school democracy in Quebec. Bill 180 (1996), which resulted from the Estates General, explicitly aimed to "reinforce the role of local actors, and reinforce community involvement in education governance" (Dembélé, Goulet, Lapointe, & Deniger, 2013, p. 59). The law gave more institutional autonomy to individual schools; in addition, parents' roles were reinforced with the creation of a school council (*conseil d'établissement*) tasked with defining a school project (*projet éducatif*) for each school. School autonomy was perceived as a means to improve educational success, while a form of horizontal accountability to the local community was expected from schools (Lessard, Henripin, & Larochelle, 2004).

During this period, statistics and indicators became not only tools to provide knowledge about the education system but also tools for planning and monitoring public action (Doray, Prévost, Delavictoire, Moulin, & Beaud, 2011). At the central

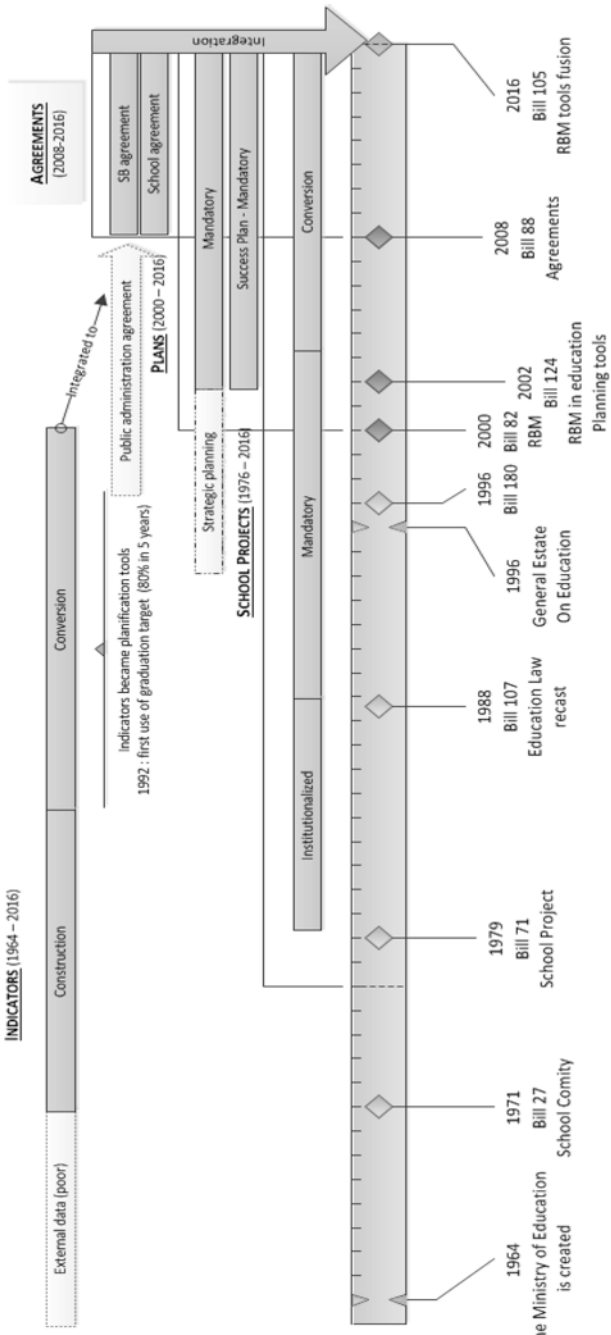

Fig. 5.1 Key education policy stages in Quebec RBM tools: indicators, school projects, plans, and agreements

level, some QME action plans ("*À chacun ses devoirs*" in 1992 and "*Prendre le virage du succès*" in 1997) introduced quantified targets for the first time, namely, the school qualification rate. In addition, various actions and programs were developed to improve school success in disadvantaged schools and areas (especially in some neighborhoods of the city of Montreal), while at the same time, the QME developed new statistical indicators to measure the so-called underprivileged environment (in French, *indice de défavorisation*) (Deniger, 2012).

In summary, if growing concerns with the "accountability" of schools to local communities already emerged during the Estates General (Brassard, 2007), it was only in the 2000s that the objectives of higher success rates and better "results" were explicitly tied to the desire to create more "overall consistency" in the education system and more bottom-up accountability. The decentralization movement was, from then on, counterbalanced by a general reform of public administration.

In 2000, the Public Administration Act reform[5] (Bill 82) established the foundations of "results-based management" and promoted a general public administration reform. Bill 82 was part of a climate of public service reform in Canada throughout the 1990s (Clark, 2002) which led to the adoption of a "policy statement" by the Treasury Board promoting a new form of public management (Quebec Government, 1999), whose main ideas and models were, in fact, borrowed from ongoing experiences and reforms in other Canadian provinces or Commonwealth countries. For example, high-ranking Quebec officials visited Great Britain to discuss the implementation of administrative reform while the bill was under consideration (Bourgault, 2004). According to Fortier, Bill 82 was a turning point and corresponds to "the entry into force of managerialism into Quebec public organizations" (Fortier, 2010, p 807). For Dembélé et al. (2013), it constitutes "the legal framework" of New Public Management for the province of Quebec (p. 96).

However, for the education ministry's central administration, Bill 82 only meant the institutionalization of their strategic plan and the use of statistical indicators to measure the education system's performance rates. Thus, a specific department of strategic planning was created within the QME (Lessard, Henripin, Larochelle, Cournoyer, & Carpentier, 2007), and "annual steering indicators" were elaborated in collaboration with the SBs (QME, 2003, 2004).

Inspired by a Forum on Youth (*Sommet du Quebec et de la Jeunesse*, 1999–2000), the extension of this management reform to the Quebec public network of education was first launched on a voluntary basis in the spring of 2000 by the Minister of Education, F. Legault. Through financial incentives, he encouraged schools to develop "success plans" in order to operationalize their school projects and promote "success for all." However, this "success plan" initiative faced various implementation problems: the lack of cooperation between schools and SBs, a problematic choice of indicators, and the vagueness of the success plans (*Rapport de la Vérificatrice Générale*, 2001–2002 in Lessard et al., 2007, p. 63).

[5] Public Administration Modernization Act, 2001, L.R.Q. c.-A-6.0. This act derived from the discussion, amendments, and adoption of Bill 82 in the *Assemblée Nationale* of Quebec.

In 2002, the *Parti québécois* (PQ)[6] held a vote on Bill 124,[7] which extended the results-based management approach to the public education network, making strategic planning processes within SBs obligatory and requiring schools to define success plans intended to "operationalize" their school projects. The schools were to create annual management reports and were to be held accountable to local democratic bodies (councils of elected commissioners or school councils) for the achievement of their plans.

Bill 88,[8] adopted 6 years later, went further, requiring that accountability from lower to higher levels be based on results compared to previously determined "measurable objectives" or targets. This bill also introduced contractualization ("partnership agreements" between the ministry and the SBs and "management and educational success agreements" between the SBs and schools). Since then, the SBs and then the schools have had targets to reach and plans aligned with the ministry's performance objectives. This was a powerful recentralization mechanism. As a consequence, the local level's leeway was considerably reduced, despite the institutional autonomy given to schools. However, following the changes introduced by Bills 124 and 88 in the Education Act, there are neither explicit incentives (financial bonuses) nor sanctions for "failing" schools or SBs, in contrast to the US high-stakes accountability systems (e.g., firing or transferring the superior officers or principals). At the time of our inquiry into schools and SBs, therefore, there were only "moderate stakes" for RBM in Quebec.[9]

The focus of our empirical study is the implementation of Bill 124 and, more importantly, Bill 88. However, following the completion of our fieldwork, there have been further developments in the Quebec's results-based management education policy. With the new Liberal government (2014–2018), a new minister of education (François Blais) tried to leave his mark on the public education network in 2015, by proposing Bill 86. This bill intended to revoke the current status of SB commissioners as elected representatives and the SB taxation power as it had been practiced so far. In this bill, provisions tend also to strengthen the ministry's control over the education network, to increase the power of parents in decision-making

[6] The province of Quebec has a parliamentary political system like that of the United Kingdom. The party with the most deputies forms the government. The main political parties during the period in question were the *Parti libéral du Quebec* (PLQ), the *Parti québécois* (PQ), and the *Action démocratique du Quebec* (ADQ).

[7] Act to amend the Act with respect to the *Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation* and Education Act, 2002, L.R.Q., c.-I-13.3.

[8] Act to amend the Education Act and other provisions, 2008, L.R.Q., c.-I-13.3.

[9] Two forms of sanctions are possible. (1) In the case of an SB's recurrent poor performance (related to targets), the ministry might impose some actions on the SB (no example reported) or (2) due to its hierarchical power, the SB might also take into account school performance in evaluating and managing the school principal's career, although there are no direct and explicit sanctions possible for teachers who are protected by collective agreements We should also mention that, since 1999, schools' reports and rankings are published in the media. Thus, before the enactment of Bills 124 and 88, parents could exert pressure on "bad" public schools and SBs by choosing the private sector (Desjardins, Lessard, & Blais, 2011).

processes (at school and SB level) and deeply reduce the SB's room of maneuver. However, this bill was strongly challenged by education actors, with SBs in the lead. This resistance (in particular against the removal of school election and democracy at the SB level) could have contributed to the replacement of the minister by a new one, Sebastien Proulx.[10]

The minister Proulx quickly stated his desire to move away from "structural reforms" and focus on "success." He soon abandoned his predecessor's Bill 86 to propose one of his own (Bill 105, 2016). This change to the Education Act is more limited in scope, as it does not call the SB into question as an institution. However, it brings about significant changes in education accountability, especially in regard to its policy tools. Bill 105 reinforces the mechanisms of vertical coordination associated with RBM (the imposition of targets by the minister; the prescription of the "modalities" of the "strategic planning process" for the lower levels; and increased "monitoring" capacity). This strengthening also involves the merger of policy tools associated with RBM (plans and agreements are integrated into a single tool for each level) and an enhancement of the accountability capability of these tools. Finally, this merging of tools is accompanied by the abandonment of the formal principle of contractualization between each level, put forward by the "agreement" tools of Bill 88. Thus, the bill promotes more control and performance-based accountability from all levels to the minister and to parents, even though more room for maneuver is given to school principals in their relations with the SB. This bill was adopted in the fall of 2016, in conjunction with the implementation of a broad-based consultation project on "student success."

This approach, far from challenging RBM, rather seems to reinforce the vertical character of this performance-based accountability system. The changes related to this new inflection of the RBM trajectory have not been implemented at the time of writing (it will start in the fall of 2017), but it seems to be part of the paths traced since 2008.

5.2.1.2 A Shifting Repertoire of RBM Tools in Quebec

The history of the RBM bills could give the impression of some linear construction of their policy tools. This impression could be reinforced if we listen to the official discourse, intended to give some coherence to the policy and the policy tools.[11]

[10] He is a former member of the ADQ party and was ADQ's legislative representative for education. At the time of Bill 88 (2008), he was in favor of the abolition of SBs. As we will see later, SBs as an institution are not easy to remove, due to significant institutional path dependence which was still at work at the time of Bill 86 (2015) which unsuccessfully attempted to abolish school board democracy.

[11] If we consult the guides written by the QME to make sense of the policy, all tools and actors have a clear and complementary role, contributing to improving "perseverance and success"; see *La convention de partenariat. Outil d'un nouveau mode de gouvernance. Guide d'implantation*. Quebec's Ministry of Education (QME) 2009.

However, if we closely examine the actual genealogy of these tools, the illusion of linearity and consistency among tools and bills disappears.

First, some of these tools have a much longer genesis. As is apparent in Fig. 5.1, tools such as "school projects," "indicators," or "plans" have been used and institutionalized in Quebec education in various and independent ways since long before the first RBM bills. Indicators, tools that serve in Bill 88's framework to detail and justify the targets mentioned in the plans and agreements, have long been used in the Quebec system (since the creation of the QME). Moreover, some performance indicators are built upon the testing system in Quebec (the external exams), organized by the QME since the 1960s. As Doray et al., (2011) explain, the primary function of these indicators was to provide better knowledge of the system and its outputs and outcomes. However, in the 1990s, the use of indicators was increasingly coupled with diverse forms of planning at the central level in conjunction with a specific policy concerning the newly recognized problem of a significant "drop-out rate" in certain disadvantaged regions and populations. Indicators became a "monitoring tool of public action" and not only a tool for knowledge (Doray et al., 2011, p. 211).

Second, some tools have been associated with various policy preoccupations other than performance-based accountability. For example, "school projects" are associated with reflections concerning decentralization and school autonomy. They were employed and institutionalized from the time of Bill 71 (1979) until Bill 180 (1996) (Fig. 5.1). During that period, the school project was associated in the political discourse with the need for accountability to the "community," especially to parents in the "school council." In other words, this tool was associated with a normative reference to "local participative democracy" at the school level. The school project has the theoretical virtue and function of opening the school to the local community and formalizing the values, ideals, and concrete projects that characterize the local identity of the school community (Brassard, 2007; Lessard, 2006).

This "horizontal" accountability relation was then related to performance-based accountability when, during the Youth Summit (2000), other narratives stressed that "success plans" should operationalize the "school project" with targets and indicators of results. These narratives insist that this new tool should help to address the crucial challenges of "success" and the "qualification rate," particularly for disadvantaged or indigenous populations and boys in particular.[12] These narratives occurred in a context in which the discourse of NPM and the discussion of Bill 82 (2000) had already taken place.

Finally, the links between the tools have themselves fluctuated. We have seen, for example, that "agreements" appear only in Bill 88, while they disappear after Bill 105, which sought to simplify the tools.

In summary, within the current directory of accountability tools, several were developed at the outset somewhat independently of RBM policy, as Fig. 5.1 shows. The connection of school projects, strategic or success plans, agreements, indicators, and targets put in place by these bills was specific and has changed over time,

[12] In particular, this problem was put forward by trade unions and various stakeholders during the Estates General of Education.

as have the number of tools, their names, contents, or meanings. In Sect. 5.3, we will show how the influence of various mechanisms has led to a particular discursive articulation among tools, as one possibility among others.

5.2.2 France: A More Contingent Policy Development?

In France, even if the expression "steering by results" appeared explicitly in 2003 and was then defined as an instrumental triptych linking projects, contracts, and evaluations, the performance-based accountability policy is not as codified and formalized as Quebec RBM. For instance, there is no official act explicitly using this expression. There is no equivalent to Quebec Bills 82, 124, 88, or 105, but instead a multitude of other official texts, with more or less regulatory power, which do introduce the key policy tools at the origin of steering by results but without always saying so and without linking them explicitly to a specific policy to meet a set of public policy goals.

Therefore, the historical development of the French performance-based accountability policy is particularly nonlinear. Starting in 2003 would make us underestimate the importance of former experiences and overestimate the role played by this "new" expression (nominalist bias). Yet starting before 2003 exposes us to the risk of providing a linear vision of history that would rationalize a posteriori historical dynamics that are, ultimately, more contingent, in order to come up with the expected outcome (teleological bias).

That is why our approach in this section is close to Foucault's idea of genealogy Foucault (1971). It consists first of synthesizing various managerial initiatives from the 1970s, even if sometimes this presentation may sound like a pure enumeration, and pointing out continuities and discontinuities. Then, we will demonstrate that "steering by results" as a notion is both a simplification and a rationalization of these initiatives and that lastly it has been, more or less implicitly, evoked in several official texts since 2003.

5.2.2.1 Three Decades of Managerial Initiatives (1970–2003)

Without constituting its "origin,"[13] the repercussions of the social events in France in May 1968 may prove a relevant starting point. This massive social movement which contested several foundations of French society had, of course, various

[13] According to Foucault (1971), in a genealogical approach, it is always possible to find another "origin" or more precisely another "haphazard starting point." For instance, the first institutional reflections on the need to improve the management of the gigantic "firm" that would constitute the French ministry of education started in the 1950s, even if they remained limited. This decade also witnessed many debates about school psychology and the effects of the policy of educational guidance on student achievement. For Eric Monnier (1987), the tradition of policy evaluation in education even started in 1905 when the ministry asked Alfred Binet to conceive a test to detect "abnormal" students, etc.

impacts on education and even on the administration of education. Several "critical reflection groups on administration" were created in May and June 1968. They provided reports in which they pointed out, among many other topics, the lack of tools that would allow the ministry to improve its knowledge of the school system—the authors, thus, supported the development of a true statistical office—and the need to depoliticize school administrations and make them more accountable to their constituents.[14]

Consequently, in the 1970s, the ministry started to develop several regulatory tools with different purposes but which all tried in their own way to improve these two aspects. Starting in 1970, the interdepartmental program called RCB was developed within the French central administration of the education ministry.[15] The latter intended to promote systemic analyses, new management tools, and ex ante evaluations of policy programs within ministries. The education ministry conducted various studies of that kind (on school transport, school schedules, and reforms of secondary education), recruiting many state engineers to that end. It redefined its budget for a series of programs that could be evaluated and progressively promoted new tools such as school scoreboards and national standardized student evaluations. The former were conceived from 1972 onward, on the basis of lessons drawn from local experimentation in dynamic *rectorats*, and were integrated into an overall initiative aiming at promoting "new managerial methods" within school administrations (Meuret, 1986). These evaluations were launched for the first time in 1973 and, until 1989, led to several other tests (Pons, 2013). In parallel, in the context of a growing policy debate on decentralization and school autonomy, the ministry invited secondary schools to create their own school projects. Initially, it concerned a small part of the school budget (the "10% measure" from the minister of that time, Joseph Fontanet).

The period 1978–1992 introduced an initial series of changes although the former initiatives to develop management by objectives within school administrations continued during the period with, for instance, the development of management control in cooperation with private consulting firms in 1984–1986.

This period was marked by a focus on two specific regulatory tools. The first is the school project. Institutional reflection on that tool clearly intensified during the period, as emblematic seminars such as that of Souillac in 1982—reproduced in many *académies* and often quoted in the institutional reviews that we consulted—illustrate. Every minister promoted his or her own measure. This movement was fueled by the implementation of the priority education policy requiring that the boards in priority education zones conceive their own plan and also by the decentralization of the school system, involving the conception of new regulatory tools to simultaneously encourage and steer school autonomy.

[14] Groupes de réflexion critique sur l'administration, Rapport de synthèse, May to June 1968, 34p.

[15] The "*Rationalisation des choix budgétaires*" (rationalization of budgetary choices) can be regarded as the French version of the "planning-programming-budgeting-system" (PPBS) implemented in the United States from 1967 onward.

This period was also characterized by the development of evaluation through many different initiatives. The statistical office of the ministry—which became a department devoted to statistics, evaluation, and forecasting in 1987—still administered national student tests. From the school year 1989–1990 onward, exhaustive national tests were even implemented each year at the beginning of the CE2 (year 9) and *6ème* (year 12). The Ministry of Education contributed to the first interdepartmental reflections on policy evaluation from 1982. It conceived new indicators for secondary schools' performance in order to counterbalance media rankings published each year on the basis of students' results in the *baccalauréat*. It commissioned various experts whose reports added to the numerous ones written on the education sector by the *Cour des comptes*[16] and other bodies (Pons, 2010).

This movement led to the 1989 Act which made school projects compulsory in secondary as in primary education and which gave the mission of evaluating the school system at all institutional levels to the general inspectorates. In 1989 and 1990, this act was then translated into decrees that modified the status and missions of inspection bodies as a whole. It also led to an intensive production of articles by professionals and civil servants on the need to develop a true evaluation of the "results" of the system. This reflection gave birth to various formalizations of the accountability relationships such as the "project approach," the "strategic approach," and audit measures or "quality management."

These dynamics continued into the 1990s. Nevertheless, institutional reflection on the new modes of steering of the education system intensified during the period 1993–2002, as is illustrated by a series of public reports by experts (such as the Pair report from 1998) and articles published mainly by senior civil servants in various professional journals such as *Administration et éducation* or *Education et management*. Their conceptions of the expected new steering modes are far from unique or convergent[17] but are generally based on the same diagnosis: in a growing internationalized education system, a centralized and top-down bureaucratic management of schools is no longer relevant and conceivable, and other modes of steering must be found. This is precisely what the ministry intended in 1998 in developing contracts between the central administration and the *rectorats* in order to make them elaborate their territorial project and autonomous policy. The ministry also tried to promote a "culture of evaluation" with the systematization of former evaluation tools (like the national tests implemented at various key stages) and the implementation of new ones (such as the added value indicators for school performances created in 1994). Nevertheless, while this new institutional reflection gave birth to various conceptualizations of accountability relationships, it had little impact on the ministerial regulatory texts of that period, such as the ministerial circulars, and when it did, it mainly took the form of incentives to change rather than detailing the effective implementation and effects of these accountability relationships. This is mainly due to the lack of legitimacy of these new steering modes among many

[16] French Supreme Audit Court.

[17] For an initial overview (in French) of the diversity of these conceptions, the reader can refer to the issues published by the journal *Administration et éducation* in 1993.

professionals. Indeed, the period 1993–2002 is also characterized by the progressive structuration of a burning policy debate between the advocates of an "obligation of results" in education and their opponents. The former consisted mainly of think tanks like the Montaigne Institute or the Foundation for Political Innovation, high-level councils (*Haut conseil de l'éducation*, *Centre d'analyzse stratégique*), parents' associations, some conservative intellectuals, and international actors (like the OECD). The latter mainly consisted of teachers, inspectors' unions, and committed scholars.

5.2.2.2 Emergence and Chronology of Steering by Results

In spite of this resistance to an "obligation of results" in education in France, a major change occurred between 2003 and 2005. First, the expression "steering by results" itself was explicitly formulated for the first time by a senior civil servant, the general inspector Bernard Toulemonde, in several of his publications. It was also under his presidency that the French association of education administrators (AFAE) published in its journal *Administration et éducation* an issue on that theme the same year (Issue n°98). In these publications, steering by results is conceived as the combination of three policy tools (project, contract, and evaluation) which are supposed to act as a virtuous circle and be implemented at various institutional levels: in the system as a whole, in some specific territories such as the *académies* or the primary education constituencies, or in schools. This new mode of steering is expected to improve the overall governance of the system by introducing new modes of coordination, beyond traditional bureaucratic regulations.

Beyond this new concept, steering by results materialized, without any explicit reference to the concept itself, in the preparation of two main acts. The first was a law reorganizing the vote and structure of the state budget, referred to as the "LOLF."[18] According to this law, this budget now consists of different missions corresponding to specific policies (and no longer to ministerial expenditure items). These missions distinguish various policy programs in which actions, targets, and indicators are detailed and the legislature is supposed to authorize state expenditure only if, according to these indicators, objectives are met or actions are relevant. Not so different from the Quebec RBM, the LOLF is supposed to increase state accountability to the legislature. The LOLF was passed in 2001 and expected to be implemented in 2006. Yet it was only in 2003 that the education ministry started to prepare its adoption and created the programs of the mission devoted to primary and secondary education. The second law is the Act of 2005 which confirmed the importance of evaluation but which also created objective contracts that each school is required to sign with the *rectorats*. In the annexes to this law, which are supposed to frame its regulatory enforcement (*rapport annexé*), it is clearly mentioned that the law

[18] Loi organique relative aux lois de finances.

introduces a "new deal"[19] in terms of steering, with a better focus on target setting, contract enforcement, and measurement tools.

From then on, the implementation of the steering by results policy seemed to vary, depending on political circumstances. From 2005 to 2012, its promotion was intensive, and it took three main forms. First the LOLF was accompanied by successive waves of audits at the central national levels: audits from the interdepartmental committee reviewing LOLF programs (CIAP, 2003–2005), "modernization audits" by pluralist teams of general inspectors (2005–2007), and "General Policy Review" by pluralist expert committees (RGPP, 2007–2012). Despite their minor variations, all these audits promoted accountability measures and invited the ministry to improve the quality of its processes and its statistical data. Second, in 2005, the ministry relaunched contractualization between the central administration and the *rectorats* through a more documented process but still without major financial consequences. Third, it implemented various national tests of students' performance, especially in primary education, with more or less success and continuity, and promoted school evaluation processes on several occasions, such as in 2008–2009.

Between 2012 and May 2017, on the contrary, this steering was clearly put aside, as the ministerial circulars and the discontinuation of national tests in primary education illustrate. Yet several evaluations of education policies were conducted by the National Council of Evaluation of the School System (CNESCO) created by the Act of 2013 (e.g., evaluation of priority education policy), and the ministry re-emphasized the need to sign local contracts between schools, local authorities, and *rectorats*. Nevertheless, the impact of this political orientation varied, depending on the territories and the local policies of *recteurs*.

5.2.3 Conclusion

Finally, beyond similarities in the two education systems regarding the overall chronology of accountability policies and the policy design as a whole, we see that each policy has its own history and political meaning, according to its degree of codification and its more or less problematic embedding in the school system.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to overestimate these differences and to conclude, for instance, that Quebec would be the emblematic example of a cumulative policy experience in which all the initiatives of former decades are progressively systematized and consistently integrated in a general policy program (RBM), whereas the French experience would be inevitably more contingent and fragmented. Both systems are subject to the same kinds of tensions and processes that a more analytical approach to the policy trajectory will now illustrate.

[19] "*Nouvelle donne*" in French.

5.3 Policy Trajectories: A Three-Dimensional Approach

In this section, we discuss the Quebec RBM trajectory and the French steering by results policy trajectory in depth. We demonstrate that, in both cases, in spite of their differences, the trajectory of accountability policy can be understood as the outcome of the combination of three similar processes.

The first is a translation process: in France as in Quebec, this policy is the result of the translation by national policy actors in specific domestic contexts of transnational messages and imperatives. In Quebec, the two main brokers were the Ministry of Finance and the Council of Ministers of Education-Canada (CMEC). In France, the translation was made possible by right-wing political leaders, who have rationalized their policy offer since the end of the 1990s, and by senior civil servants close to their policy stances.

The second process is a path dependence on existing institutions, which does not prevent the latter from moving through gradual changes. In France, we observed both a path dependence on former bureaucratic regulation modes, visible, for instance, in the frequent top-down bureaucratic requirements—mainly through ministerial circulars—to develop post-bureaucratic regulatory tools, and the redefinition of pre-existing administrative reflections that have accumulated since the 1970s. In Quebec, for instance, the SBs still play an important role although they have been regularly criticized. Yet this permanence was accompanied by a conversion of their institutional role, moving from the democratic representation of the local education community to the efficient management of the schools.

The third process is "bricolage," that is to say policy work consisting of assembling various preformatted elements conceived for another purpose and integrating them into a policy statement. In Quebec, this bricolage was mainly done by the successive governments and the SB representatives with the tacit agreement of the unions. It consisted of selecting some elements from the NPM doctrine to fuel a specific policy program reinforcing vertical state control instead of the neoliberal narrative emphasizing more structural changes in the school system. In France, this bricolage led political leaders to assemble pre-existing administrative reflections on some regulatory tools and the possibilities offered by the LOLF and to integrate them into a specific policy offer which was more or less intensively disseminated and implemented, depending on political circumstances, and which proved more or less effective from one period and territory to another.

5.3.1 The Trajectory of RBM Policy in Education in Quebec

5.3.1.1 Translation of the NPM Model in Quebec: Two Main Brokers

In this section, we will analyze the main mechanisms that have influenced the trajectory of RBM policy in Quebec education. First of all, we will emphasize that the circulation of the transnational principles of NPM in education occurred through two main dissemination channels, one related to the Ministry of Finance (the Treasury Board Secretariat[20] of the Quebec government) and the other related to the Canadian Council of Ministers of Education. These are the principal "brokers" that have been active in the circulation of key examples and templates for the construction of RBM policies. These actors are brokers, not only because they have played an active role in the circulation of some international ideas but also because they have participated in the framing of "policy templates" related to RBM or NPM that will be used not only in the content of legislation but also in the various brochures, folders, or flyers used to inform the actors involved and guide the implementation of RBM.

Concerning the Treasury Board Secretariat, studying its major publications before and after Bill 82 in 2000, we see that they are significant and have reframed elements of NPM to adapt to the Quebec model of RBM. Three elements are noteworthy.

- There are many brochures published by the Treasury Board Secretariat (or reports ordered) that are focused on the RBM approach in general or on specific tools. In relation to Bill 82 and the implementation of RBM in all ministries after 2000, the secretariat launched several guides targeting key public managers, explaining the various RBM tools.[21]
- The sources of inspiration of the content of these brochures are mostly English-speaking countries and international bodies, such as the OECD. For example, in the first 2002 general guide on RBM, the OECD, the federal government of Canada, and various other Canadian provinces, including Alberta, Ontario, and Manitoba, are cited as sources. In the 2002 guide on the "annual management report," the main areas referred to are the United States, Australia, and other Canadian provinces (Alberta and Ontario). In addition, other transnational

[20] The *Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor*'s mission consists of advising the *Conseil du trésor* and the Chair of the *Conseil du trésor* of the Quebec government, the minister responsible for government administration, and the minister responsible for the Montréal region in matters of human, budgetary, material, and informational resources and in providing services to citizens and the government community (Source: Termium, http://www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca; consulted the 11 July 2017).

[21] For example, 2000. Guide sur la convention de performance et d'imputabilité et sur l'entente de gestion. (TBS); 2002. Guide sur la gestion axée sur les résultats; 2002. Guide sur le rapport annuel de gestion; 2003. Guide sur les indicateurs; 2005. Étude comparative sur les politiques de gestion de la performance. ENAP report for the TBS; 2005. Cinq années de gestion axée sur les résultats au gouvernement du Quebec. Rapport sur la mise en œuvre de la Loi sur l'administration publique; 2009. Glossaire des indicateurs; 2014. Guide sur la gestion axée sur les résultats.

sources, such as the World Health Organization, the European Union Commission on quality indicators of education, and the American Productivity and Quality Center, are referred to in the 2003 guide on indicators.

- The general picture presented of these tools is very positive, considering them as models or templates, but insisting that they need to be adapted to the local and national situation. Moreover, vocabulary and definitions of various tools are detailed in the brochures: for example, external or internal accountability, targets, results, performance, and "accountability and performance agreements." However, some proposals to rename tools are also present: the use of the term "contract" (used in the United Kingdom for contracts between identified individual managers and policy makers) seems to be less appropriate than "agreements" that concern organizations, instead of individual officers. While many of these brochures aim to inform and guide public officers and officials in various administrations, we see that they also tend to "frame the discourse," in order to be convincing and persuasive.

Despite the fact that education falls strictly under provincial jurisdiction in Canada, the Council of Ministers of Education in Canada has also had a significant role in the circulation of NPM ideas in the education domain. In 1999—just before Bills 82 or 124—this council released the Victoria Declaration, in which ministers were called upon to collaborate in order to promote "quality education" as a way of dealing with the "challenges posed by the rapid transformation of our world: youth unemployment, the creation of a knowledge economy, globalization and the rise of technology" (CMEC, 1999). While respecting the provinces' policies and school administration at the local level, this initiative underscored the importance of adopting a "collective approach to finding solutions," and its plan of action gives priority to "education results" and "accountability."[22]

This program was further explained in 2008 with the "Horizon 2020" declaration, aiming to improve the education systems and opportunities for learning and success in Canada. In this declaration, general objectives are defined for all levels of the education system (preschool, primary, secondary, tertiary education, and lifelong learning). Concerning primary and secondary education, the emphasis has been on the "right of all kids" to get a good education. Thus, the principle of the comparison and benchmarking of the Canadian education systems' performance is emphasized (Lessard, 2006).

These action plans have not directly resulted in Quebec's RBM strategy, but the Council of Ministers of Education in Canada has promoted statistical tools and culture in favor of the benchmarking of education performances, which seems consistent with RBM orientation in the Quebec education system.

[22] The other priorities were "education quality, accessibility, mobility, needs-based responses."

5.3.1.2 Bricolage as a Silent Alliance

Beyond the role of brokers in the importation of international NPM ideas, insofar as results-based management policy in Quebec public schools is concerned, the translation process was also deepened by and intertwined with a three-faceted bricolage.

First, there was a selection and translation of New Public Management tools, presented as solutions to major shared problems within the school network. More precisely, the process was manifest in the policy narrative (Radaelli, 1999) used by governments in order to justify successive Bills (the center-left-wing *Parti québécois* government for Bill 124 and the center right-wing Liberal Party for Bill 88). This narrative was also shared and supported for the main part by important stakeholders, as the SB representatives. This narrative not only reveals a political paradigm[23] but also displays cognitive bricolage, allowing for an association of certain key problems (success and school democracy), some existing tools and structures, and new "solutions," brought in selectively from the repertoire of New Public Management (contracts, plans, evaluations, accountability, etc.).

This narrative emphasizes two types of problems the Quebec school system has had to deal with: first, dropouts and failures, which have been considered central problems in Quebec education policy since the Estates General; and second, faulty school democracy in need of revitalization and revalorization (another of the Estates General's issues). As results-based management was being developed, the senior officials' discourse connected these problems to a lack of efficiency and legitimacy in existing structures. Their narrative emphasized insufficient coordination and consistency in actions at various levels of the system and pointed to the population's disengagement from school elections. This led to a theory of the correct public action to implement, based on improving organizational efficiency and transparency for existing structures, clearly inspired by New Public Management discourse. The solutions proposed involved maintaining the system's three tiers (the ministry, SBs, and schools) but also involved improving alignment and coordination (through the "contractualization" and "planning" tools mentioned in Bills 124 and 88). Moreover, this theory underscored the need for better accountability from local bodies to superior levels and to the population at large. This theory also suggested that such accountability should be based on target figures and used at all levels of the system (the ministry, SBs, and schools).

Thus, to cure the "ills" of the Quebec education school, this narrative translates ideas from New Public Management or rather from the composite doctrine that makes up NPM (Bezes, 2005). It clearly favors using private-sector managerial tools in public administration (strategic plans, "contracts," evaluations based on measurable results, results-based accountability, and development of monitoring

[23] Campbell (2004) describes them as ideas that are behind debates and political decisions. They concern "the elite assumptions that constrain the cognitive range of useful programs available to politicians, corporate leaders and other decision makers" (p. 94) and are "outcome-oriented" in the sense that they are oriented toward the means necessary to achieve a certain result.

indicators). These elements may be referred to as the "managerial" dimension of New Public Management, already present in Bill 82 on public administration modernization. On the other hand, other tools available in the NPM repertoire, such as promotion of choice and competition with regard to service providers, or direct user/consumer information on service provider quality, are much less present in the argument put forth.[24]

However, another discourse which is predominantly that of an opposition party (the right-wing *Action démocratique du Quebec, ADQ*) but also of an association of school principals proposed dealing with the same problems by emphasizing tools that would mix market competition and local parent participation. Like the first narrative, this "alternative" narrative featured the elements of success and school democracy but with a more alarmist approach. It argued that the loss of user confidence implied a crisis of confidence in the public school system, caused mainly by a deficient middle tier in the education system—that is, the SBs. The resultant public action theory called for a re-examination of these structures. School autonomy must be reinforced, along with the decentralization of resources and management capacities. Giving individual schools local responsibilities and holding them accountable for results, to both local users and to the ministry, would strengthen performance and responsiveness to user needs. Users could communicate as easily through the local school democracy as through their choice of school. This alternative narrative was closer to a neoliberal version of New Public Management, because it brought in more elements from a logic of "marketization." However, it was destined to remain merely an opposition party discourse.

The second element of the bricolage we are describing here is political in the sense that the trajectory of results-based management and the content of the laws were both conditioned by the political climate, including calculations and coalitions. We observed that between Bill 124 (a *Parti québécois* bill passed in 2002) and Bill 88 (a Liberal Party bill passed in 2008), there was a growing emphasis on performance-based accountability. During the discussion on Bill 124, the center-left-wing *Parti québécois*, in power at the time, made significant concessions to teachers' unions. In amending its initial bill and accepting accountability on the basis of "creating and realizing a success plan" (i.e, on the means used) rather than on the basis of results compared to the target figures, the PQ made an important concession to teachers' unions but also to high-level school officers. Once the center-right-wing Liberal Party came back into power, however, the option of measurable targets was again proposed in Bill 88. Ultimately, Bill 88 calls for accountability on the basis of figures and targets established in the "partnership agreements" and in the management and educational success agreements (Maroy & Mathou, 2014).

[24] However, choice (and competition) between public and private (tuition-based) schools had existed since the Quiet Revolution and partially (since 1998) among public schools. Parents' "choice" (limited by financial capacity) of schools is, nevertheless, not explicitly featured as market-oriented policy. Different governments have, in fact, tolerated this "clandestine market" and the inequality of its consequences.

Our interpretation of this reform development, which tends toward accountability with regard to target figures, is that the pre-electoral context of discussion surrounding Bill 88 and the rise of the right-wing ADQ party in the polls (the ADQ was one of the parties defending the alternative narrative) led the Liberal Party (without clear opposition from the *Parti québécois*[25]) to strengthen Bill 88's neo-managerial leanings at the expense of compromising and mixing with more "communitarian and participative" approaches to regulatory logic and accountability and "the spirit behind Bill 180" (dating back from the Estates General), taken more significantly into account during Bill 124 discussions.

Finally, we present the third kind of cognitive and political bricolage. It is possible to hypothesize that there was a sort of alliance (or at least a partial consensus), both explicit and silent, between the actors behind the ruling officials' discourse and the unions during the development of results-based management. This consensus was built "against" the alternative, neoliberal narrative discussed earlier. An analysis of the controversy between actors with different policy narratives for Bills 124 and 88 reveals a number of convergence points[26] between a third narrative—that of the unions—and that of the ruling officials. There was indeed a partial convergence on the question of "problems to solve" (student success and school democracy) and on the proposed means of doing so (strengthening the state's strategic role or the necessity of maintaining and better supporting the SBs). This cognitive convergence was intensified by interests shared by unions and "rulers" (governmental parties and SBs) around the idea of maintaining the SBs and giving the state power to strengthen its control.

This partial convergence of interests and visions of education policy does not in any way mean that results-based management was, or is, fully accepted in Quebec. Teachers' unions express strong concern about the potential effects of results-based management tools in schools (targets and accountability for results), to the extent that, in their eyes, these tools threaten teachers' professional autonomy. They are also seen as a threat to the educational goals that unions stand behind: an educational model at the service of students, providing equal opportunities for success for the largest number of students within a public education system (Maroy & Vaillancourt, 2013).

[25] André Brassard (2008) points to the particular climate in 2008, which authorized the Liberal Party—though a minority party—to propose more managerial solutions, accepted with only a limited number of amendments by the second opposition party (*Parti québécois*). It would have been difficult to get these solutions adopted at another time. The *Parti québécois* would not have wanted to oppose the government because, among other reasons, the Liberal Party's rejection may have led to the dissolution of the Assembly. The ADQ had become the official opposition party in the 2007 elections (with 41 deputies). By the end of 2008 (the period of Bill 88's adoption process), elections were probable in the near future.

[26] Some of these points of convergence are explicit elsewhere. For example, unions specifically stressed the importance of school boards several months beforehand, during the *Forum sur la démocratie et la gouvernance des commissions scolaires* (2008).

5.3.1.3 School Boards as Institutions: Dependence and Conversion

The notion of path dependence may also be used in order to understand the trajectory of results-based management and the maintenance of the middle tier—the school boards—in Quebec. The SBs have been significantly transformed over the past decades (see the 1998 consolidation and separation from faith-based organizations), but they remained intermediate regulatory bodies, with a heightened power on schools in light of results-based management. In other words, actors in favor of eliminating the SBs (mainly, the ADQ) did not see their wish fulfilled. One interpretation of this state of affairs is policy path dependence with regard to this structure and its symbolic weight. Quebec governments throughout the 2000s (both the *Parti québécois* and the Liberal Party) preferred an "alignment" model, with more consistency between the middle tiers, rather than the idea of eliminating them altogether. For a government, the advantage of this option is that it avoids obstacles that would arise if the state tried to eliminate or replace them. These obstacles are economic, legal, and socio-normative. First, "dismantling" the SBs would imply an economic cost. SBs deal with services (student transportation, managing building labor and maintenance, and training and professional support for school personnel) that cannot all be transferred to the level of the schools. It would be necessary to create another entity with new missions, statuses, and functioning which would take care of these operations. There would be costs involved. Secondly, from a legal perspective, this could lead to legal disputes on the subject of constitutional protection for linguistic minorities (Anglophones) in education policy, particularly with respect to school management issues. In addition, path dependence results from the strong normative weight of "school democracy" as a value. Though the majority of actors (government parties, SBs, and unions) recognize "school democracy" as being "in trouble" or even in a state of crisis, they also identify it as a value and a democratic tradition worth upholding. Thus, "school democracy" still serves as a justification in the context of debates. This, no doubt, contributed to lessen the impact of the alternative narrative, strengthen the dominant one, and justify the current policy. Moreover, after our fieldwork, in 2015, the withdraw by the Liberal government of Bill 86 intending to remove "school elections" and change the democratic legitimacy of the SB institution has once again illustrated the force of this institutional dependence. The combination of political opposition of SBs and the queries in the public debate about the future of SB institution and school democracy have led to the replacement of the education minister and to a new Bill (Bill 105, see above Sect. 5.2.1.1).

However, the SBs were not exactly preserved in their original state: they went through a process of institutional conversion (Streeck & Thelen, 2005). Though the SBs retained their previous, official function as "representing a community" (via elections and school democracy), this function seems increasingly dominated by the task of efficient management of educational resources (support for schools). Other new tasks included serving as relays and vectors for the central ministry's objectives via their positioning as pivots in the vertical logic of results-based management; however, this reorientation had begun earlier than RBM policy (Brassard, 2007).

This functional conversion of SBs can be linked to incremental mechanisms of institutional change, simultaneously linked to a *layering* (Streeck & Thelen, 2005) of tools for public action and to the slow *drift* and loss of effective hold over some of them, thus favoring the vertical logic of accountability.

Furthermore, with Bill 124, "strategic plans" and "success plans" were put in place, while tools already in place were used to organize "participation" and local school democracy (e.g., "school projects"). With Bill 88, these two generations of tools were combined with "partnership agreements" and "management and educational success agreements" which organized accountability more formally and aligned objectives for the different system tiers. Empirical research on the intermediate and local levels (see Chaps. 6 and 7) shows that this layering process works in favor of vertical accountability (to the hierarchy) over the horizontal logic of "accountability to the community." Indeed, the agreements and their quantitative targets, implemented from the central level to the schools in a cascading effect, have been taking precedence over other, more "participative" instruments such as the "education project," the purpose of which is, increasingly, to display an appropriate image and corresponding values without necessarily changing the orientations of the SBs or the schools.

5.3.1.4 Conclusion

In summary, results-based management in Quebec developed around the idea of a "neo-statist" or "managerial" translation of New Public Management rather than a more "doctrinaire" variant aiming at a neoliberal promotion of competition in public service offers (Clark, 2002; Jobert, 1994). We have shown how the introduction of results-based management in Quebec is the result of a long-lasting trajectory: since the year 2000, throughout the discussion of Bills 124 and 88, a neo-statist translation of NPM has been combined with a cognitive, political, and institutional bricolage of the policy goals and tools. By cognitive and institutional bricolage, we are referring to a combination of long-standing issues within the new accountability mind-set, resulting in the sedimentation of community-based accountability tools (school projects) and a new set of contracts and targets while strengthening hierarchical and performance-based accountability. This process is the result of political games and transactions in policy making, framed by path dependence on the SB structure and key values associated with education in Quebec. The policy trajectory has led to the reinforcement of a vertical institutional linkage between layers of the system at the expense of more decentralized, community-based, regulation of schools. As a result, the strategic role of the state is enhanced, and there is a gradual conversion of the SB into a relay for top-down regulation from the state.

5.3.2 The Trajectory of Steering by Results in Education in France

Since the early 1980s, France's education system has gone through several significant structural transformations, from the massification of the upper-secondary level to successive changes in the school map and the introduction of priority education.[27] Other issues have included the decentralization of certain aspects of education policy, the strengthening of devolved state services, and Europeanization. The school system and its regulations have since been characterized by a complex entanglement of responsibilities between the central state, its territorial administrations (Dupuy & Pollard, 2014), and its partners, first of which are the subnational governments (Dupuy, 2012, 2014). Concerns related to accountability are part of the recent changes in French education policy regulation.

In the early 2000s, the European Union and the Lisbon Strategy were involved in putting this question on the agenda.[28] Yet European recommendations were translated in the French context, where right-wing governmental actors were in power. This translation led, on the one hand, to strong opposition from the education sector and, on the other, to efforts (begun much earlier) on the part of national education administrators to define accountability mechanisms. Moreover, in this context, the definition and development of these mechanisms were marked by three processes of bricolage. The first took place between government advocates and their opponents, whether from the right (2003–2012) or the left (2012–2017). The second centered around a parallel process of state management reform and implementation—the *Loi organique relative aux lois de finances* (LOLF) aimed—in the early 2000s, at restructuring the state budget for objectives and performance indicators. The third refers to education accountability practices that are effectively implemented at the intermediate and school levels. Finally, these processes were tied to path dependence and sedimentation, not only with regard to the ways accountability was conceived in the administrative sphere but also to the former and traditional modes of regulation of the system and to the ways in which administrative actors' practices and allocation of education resources were envisaged at that time. The resultant

[27] The generic expression "priority education" designates both the policies of compensation which have been implemented in education since 1981 and the zones, networks, and schools which were targeted by these policies and which progressively constituted a distinct system within the entire school system.

[28] The so-called Lisbon Strategy started at the Lisbon European Council meeting in March 2000, where the EU member states agreed on a new strategic goal "to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" (European Parliament (2000), Lisbon European Council March 23rd and 24th, 2000, Presidency Conclusions, retrieved from http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm). This strategy led to various measures to modernize the economy, social security, and also education and training. Through a "new open method of coordination," common European benchmarks and monitoring mechanisms have also been defined and regularly updated through various work programs, such as Education and Training 2010 and 2020 (Lawn & Grek, 2012; Ozga, Dahler-Larsen, Segerholm, & Simola, 2011).

accountability policy assigned a dominant role to the central state in developing instruments to monitor the activities of devolved administrations and their schools. These instruments were not, however, tied to mechanisms for emitting sanctions or allocating resources.

5.3.2.1 Translating the Lisbon Strategy Requirements in France

At the European level, 2003 was marked by accelerated debates surrounding the Lisbon Strategy adopted in March 2000. In March 2003, the European Commission was concerned that the benchmark identification process had not made greater progress. Two months later, the European Council, composed of political leaders, had identified five benchmarks. In November 2003, the commission released an initial estimation of the degree to which each of the member states had reached these target figures. The commission expressed concern that national governments seemed to place little importance on their European-level engagements and pressured France and other member states to implement reforms that would explicitly target these objectives (Pépin, 2006).

Nationwide, a political debate gradually spread around the question of performance requirements. Two sides clearly emerged. On the one hand, the governmental right-wing party (RPR[29]) had been preparing its school policy program since before the 2002 presidential elections. This group established a link between actor/structure autonomy and increased performance requirements, and for this purpose, a regularly evaluated contract would be required. This plan, often coupled with discourses around declining student performance levels and a necessary back to basics (Robert, 2010)—discourses that the publication of the PISA results reactivated in their own way (Pons, 2016)—was quickly met with approval by entities such as the PEEP[30] and the *Commissariat général au Plan* and even by certain intellectuals. On the opposing side was not the governmental left (nearly silent on the matter until 2012) but rather various left-leaning groups such as teachers' unions and the FCPE,[31] as well as academics such as Philippe Meirieu (e.g., Meirieu, 2008, 2009). These actors repeatedly denounced the tendencies toward consumerism and neoliberalism. If adopted, performance requirements would be evidence of these tendencies. This political debate reached its height in 2003 when the government announced its first job cuts and began retirement reform, which led to strong mobilization on the part of teachers' unions (Robert, 2010).

The Act of 2005, sometimes called the Fillon Act, clearly made the connection possible between these European concerns, the various policy recommendations formulated for the sake of PISA, the policy program from the right, and the ongoing

[29] The *Rassemblement pour la République* (RPR) was created in 1976 by Jacques Chirac but broke up in 2002 into the UMP (the *Union pour un mouvement populaire*) and in 2015 into *Les républicains*.

[30] Fédération des Parents d'Elèves de l'Enseignement Public, close to the right-wing movement.

[31] Fédération des conseils de parents d'élèves.

reform process of the education sector. This law introduced a "common base of knowledge and skills" (*socle commun de connaissances et de compétences*) which was presented in its founding decree as an adaptation to the new European and international context. In the additional regulatory documents which were conceived to orient its legal enforcement (*rapport annexé*), the Lisbon Strategy was clearly mentioned in terms of the necessity to change the governance of the system through a new steering mode. Various policy targets were also enumerated. For these reasons, the Fillon Act, especially in a country and in a policy sector with a strong administrative tradition, contributed to making Europe and the new steering models a compulsory step of the collective reflection and policy debate on education reform, and it served as a tool to interest more policy actors (Callon, 1986).

This translation process is convergent with several other analyses of the Europeanization of the French education policy. Empirically, it confirms the policy turn that occurred with the Act of 2005 (the Fillon Act) and that some empirical studies on the French curriculum policy confirmed, for instance, those on the common base of knowledge and skills (Clément, 2013) or on the French policy of foreign languages (Buisson-Fenet, 2014). Theoretically, it shows that, as in other cases, such as school evaluation (Buisson-Fenet & Pons, 2014), it is only when there is a major reorientation of domestic policy and when national policy makers establish a link with the European policy space that the latter may have an impact on domestic education policies through the "articulation between some measurement tools, a European education governance and an international expertise" (Normand, 2011, p. 101).

5.3.2.2 French Steering by Results as a Path and as a Sediment

In the early 2000s, the French right wing's translation of the Lisbon Strategy in the field of education and the opposition this engendered did not occur in a vacuum but rather in a context of nonlinear, inconclusive reflections which emerged in the 1970s and centered on defining and solving the problem of accountability in the education system. Administrators largely attempted this definition process. General inspectors and senior civil servants, for instance, from the ministry's department of evaluation, often argued in favor of a necessary growing "culture of evaluation" within the system. In 2003, a relatively stabilized outcome emerged in the form of "steering by results," conceived essentially by high-level public officials, members of the *Association française des administrateurs de l'éducation* (AFAE). This "steering by results" is often presented in professional and institutional journals as a combination of three policy instruments intended to constitute a virtuous feedback loop: project, contract, and evaluation. This triptych was developed at several levels and for several parts of the school system. For example, the creation of a school project, which is supposed to formalize national policy in a specific local context, must lead to a contract between the school and state regional or subregional authority. This contract should formalize and prioritize goals and actions. The results of these goals and actions are then to be evaluated in several ways (including performance

indicators and inspections), and this evaluation should steer the next school project. Conceptually speaking, this triptych both rationalizes and simplifies several decades' worth of actors' reflections, developed according to a process of institutional sedimentation (Dupuy & Pons, 2013). Figure 5.2 shows the sedimentation process, including policy instruments (gradual appearance of the project and contract with the initial reflections on evaluation), main arguments (to the classic arguments calling for better knowledge of the school system, an argument concerning efficiency is added), policy narratives (developing discourse on globalization and accountability on the basis of earlier arguments concerning the large size of the French school system), and finally successive formalizations of accountability

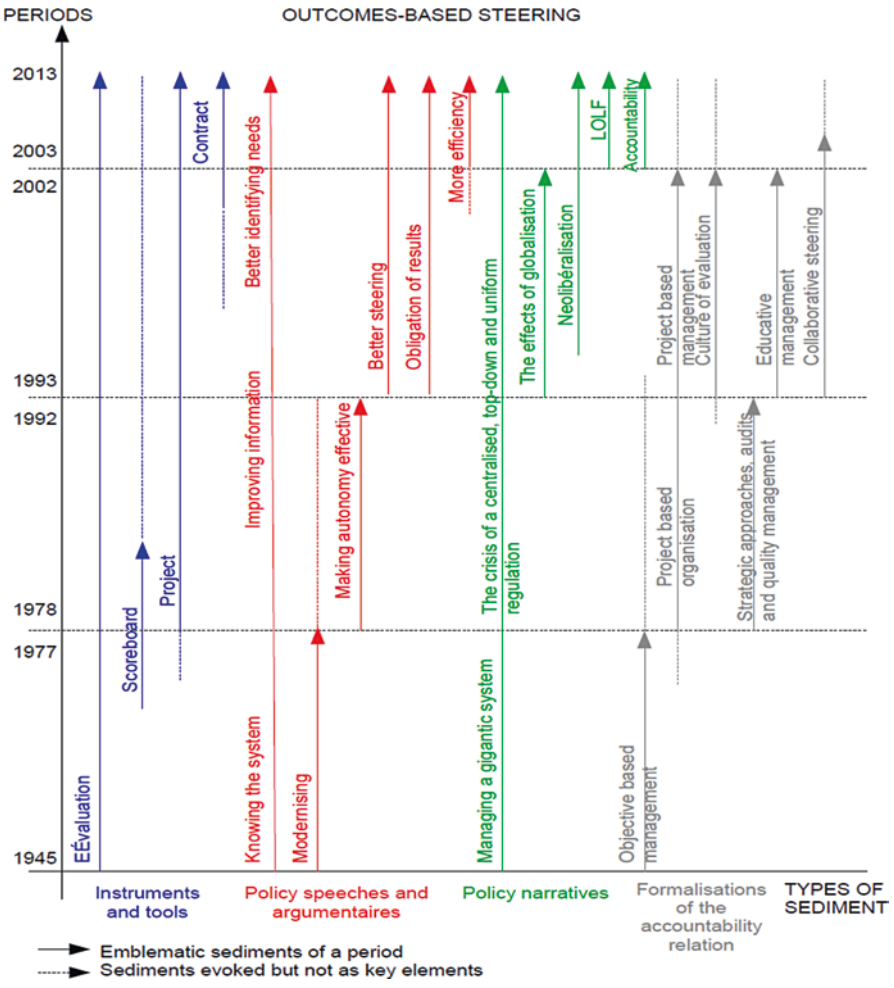

Fig. 5.2 Steering by results as a sedimentation process. (Source: Maroy, Pons, & Dupuy, 2017, p. 112)

relations, in Mark Bovens' sense of the term Bovens (2010). Though "steering by results" is the direct product of watchwords from the previous period ("steering" and "performance requirements"), it is also connected to more long-standing concerns about improving information and knowledge of the school system and finding a regulatory mode which will help resolve the crisis of school reform, reform which has been traditional, centralized, top-down, and relatively uniform. Steering by results is also the product of a specific climate in which discourse on public service efficiency is on the rise. Discourses on the new finance law and its supposed effects have also multiplied, along with that on the accountability-centered experiments conducted abroad and, in the other direction, on the risks and possible shifts tied to this approach.

This triptych (project, contract, evaluation) was worked into certain instruments, but the cyclical logic was never seen through to the end, just as in the first contractualization phase in 1998 between the central administration and state regional authorities. The contract took the form of a document of several pages in which academic services described the situation in a given *académie*, setting objectives (the project) which were commented on by the ministry's central services. They then detailed the help they would offer in the carrying out of the contract: according to some of our interviewees, the extent of this help was "enthusiasm" and "moral support." The objectives were often very general, and, when they were tied to indicators, the measures were not performance indicators. The contracts were also not legally binding for any of the parties, and the central services had not set up any system for monitoring, sanctioning, or evaluating the situation. In addition, each *académie*'s evaluations, carried out during general inspections several years after the contract signature, indicated that the contracts were at most marginal with regard to the overall actions within the *académies*. The first contractualization policy was therefore terminated in 2004. This experience is a good illustration of the tendencies identified in other research on school projects (Combaz, 2002) and on evaluation mechanisms (Pons, 2011) implemented during the same period: some of these tendencies include an absence of sanctions tied explicitly to the evaluation procedure, a preference for incentives rather than institutional constraints, and favoring professional dialogue over codified procedures.

In the French case, the path dependence concerned not only cognitive categories used to conceive governing changes but also national modes of regulation themselves. It was, indeed, particularly interesting to see how this plea for post-bureaucratic change (i.e., through pro-steering by results discourses) was done very bureaucratically. Even if the trend was more marked between 2005 and 2010, the whole period was characterized by the production of various regulatory documents (such as the ministerial circulars from the central administration but also from the *académies*) asking leaders from the lower levels (respectively, the *rectorats* or the schools), through a very classical administrative and top-down process, to adopt new managerial dispositions and develop projects, contracts, and evaluation. Sometimes this traditional bureaucratic regulation of the French education system, that has been pointed out in earlier studies (Maroy, 2006; van Zanten, 2008), merged with another traditional mode of regulation: neo-corporatism. This was particularly

the case when the effective implementation of some policy devices, such as school evaluation policy, for instance, finally depended on the professionalism of policy stakeholders and their capacity to make their professional identities and ethos converge in specific local policy configurations (Buisson-Fenet & Pons, 2014).[32]

5.3.2.3 A Three-Dimensional Policy Bricolage

A three-dimensional bricolage emerged from the translation of European recommendations in education policy within an overall context where accountability had been considered and partially implemented in the administrative sector (the early 2000s). This bricolage was fueled by three distinct processes.

The first is a group of initiatives by successive governments in particular political circumstances. From January 2004 to the summer of 2007, the right-wing government clearly promoted the idea of a necessary development of the steering by results approach for education. This view was observed in a series of public interventions, such as the speech delivered by President Chirac for the opening of the national debate on schools on the 20 November 2003[33] and the address of Nicolas Sarkozy, then Minister of the Economy, Finance, and Industry, on the necessity of a "results-oriented culture" in April 2004.[34] Several measures announced during this period display the same orientation. Such is the case for the 2005 contractualization policy revival between the central administration and state regional authorities. In addition, it is the case with regard to emphasis placed on "steering by results and policy evaluation" in the plan for personnel training as announced by the *Direction de l'encadrement du ministère* in January 2005. Finally, we can also point to a wave of modernization audits by the *Éducation nationale* between April 2005 and April 2007 and to the publication of a "Steering Practices Charter" for secondary schools in the official bulletin (*Bulletin officiel*) on the 22 February 2007, which encouraged schools to be more aware of their results and to take care of relationships with families, etc. The 2003 ministerial circulars also clearly illustrate the change in tone. It is now necessary to involve "more systematically the administration councils" in secondary schools and to render systematic the creation and signing of contracts.[35] It is also crucial to "develop a strategic approach at every level of education policy steering," in keeping with the Lisbon Strategy, defining precise goals at every level and making diagnostic and self-evaluation tools available to actors, making contractualization more widespread, and developing available performance indicators.[36]

[32] See also Chaps. 6 and 7 on that aspect.

[33] Chirac declared: "Let us engage ourselves, here and everywhere, in this culture of goals and contracts, with results and evaluations worthy of their name."

[34] We also note similar declarations close to those Ministers Gilles de Robien and Dominique de Villepin made to ministry officials during the summer of 2006, such as at that of Pierre-André Périssol (UMP), during the UMP program presentation in the 2007 presidential election.

[35] Bulletin n°2003-050 from 28-3-2003.

[36] Bulletin n°2004-015 from 27-1-2004.

The adoption of several official texts confirming this orientation indicates path dependence on cognitive categories developed in the administrative sector from the 1970s on in order to deal with accountability in French education policy. The project and the evaluation, recognized by the 1989 *Loi d'orientation*[37] in force until the 22 April 2005, were confirmed by the new 2005 *Loi d'orientation.*[38] This new law favored contractualization, stipulating that contracts between secondary schools and state regional authorities were required. These contracts would make the objectives and resources explicit. It is interesting to note that this law is purportedly in response to the Lisbon Strategy orientations. The report included in the law's annex speaks of a "new order" in matters of steering and proposes target figures for various actions.

The policy implemented during Nicolas Sarkozy's presidency (2007–2012) was built around the same action levers: repeated governmental communications calling for a results-based culture and better accountability (see the president's 19 September 2007 speech on public function reform, the presentation of primary school education reform in October 2007, etc.); commitments in principles[39]; "reportology,"[40] changes to be published in ministerial circulars (particularly in 2007 and 2010); and adoption of technical equipment and rules affecting relations between the central administration and the *académies* (implementation of new computer applications, academic governance reforms via a January 2012 decree, etc.). The main difference is that this policy was carried out in a context characterized by a strong desire to reduce public spending and shifted progressively from the question of results to that of overall school performance and public administration performance.[41] Though several actors from the public debate supported the idea of better steering by results,[42] governmental policy was also met with strong, cohesive, and long-term

[37] Act n°89-486, 10 July 1989.

[38] Act n°2005–380, 23 April 2005.

[39] On 11 May 2010, France formally accepted the conclusions by the *Conseil des ministres de l'Éducation européens à Bruxelles* according to which schools must be held more accountable to society.

[40] This neologism, inspired by that of "comitology," often used to describe the functioning of some European policies, is used here to mean an organized succession of public reports intended to prepare scheduled reforms. In France, it is a question of parliamentary and inspection *reports from the Finance Ministry, the Court of Auditors and audit reports* (see the *Révision générale des politiques publiques* begun in July 2007), etc.

[41] The policy from the government officially in place from 2012 to 2017 clearly broke with the former in terms of discourse (there is weak governmental communication on the subject of evaluation results; the 2013 and 2014 bulletins use much less managerial discourse) and in terms of managing means; the new government is apparently placing more weight on savings in other sectors.

[42] Actors supporting the idea were cross-ministerial actors (the Court of Auditors, the Strategic Analysis Council, the Economic and Social Council, think tanks generally situated on the political right such as the *Fondation pour l'innovation politique* and the *Institut Montaigne*, international entities such as the OECD or supranational bodies such as the European Commission. Also included were certain actors from within the school systems (the main student-teacher associations), some scholars (François Dubet and Denis Meuret), superior central councils, and an association called *Créer son école* (Creating One's School).

opposition from education professionals (teachers' unions and sometimes inspectors).

This trend came to an end with the arrival in power of the left-wing government in 2012. The number of public speeches and announcements clearly decreased, and, significantly, the policy debate on steering by results issues was essentially fueled by other policy actors such as international organizations (especially the OECD); political opponents, particularly in the context of the preparation of the next presidential election in 2015; and lastly senior civil servants who wanted to promote alternative modes of management. This was, for instance, the case of Jean-Michel Blanquer, former *recteur* and former head of the largest central administration of the ministry, who published two books during the period in which he pleaded for a reactivation of steering by results tools.[43] Nevertheless, beyond this discontinuity, the policy bricolage went on through two main channels. First, there was still an intensive production of reports on the school system—e.g., those produced by the National Council of School System Evaluation (CNESCO) or the Interdepartmental Committee for the Modernization of Public Action (CIMAP)—which indicated that steering by results and administration reforms had to be implemented. Second, the ministry still expected the implementation of specific tools to develop this mode of steering. Thus, it regularly invited schools, local authorities, and state local administrations to sign tripartite contracts in order to better plan the improvement of school functioning and results.

Discussions surrounding the *Loi organique relative aux lois de finances* (LOLF), followed by its implementation, constitute the second process fueling French accountability policy bricolage over the last decade. In force since the 1 January 2006, this law reformed the French state budget's structure, submitting all public policy financing (defined within "missions") to target figures set for each plan of action. Like the other ministries, the Ministry of National Education is concerned: "school education" groups together with six different programs. At the national level and that of *académies*, a strategic plan is defined in keeping with each program's operational budget. The *rectorats* are responsible for developing a budget for each program, separate for each *académie*. Therefore, what distinguishes the LOLF is that central services rely on state regional authorities to attain budgetary goals. This may be observed particularly in the case of the reworking of the finance law preparation procedure, where central services begin budgetary negotiations ("management" dialogue) before the finance law vote so that chances are higher that the national education budget that has been voted upon will end up being respected. The central services gradually developed sets of formalized applications and procedures for monitoring and controlling state regional authorities' budgetary activities.

[43] Jean-Michel Blanquer was appointed minister on 17 May 2017. On 5 December 2017, consistently with his former decisions as a senior official and with his books, just after the publication of the results of the PIRLS program, he announced the introduction of new tests in primary education (at age 7).

In reality, the ministry actors' concerns deal principally with program divisions and the trustworthiness of the changes in budgetary nomenclature (including its being understood correctly). This is to the detriment of a more strategic approach to determining targets and expected results. In addition, the ministerial circulars remain vague on the question of changes to implement (actual responsibility is often given to state regional authorities in the form of sentences beginning with "it is in the *académies*' purview to…") and on the question of what will happen if they are not introduced. These circulars aim to provide "guidance," "references," and a basic "framework." Discourse surrounding the LOLF became increasingly severe, with certain unions denouncing the "war machine" working to cut jobs and, on the other hand, the majority of deputies (primarily from the UMP) in the National Assembly or in the Senate criticizing "education sector's" specific situation.

Finally, the third process of bricolage which has been fueling French accountability policy recently is that of regulatory practices at all levels of the school system. In several studies at the school level, research findings show that school projects, contracts, and evaluations (or school evaluations more generally speaking) remained unequal from period to period and from area to area. This shows the limitations of legal injunctions concerning these matters (e.g., Buisson-Fenet & Pons, 2014). Moreover, an analysis of the implementation of contractualization between the central administration and state regional authorities shows that, though this policy may be more formalized,[44] the negotiation phase and contract itself exclude resources, which continue to be allocated on the basis of needs, traditionally measured by student headcounts. In addition, the indicators included in the contracts are not tied to mechanisms for sanctioning, regardless of the type of sanction or evaluation in question. The interviewees in charge of contractualization point to a clear disconnect in regard to the contract between the central services and the *académies* and the idea of performance and the allocation of resources on the basis of performance. Some even insist on the incompatibility of this mode of resource allocation with the very principles of the French education system (Dupuy & Pons, 2013). Lastly, Chaps. 6 and 7 will clearly demonstrate that the effective implementation of steering by results at the intermediary and local levels is very different from one *académie* to another, that this implementation also differs from one secondary school to another, and that this implementation depends in France on a series of conventions that policy actors have to define in specific configurations, according to particular infra-national trajectories.

[44] After a brief introduction by the *académie* and the central administration, the document we analyzed is split into two parts. The first includes a number of indicators for characterizing the *académie*'s situation from socioeconomic and the *académie*'s perspectives. These indicators are "performance radar charts" which, represented graphically, show the value of several indicators compared to the national average. For example, for success indicators: the percentage of students having repeated a grade level, the rate of secondary school entry into different programs, and the proportion of students having left the system without a sufficient diploma or the rate of students entering university with a baccalaureate (*baccalauréat*). The second part presents the *académie*'s strategy and the central administration's observations on the subject.

5.3.2.4 Conclusion

The trajectory of French performance-based accountability policy shows that, throughout the 2003–2017 period, there were a significant number of discourses, administrative and professional and then political and governmental, on "steering by results." These were found in official texts and in the formal regulation of the French education system and served as the basis for several measures and bureaucratic calls for change (e.g., via circulars). Nevertheless, throughout this period, there was an intense political debate surrounding the political, regulatory, and axiological legitimacy of steering by results and the transformative effects of the regulatory instruments that were implemented. In addition, no exogenous force, such as PISA or interministerial reforms, seemed to alter this trajectory.

In theory, this strong discursive dimension could lead to the conclusion that the French state is weak in matters of education, incapable of encouraging action or implementing a constitutive institutional reform. However, in reality, we are witnessing a continuous, even powerful strengthening of the central state at an essentially cognitive level. "Steering by results" is indeed, basically, a policy category conceived and disseminated by state elites (general inspectors, rectors, and central administration directors). This policy envisages mainly state-oriented accountability(with respect to government and administrative hierarchies). Analyzing the effective implementation of certain steering instruments, such as contractualization between the central administration and the *académies*, reveals that one of the first tangible effects of this instrumentation was to improve the internal functioning of ministerial administrations (tools for communication between generally separate services) and bolster these administrations' knowledge of the *académies*' territories and policy (through new computer applications, improvement and extension of the administrative data and statistics produced, and regular and better-equipped dialogue). Other research has shown that the implementation of these new policy instruments allows even the administrative elite to transform and rationalize their state science (Pons, 2010). Finally, it is striking to consider that the implementation of this steering approach is particularly suited to the French school system's classical governance. This approach uses state regulation that is all together centralized and personified by high civil servants, top-down and bureaucratic, and in constant negotiation with sector professionals (Maroy, 2006; van Zanten, 2008).

Overall, we see that the process through which accountability instruments were introduced in the French education policy is not only based on the translation of European guidelines by partisan actors but also shaped by extended ongoing and homegrown discussions among administrators regarding conceptions and instruments of accountability. This has resulted in a multidimensional bricolage whereby steering by results is embedded in a broader reform of budgeting at the level of the French state and is strongly path-dependent in ways of conceiving accountability inherited from an earlier period, as well as in ways of regulating the French school system.

5.4 Conclusion: Two Neo-statist Trajectories

A comparison of performance-based accountability policy trajectories in France and Quebec leads to three main conclusions. First, both education systems are, indeed, exposed to the requirements of transnational doctrines, such as New Public Management and, particularly, accountability. Yet an examination of trajectories shows that these requirements are translated on the basis of the specific contexts and problematizations of domestic public action.

In Quebec, the translation of New Public Management favors the introduction of new tools for managing school organizations. These tools are intended to better rationalize and improve organizational efficiency within schools and SBs. A neo-statist version of NPM is being implemented via the strengthening of the vertical contractualization mechanisms. This policy trajectory links cognitive bricolage (adopting accountability as the remedy to long-standing problems in matters of education policy: dropouts, failure, autonomy, and local democracy), political bricolage (conflicts of interest and alliances among various actors and stakeholders), but also institutional mechanisms of path dependence (persistence of the middle tier, the rhetorical importance of preserving school democracy, and the significance of the shared objective of "success for all"). At the same time, this creates various sedimentation effects with regard to tools and institutional mechanisms which do not guarantee local consistency while favoring gradual change (the SBs become representatives for ministerial policy).

It is difficult, in France, to ignore the volume of discourse on steering by results which buttressed government action for 10 years and which can now claim legal existence. In this sense, there is indeed a gradual institutionalization of the logics of accountability. This, however, leads primarily to calls for change in discourse and official texts: these injunctions are issued by the central national level and are meant to be applied from the top down, but they are contested by a number of sector professionals, fueling a deep-seated public debate throughout the entire period. This gradual institutionalization also leads to the implementation of new policy instruments with limited transformative power. In this way, discursive steering by results is particularly suited to traditional, bureaucratic, and corporatist regulatory modes of French education, all while constituting a singular French form of accountability.

Second, having recourse to a comparison of most-different cases highlights a common characteristic of the introduction and implementation of accountability mechanisms: the strengthening of public authorities and the development of a neo-statist version of NPM.

In Quebec, the translation of NPM results in strengthening public authorities in Quebec school system governance. A "neo-statist" trajectory implies strengthened state power and a stronger hold over the school system's components. Vertical accountability mechanisms (SBs accountable to the ministry or schools to the SBs) are favored over horizontal anchoring mechanisms in communities and reinforced accountability to parents and community representatives. The state is more powerful because it is in a position to impose "ministerial goals" on the SBs, to expand its control and increase accountability with regard to the "results" produced by SBs, all

while maintaining (or reinforcing) its usual budgetary or regulatory pressure. The vertical bureaucratic administration, therefore, ends up stronger. The reinforcement of the state's power happens, challenging the middle tier or school democracy but without removing them totally. The sedimentation of discourse and management/accountability mechanisms tends to obfuscate and also legitimize the growing weight of state political orientations.

In France, we are witnessing an essentially cognitive strengthening of the state whereby the state's power to frame future institutional reforms is increased, and as a consequence, its power to control potentially fundamental changes is also strengthened. This evolution toward a neo-statist version of NPM results from two main processes. First, the incorporation of NPM principles was more "managerial" than "doctrinaire" (Jobert, 1994). Overall, senior civil servants were convinced that management tools inspired by the private sector should be introduced into education. They did not promote a neoliberal approach to administrative reforms or system regulation that would advocate competition between units within the school system. Most policy makers agreed with this interpretation. Second this incorporation allowed the central state to increase its "infrastructural power" (Mann, 1986), more precisely its ability to act on the education system (Dupuy & Pollard, 2014) through administrative restructuring and the improvement of state administrations' knowledge of actual education policy and outputs.

References

Ball, S. J. (1994). *Education reform: A critical and post-structural approach*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Ball, S. J. (1997). Policy sociology and critical social research: A personal review of recent education policy and policy research. *British Educational Research Journal, 23*(3), 257–274.

Bezes, P. (2005). Le renouveau du contrôle des bureaucraties. *Informations Sociales, 6*, 26–37.

Bourgault, J. (2004). La mise en œuvre de la gestion axée sur les résultats: leçons tirées de l'expérience québécoise. *Revue Française d'Administration Publique, 1*, 109–128.

Bovens, M. (2010). Two concepts of accountability: Accountability as a virtue and as a mechanism. *West European Politics, 33*(5), 946–967.

Brassard, A. (2007). *La question de la décentralisation en faveur de l'établissement dans le système d'éducation préscolaire et de l'enseignement primaire et secondaire (1979–2006)*. Québec, Canada: FQDE.

Brassard, A. (2008). *Examen critique du projet de loi 88 amendant la Loi sur l'instruction publique et d'autres dispositions législatives*. Unpublished.

Buisson-Fenet, H. (2014). Enseigner les langues en Europe: Expertise communautaire ou expertise d'Etat? *Carrefours de l'Education, 37*, 79–94.

Buisson-Fenet, H., & Pons, X. (2014). *School evaluation policies and education states: Trends in four European countries*. Berne, Switzerland: Peter Lang.

Callon, M. (1986). Some elements of a sociology of translation: domestication of the scallops and the fisherman in St Brieuc Bay. In D. K. Knorr-Cetina & A. V. Cicourel (Eds.), *Advances in Social Theory and Methodology: Toward an Integration of Micro and Macro-Sociologies* (pp. 196–223). Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Campbell, J. L. (2004). *Institutional change and globalization*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Clark, D. (2002). Neoliberalism and public service reform: Canada in comparative perspective. *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue Canadienne de Science Politique, 35*(04), 771–793.

Clément, P. (2013). *Réformer les programmes pour changer l'école. Une sociologue histoirique du champ du pouvoir scolaire*. PhD. Thesis, Université de Picardie Jules Verne, Amiens.

Combaz, G. (2002). Le projet d'établissement scolaire: vers une dérive du curriculum? Contribution à une sociologie des rapports État-école. *Revue Française de Pédagogie, 139*, 7–19.

Conseil des ministres de l'éducation du Canada-CMEC. (1999). Déclaration ministérielle conjointe: priorités communes en éducation à l'aube du XXIème siècle (Annexe F). In CMEC. (Ed.), *Un plan de travail pour les années à venir*. Toronto, Canada: Conseil des ministresd e l'éducation du Canada. Retrieved from: https://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/51/CMECReview.fr.pdf

Corbo, C. (1994). *Préparer les jeunes pour le XXIe siècle. Rapport du groupe de travail sur les profils de formation au primaire et au secondaire*. Québec, Canada: Direction des communications du MEQ.

Dembélé, M., Goulet, S., Lapointe, P., & Deniger, M.-A. (2013). Perspective historique de la construction du modèle québécois de gestion scolaire axée sur les résultats. In C. Maroy (Ed.), *L'école à l'épreuve de la performance :Les politiques de régulation par les résultats: trajectoires nationales, usages locaux*. Bruxelles, Belgium: DeBoeck.

Deniger, M.-A. (2012). Les politiques québécoises d'intervention en milieux scolaires défavorisés: regard historique et bilan critique. Revue française de pédagogie. *Recherches en Education, 178*, 67–84.

Desjardins, P. D., Lessard, C., & Blais, J.-G. (2011). Les effets prédits et observés du Bulletin des écoles secondaires au Québec. In Y. Dutercq (Ed.), *Où va l'éducation entre public et privé?* (pp. 107–123). Bruxelles, Belgium: De Boeck.

Doray, P., Prévost, J. G., Delavictoire, Q., Moulin, S., & Beaud, J. P. (2011). Usages des statistiques et actions publiques: les politiques de lutte contre le décrochage scolaire au Québec. *Sociologie et Sociétés, 43*(2), 202–221.

Dupuy, C. (2012). La course vers le milieu des régions. Compétition et politiques régionales d'éducation en France et en Allemagne. *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique, 45*(4), 881–907.

Dupuy, C. (2014). Actively cultivating policy similarity. A regional strategy in education policy in France and Germany. *Regional & Federal Studies, 24*(4), 451–471.

Dupuy, C., & Pollard, J. (2014). A dethroned king? The limits of state infrastructural power in France. *Public Administration, 92*(2), 359–374.

Dupuy, C., & Pons, X. (2013). *Le "pilotage par les résultats" en éducation en France. Genèse et trajectoire* (NewAge Research Report). Paris: OSC.

Fortier, I. (2010). La "réingénierie de l'État", réforme québécoise inspirée du managérialisme. *Revue Française d'Administration Publique, 4*, 803–820.

Foucault, M. (1971). Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire. In S. Bachelard (Ed.), *Hommage à Jean Hyppolite* (pp. 145–172). Paris: PUF-Epiméthée.

Jobert, B. (1994). *Le tournant néo-libéral en Europe*. Paris: l'Harmattan.

Lawn, M., & Grek, S. (2012). *Europeanizing education: Governing a new policy space*. Oxford, UK: Symposium Books Ltd.

Lessard, C. (2006). La «gouvernance» de l'éducation au Canada: tendances et significations. *Education et Sociétés, 18*(2), 181–200. https://doi.org/10.3917/es.018.0181.

Lessard, C., Henripin, M., & Larochelle, M. (2004). *Les politiques d'éducation au Québec: 1990–2003*. Montreal, Canada: Université de Montréal, LABRIPROFCRIFPE http://www.labripro.umontreal.ca/index2.html.

Lessard, C., Henripin, M., Larochelle, M., Cournoyer, É., & Carpentier, A. (2007). *Inventaire des politiques d'éducation au Québec portant sur l'enseignement primaire et secondaire de 1990 à 2006: analyse et impacts des politiques scolaires canadiennes sur le personnel scolaire (Projet 2)*. Montréal, Canada: Chaire de recherche du Canada sur les métiers de l'éducation Faculté des sciences de l'éducation Université de Montréal.

Mahoney, J., & Thelen, K. (2010). *Explaining institutional change: Ambiguity, agency, and power*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Mann, M. (1986). *The sources of social power* (Vol. I & 2). New York/London: Cambridge University Press.
Maroy, C. (2006). *École, régulation et marché: une analyse de six espaces scolaires locaux en Europe* (1st ed.). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
Maroy, C., & Mathou, C. (2014). La fabrication de la gestion axée sur les résultats en éducation au Québec: une analyse des débats parlementaires. *Télescope, 20*(2), 56–70.
Maroy, C., Pons, X., & Dupuy, C. (2017). Vernacular Globalisations: Neo-statist accountability policies in France and Quebec education. *Journal of Education Policy, 32*(1), 100–122. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2016.1239841.
Maroy, C., & Vaillancourt, S. (2013). Le discours syndical face à la nouvelle gestion publique dans le système éducatif québécois. *Education et Sociétés, 2*, 93–108.
Meirieu, P. (2008). L'école entre la pression consumériste et l'irresponsabilité sociale. In C. Lessard & P. Meirieu (Eds.), *L'obligation de résultats en éducation* (pp. 5–2). Brussels, Belgium: De Boeck.
Meirieu, P. (2009). Postface. L'innovateur et le chercheur. In J. Chupin & A. Sobocinski (Eds.), *Quand l'école innove!* (pp. 195–196). Paris: Autrement.
Meuret, D. (1986). Le tableau de bord des collèges et des lycées: histoire d'un ajustement. *Politiques et Management Public, 4*(1), 1–28.
Monnier, E. (1987). *Évaluation de l'action des pouvoirs publics*. Paris: Economica.
Normand, R. (2011). *Gouverner la Réussite Scolaire: Une Arithmétique Politique des Inégalités*. Lyon, France/Berne, Switzerland: ENSL/Peter Lang.
Ozga, J., Dahler-Larsen, P., Segerholm, C., & Simola, H. (2011). *Fabricating quality in education: Data and governance in Europe*. London: Routledge.
Pépin, L. (2006). *The history of European cooperation in education and training: Europe in the making. An example*. Luxembourg, Luxembourg: European Communities.
Pons, X. (2010). *Evaluer l'action éducative (Education & Société)*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
Pons, X. (2011). *L'évaluation des politiques éducatives (Que sais-je ?)*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
Pons, X. (2013). The science from the state: The production of data by the statisticians of the French Ministry of Education, 1957–2007. *European Educational Research Journal, 12*(1), 71–87.
Pons, X. (2016). Tracing the French policy PISA debate: A policy configuration approach. *European Educational Research Journal, 15*(5), 580–597.
Quebec Government (Treasury Board). (1999). In Conseil du trésor (Ed.), *Pour de meilleurs services aux citoyens: un nouveau cadre de gestion pour la fonction publique. Énoncé de politique sur la gestion gouvernementale*. Québec, Canada: Gouvernement du Québec.
Quebec's Ministry of Education (QME). (2003). *Les nouvelles dispositions de la Loi sur l'instruction publique (Loi sur l'instruction publique)*. Québec, Canada: Ministère de l'Éducation.
Quebec's Ministry of Education (QME). (2004). *Indicateurs nationaux des commissions scolaires et données par établissement*. Quebec, Canada: Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport.
Quebec's Ministry of Education (QME). (2009). *La convention de partenariat. Outil d'un nouveau mode de gouvernance. Guide d'implantation*. Québec, Canada: Gouvernement du Québec.
Radaelli, C. M. (1999). Harmful tax competition in the EU: Policy narratives and advocacy coalitions. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies, 37*(4), 661–682.
Robert, A. D. (2010). *L'cole en France de 1945 à nos jours*. Grenoble, France: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble.
Streeck, W., & Thelen, K. (2005). *Beyond continuity. Institutional change in advanced political economies*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
van Zanten, A. (2008). Régulation et rôle de la connaissance dans le champ éducatif en France. *Sociologie et Sociétés, XL*(1), 69–92.

Chapter 6
Mediations

Christian Maroy, Claire Dupuy, André Brassard, Hélène Buisson-Fenet, Cécile Mathou, Xavier Pons, Samuel Vaillancourt, and Annelise Voisin

6.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to analyze and compare the mediation processes at work during the implementation of performance-based accountability policies, in particular, those which occur at the intermediate level of public action, the *académies* in France and school boards in Quebec. The idea of mediation signifies that one is attentive to the local translations and recontextualizations of policies by these bodies and their actors.

This chapter is underpinned by an empirical observation: although the more centralized and hierarchical nature of the administration of national education in France might suggest that the implementation of performance-based accountability policies would be more uniform throughout the *académies* than across Quebec SBs in a system which is, in comparison very decentralized, we observe the

C. Maroy (✉) · A. Brassard · C. Mathou · S. Vaillancourt
University of Montreal, Montreal, QC, Canada
e-mail: christian.maroy@umontreal.ca; andre.brassard@umontreal.ca; cecile.mathou@umontreal.ca; samuel.vaillancourt@umontreal.ca

C. Dupuy
Sciences Po, Grenoble, France
e-mail: claire.dupuy@sciencespo-grenoble.fr

H. Buisson-Fenet
Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), Lyon, France
e-mail: helene.buissonfenet@ens-lyon.fr

X. Pons
University of Eastern-Paris Creteil, Paris, France
e-mail: ponsx@wanadoo.fr

A. Voisin
UCLouvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium
e-mail: annelise.voisin@uclouvain.be

C. Maroy, X. Pons (eds.), *Accountability Policies in Education*, Educational Governance Research 11, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-01285-4_6

contrary. Indeed, in France, we see a greater variation in the implementation of performance-based accountability policies at the level of *rectorats* and schools than that observed in Quebec among various SBs and schools. How then can we explain that the implementation of these policies is rather divergent in France from one *académie* to another while in Quebec we observe a strong convergence among at least formally relatively autonomous SBs (Brassard, 2014)?

In order to understand this phenomenon, this chapter focuses on the way in which intermediate bodies contribute to the "co-construction" of public action (Datnow & Park, 2009). As others have highlighted (Lipsky, 1980; Dubois, 2010), we argue that implementation is the process which defines public action itself, in contrast to approaches which consider implementation as merely the phase when earlier policy decisions are applied, more or less consistently (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984). In this respect, this chapter contends that policy makers include both national actors *and* those at other territorial scales who could be in a subordinate administrative position, as is the case in France. From this perspective, the chapter is attentive to *académies*' (here as administrations) and SB actors' logics when mediating central institutional accountability mechanisms.

In empirical terms, the chapter documents the implementation of performance-based accountability policies from the perspective of their convergence/divergence among French *académies* and among Quebec SBs. The analysis concentrates on two aspects: the cognitive and instrumental facets of these policies. Contrary to what an approach centered on formal institutions and the administrative organization prevalent in the two case studies would suggest, we demonstrate that the implementation of accountability policies is not uniform from one territory to another. The divergence is even strong in France, while it is weak in Quebec. In analytical terms, the chapter proposes to explain the different mediation logics at work at the intermediate level through a combination of four explanatory factors: the institutional context at work, the problematization of educational issues, the local configurations of interests, and the actors' professional ethos. These logics lead to a variety of performance-based accountability policies among French *académies* and Quebec SBs: bureaucratic governance, reflexive governance, and regulatory results-based governance.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first is devoted to the description of the implementation of performance-based accountability policies, largely divergent in France and rather convergent in Quebec. The second provides explanatory factors by developing an analysis of the varieties of performance-based accountability at work in different *académies* and SBs as a function of mediation logics at work.

6.2 Divergence in France, Convergence in Quebec

How are performance-based accountability policies implemented in France and Quebec? In order to characterize implementation at the level of *académies* and SBs, we will examine the degree of convergence of these policies from one intermediate

body to another. The notion of convergence is useful since it allows us to describe how a public policy is translated when it is enacted, as opposed, for example, to that of transfer which focuses on the analysis of the processes at play in the circulation of models and ideas orienting the policies at the formulation stage. More precisely, here we will focus on sigma convergence (Holzinger & Knill, 2005) and describe the variation in the policies observed.[1]

The investigation reveals a marked convergence in Quebec in the implementation of "results-based management" (RBM) in the four SBs studied, both from the normative perspective and from that of the instruments deployed. Among the French *académies*, in contrast, we observe a clear divergence in the implementation of the steering by results policy, while the convergence of instruments used is merely formal.

6.2.1 *Quebec: Normative and Instrumental Convergence Among School Boards*

Normative convergence in the implementation of RBM in Quebec by the SBs studied can be observed along two dimensions: SB managers' representations and the examples of "good practices" drawn upon to enact RBM.

The deployment of RBM in the SBs relies on cognitive and normative frameworks partly shared by high-level and mid-level managers. On the one hand, they agree with the arguments put forward by successive Quebec governments justifying RBM: this policy would introduce consistency in the education system, supporting "success for all," a key slogan in Quebec school policy since the 1990s and on which there is a consensus among almost all actors (Dembélé, Goulet, Lapointe, & Deniger, 2013; Maroy & Mathou, 2014; Maroy, Mathou, Vaillancourt, & Voisin, 2014; see Chap. 5). For a number of those interviewed, RBM allows "everyone to contribute (to the SBs' goals)" (Northern SB_E2_DG). It would allow for closer alignment and more precise common objectives for all SB personnel: "I think that it provides a framework for our action; we know what we are working on" (Western SB_E14_DGA). The fact of having to "account for" one's results and "take responsibility" is seen as positive.

On the other hand, high-level and mid-level managers are aware of existing research on school effectiveness (Normand, 2006) and visible learning (Hattie, 2009) as a result of their training as school managers (D'Arrisso, 2013). They

[1] Indeed, in their study of the degree of convergence of European environmental policies between 1970 and 2000, Katharina Holzinger and Christoph Knill Holzinger and Knill (2005) distinguish between "sigma convergence," with an analysis concentrating on variations between countries—thus, they measure the degree of similarity in policies between countries that are "peers," which share certain common characteristics—and "delta convergence" which designates the direction in which these policies converge, the study of which examines the gaps between a national policy and the available public policy options in a given period.

believe that a school or a teacher "can make a difference" in student learning, whether individually or collectively, regardless of family or social backgrounds. Drawing on this research, the SB managers interviewed then claim to be using RBM as a "lever" to "regulate" (orient) schools more effectively, notably to better monitor and improve the efficacy of local practices. Thus, in the Eastern SB, management agreements are a means of establishing a "correlation" between the decisions of schools (first, their management) and their effect on student achievement: according to the DG,[2] this would bring actors to ask themselves "How do the decisions taken (…) have a positive impact on student success?" (Eastern SB_E11_DG). In the Northern SB as well, RBM is not simply perceived as an administrative policy but rather as a policy that has (or should have) an influence on pedagogical practices and student services. Thus, their latest partnership agreement and strategic plan explicitly state that the instruments in place aim at "the regulation of pedagogical practices."

This cognitive convergence can be explained, first by the existence of a professional milieu of school administrators in Quebec, whose initial training has been progressively institutionalized since the end of the 1960s (Brassard, 2000) and whose networks and professional associations regularly organize conferences and training sessions. During these encounters, various academic works or "good" practices in terms of management and "effective" teaching circulate among the members (e.g., the work of J. Hattie[3] and direct instruction as a teaching practice; various forms of strategies of "pedagogical leadership" for school principals, or even for the role of intermediate administrators in policy implementation).[4] Therefore, these networks are one of the vectors of the convergences observed, confirming, in this respect the hypothesis of Di Maggio and Powell (1983) according to which professions are one source of normative isomorphism.

Moreover, we could also argue that such a consensual approach to RBM among SB managers had been encouraged beforehand during the discussion of the legal texts in a committee of the Quebec National Assembly, in which SB representatives participated. This was a lengthy process, and their representatives' suggested legal amendments were approved during successive hearings (Maroy & Mathou, 2014). In addition, the underlying orientations of these bills were supported both by the two dominant parties (the PQ and the PLQ), alternatively in government, and by SB administrators through the stance of their associations. Thus, despite the opposition

[2] Director general (*directeur general* in French). We will also use the acronym DGA (*directeur general adjoint*) to designate the deputy DG.

[3] Significantly, the works of John Hattie (2009) were translated into French in 2017 for *Presses de l'Université du Quebec* (Hattie, 2017).

[4] This is especially the case for the meetings of the *Association des Directeurs généraux des Commissions scolaires* (ADIGEC [the Association of School Board Directors-General]) which invites researchers to their annual conferences to present research on "good governance," leadership, and "winning" or "effective" management or teaching practices. (See http://adigecs.qc.ca/congres/.) In addition, various forms of continuous training or professional development of school board administrators or school managers are offered by the universities (see Brassard et al. 2013, for an example).

of teachers' unions and the more radical views of the political opposition, the debates progressively converged toward a "neo-statist" conception of New Public Management, which was satisfactory to a majority coalition of actors, to the detriment of a strictly neoliberal and market conception (see Chap. 5).

The instrumental and cognitive convergence of SB managers is also the result of the models they draw upon to orient the implementation of RBM. In three SBs out of four, the understanding and instrumentation of RBM were largely based on the importation and borrowing of the experience of Ontario, a Canadian province which has taken the reflexive *accountability* approach very far (Maroy & Voisin, 2014). Rather than systems of high-stakes incentives or sanctions, as in the USA, in this reflexive accountability system, the improvement of schools is expected both from the transparency based on the comparison of relative performances and from pedagogical and financial support measures and an obligation for teaching teams to improve their results, in case of relative underperformance (Anderson & Jaafar, 2006; Fullan, 2010; Leithwood, Fullan, & Watson, 2003).[5]

This Ontarian reference has circulated through a number of channels: visits to Ontario; the hiring of experts; and the organization of professional seminars. For example, in November 2010, ADIGECS (Association of Directors-General of School Boards) invited the Council of Catholic Schools of the Center-East of Ontario to present a paper in the context of its annual conference on tools and conditions favoring student success and better results: notably, the use of databases, team monitoring tools, and "lessons" from the school effectiveness research. Another example, the "new governance," driven by the new DG of the Eastern School Board (between June 2010 and June 2011), was very largely inspired by the experience of an Ontarian Francophone school council, which had improved its ranking in terms of school results. A number of visits from the SB management, followed by the hiring of the former school council DG as an expert, prepared

[5] Since 1995, Ontario has developed policies which resulted in a system of accountability aiming to improve results without direct sanctions and seeking to foster team organizational learning (Anderson & Jaafar, 2006; Fullan, 2010; Levin, 2010). Indeed, the policies of the Conservative government (1995–2002) brought about a centralization of the system (a centralization of the curriculum, the development of a centralized evaluation, and the creation of an Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO)) and a loss of autonomy of "school councils" (a loss of the power to raise taxes, a merger of councils, alignment of the curriculum, and greater control over expenses). In addition, teachers were seen as more controlled by the creation of a professional order, imposed from on high. In a conflictual climate, the first Liberal government of McGuinty (2003–2007) then sought to appease the various stakeholders and parties and create consensus, in developing a policy of "positive" accountability, based on greater support (pedagogical and financial) for schools, rather than sanctions (Leithwood et al., 2003). Nevertheless, it does not eliminate curriculum standards, the objectives of improving performance, and the OQRE. It is a matter of encouraging improvement in the targeted areas (numeracy and literacy) by supporting the professional development of teams, with the spread of "good practices" and research results. Nonetheless, the direct intervention of the government and school districts can occur when, in the medium term, schools or districts do not improve their performances, despite the support offered in pedagogical and financial terms. In their typology, Maroy and Voisin (2014) characterize this system as "responsibilization and reflexive accountability" with moderate stakes and strong alignment among accountability tools.

for and encouraged the implementation of RBM. In the Northern SB, a new type of support for "underperforming" schools (financially and pedagogically) was implemented in 2006, following a presentation on the Ontarian school board experience.

In terms of policy instruments employed, there too the convergence among SBs is striking. This touches on two dimensions: on the one hand, the instruments prescribed by the laws organizing RBM and, on the other hand, additional instruments (statistical or pedagogical monitoring instruments) not prescribed but greatly relied upon by the SBs, given that these instruments were put in place with the intention of regulating school (pedagogical) practices.

The large repertoire of instruments legally prescribed by RBM ("strategic plan"; "success plan"; "educational project"; "partnership agreements, management, and educational success agreements"; and accountability "reports") was, thus, progressively implemented, with diverse modalities in each school board. More or less rapidly, each SB signed partnership agreements with the ministry and established management agreements with its schools while recognizing contextual contingencies (for instance, all schools did not sign immediately, due to resistance from teachers). Nonetheless, this implementation occurred in adapting the procedures prescribed by the ministry in order to simplify them (e.g., in the Southern and Eastern SB, by combining the contents of the success plan and that of the management agreement of the school, upon the request of school principals). It is also a matter of making them more acceptable to some reticent actors by reducing, for example, the number of targets to pursue for the schools (Eastern SB), or in extending the timeline for the achievement of goals (Western SB) or, more radically, by abandoning the notion of targets to simply require "measurable progress" (Northern SB).

The relative convergence here partially resulted from the coercive framework of the legal provisions and their monitoring by the ministry. The central administration of education directed the implementation of the measures of Bill 88 over a period of 2 years, a mission statement to that effect having been sent to SBs. They were later informed of the targets that they had to reach, a timetable was specified in the partnership agreements between the minister and the SBs, and implementation guides were produced.[6] In that respect, it would have been difficult for the SBs to not comply at all, given that the adoption of the bill prescribing the measures was linked to their future, indeed, the very survival of these organizations (see Chap. 5). Furthermore, as we have seen, SB managers had agreed with RBM and its goals in principle, goals which, moreover, justified their willingness to intervene more directly than before in the practices of school principals and in schools themselves.

These intentions to monitor school performance and, subsequently, to encourage the regulation of practices in schools—inspired by the Ontarian model—

[6] Quebec's Ministry of Education (QME) (2009). La convention de partenariat, outil d'un nouveau mode de gouvernance: guide d'implantation [The Partnership Agreement, Tool of a New Mode of Governance: Implementation Guide]. Quebec: Government of Quebec.

explain the ensuing importance of both the statistical monitoring tools and the monitoring and support tools applied to pedagogic practices, established to varying degrees in each SB investigated, along with legal instruments: usage of quantitative indicators aligned with "the minister's goals," questionnaires on the satisfaction of actors (parents, students, teachers), publication of results from standardized external tests contributing to the evaluation of students' performance, analysis of these academic results generated by the software Lumix and presentation to staff, and meetings of teams of teachers of a particular subject (in a school) or of managers at the SB level about the problems revealed by the data, sometimes organized according to the model of "professional learning communities."[7] The use of these tools and their linkage with a view to regulating pedagogic practices constitute another form of instrumental convergence of Quebec SBs. This data infrastructure is crucial in the enactment of the accountability system in Quebec[8] (Sellar 2015), and we will go back to its various uses by SB (see here after 6.2.3) and by local schools (see Chap. 7).

Consequently, an additional source of Quebec instrumental isomorphism may be pinpointed here. Convergence stems from the role played by organizations and experts who are strongly entrenched in the Quebec school system and whose tools, ideas, and models circulate in various SBs. Here, we can refer to the essential role of the GRICS[9] which develops a number of software for SBs, notably the software Lumix, to monitor students' results. GRICS not only sells its software (present in all

[7] The notion of a professional learning community is derived from the work of Lave and Wenger on communities of practice Lave and Wenger (1991). Advanced by the school improvement movement, from the outset, they aim to create professional learning which draws directly from teachers' classroom experience while decompartmentalizing this experience (with respect to both the relationship with colleagues and that with other forms of knowledge). This practice of "professional development" evolved in North America, specifically, in Ontario, in connection with a statistical monitoring of schools. More recently, in Quebec, Martine Leclerc (2012) developed a "guide" widely distributed to school principals to help them construct and use such a tool, to improve weak performances.

[8] This kind of data infrastructure does not seem as much crucial in France. Of course, the ministry of education provides several data infrastructures and algorithms. There is also a recent literature in French policy analysis addressing this topic in other policy sectors (e.g., Nonjon & Marrel, 2015). Nevertheless, in fine, the effective implementation of the steering by results policy in education little depends on this kind of data infrastructure in this country as illustrated in Chap. 7, even in the case of the secondary schools' value-added indicators which are traditionally widely disseminated and frequently commented in the media.

[9] The *Société de Gestion du réseau informatique des commissions scolaires* (GRICS [Society to Manage School Boards' Computer Network]) is a private, nonprofit organization, administered by the managers of different school boards since 1985. Its goal is to offer school boards (as well as other clients) services and support in the domain of information technologies. From this perspective, GRICS develops and administers various tools for data collection and data processing analysis for school boards, such as the software Lumix or GPI. GPI (an integrated management software for schools) allows for the computerization of a collection of data on the school, used by various actors from schools and school boards: for example, the management of the student file, student absences, student evaluation and learning, constructing a student timetable, etc. These data may be formatted, framed, and analyzed by Lumix which is an Excel software, programmed and reprogrammable for that purpose.

four SBs studied) but organizes the training of the staff using it, all while adapting it to the needs of each SB. In addition, individual academic entrepreneurs spread the "principles" of RBM in various schools and offer training or guides for SB staff, aiming to increase the effective usage of associated tools (agreements, targets, indicators, etc.) (Collerette, 2010; Mazouz, 2008) or the effective usage of professional learning communities (Leclerc, 2012).

In summary, in the four SBs studied, SB managers basically share a similar, if not identical, conception of the RBM policy. Their members are committed to the RBM goals and action theory, and they implement RBM tools, thinking that they can contribute to the "success of all students" and to the ministry's objectives. Thus, the operationalization of RBM does not only signify the implementation of the plans and agreements foreseen in law but also involves the linkage of statistical tools to monitor results with tools for professional support which must serve to "regulate pedagogical practices." This concern is made evident in the fact that in three SBs out of four, management declares that, with RBM, "we talk about pedagogy more than ever before" (Southern SB_E2_DG).

These instrumental and normative convergences are a priori surprising in a system which, formally, seems more decentralized than the French system. However, this is understandable if one considers the different processes and mechanisms which contributed to a relative isomorphism of the SBs examined: normative mechanisms of socialization and of training in the networks and professional associations of school administrators; a borrowing from the Ontarian example; a circulation of tools and models for applying RBM conveyed by various experts; and finally, the coercive action by the central administration which documented and monitored the implementation of Bill 88. We find there several illustrations of the isomorphism mechanisms highlighted in the neo-institutionalist literature (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991).

6.2.2 France: Normative Divergence and Formal Instrumental Convergence

In France, in the three *académies* studied, the situation differs from that documented in the Quebec case. While, indeed, we observe a certain convergence in terms of the instruments adopted in the context of implementing the policy of steering by results, in reality, this only concerns their adoption. In contrast, their implementation remains characterized by a marked divergence among *académies'* territories. In normative terms as well, divergence among *académies* prevails: there is no common representation of the steering by results policy in the *rectorat*s studied.

When we observe the instruments of the policy of steering by results, we note that the *rectorats* and schools have, on the whole, conformed to the national policy, in adopting the prescribed instruments, procedures, and time frame. This convergence is in accordance with the "centralization" model (Hassenteufel, 2014), that is,

a vertical convergence imposed by the national level on the subnational level, and then by the intermediate level of the *académies* on the local level (schools). Indeed, it is undeniable that the policies of "steering by results" developed in the three *académies* studied are severely constrained by the bureaucratic regulation of relations between central services and deconcentrated services of the state, as well as between the state and the autonomous secondary schools. In the three *académies*, steering by results is, thus, supported by "managerial meetings" between the central administration and the *rectorats*, on the one hand, and between the *rectorats* and schools, on the other. In the three cases, questions related to the budget allocation and appropriations overrode other considerations.

Furthermore, at the intermediate level of the *académies*, the implementation of the LOLF imposes its administrative approach, calendar, computerized applications (Mélusine), and statistical categories (e.g., "radar charts," see Chap. 1) on the three *académies*. Such radar charts are drawn upon at different levels, and their use is widespread in all three *rectorats*. These instruments of the steering by results policy have produced certain effects. The management meetings have, for instance, contributed to improving the available statistical indicators, itself a significant effect.

But what about the capacity of these instruments to shape steering by results within French *académies*? It seems that it is weak. While the projects and contracts at the intermediate *académies*' level or school level do not seem to stray too far, at least formally, from the content of the discussions which take place in the context of these annual meetings, these meetings limit the scope of the steering by results policy which becomes of secondary importance. On the one hand, they sanction a very clear institutional decoupling between strategic considerations—developed in the context of contractualization—and budgetary choices which stem from financial and political logics and do not always match the former. Thus, we were able to document that the allocation of financial resources to *académies* and then to schools is essentially based on the number of students rather than on schools' performance. Besides, it gives rise to a statistical production concentrated on indicators focused on implementation, management, and allocation of means rather than a profound reflection on the production and analysis of results' indicators, which generally come down to what are generically labeled indicators of "success": exam pass rates and the percentage of students repeating a class or being oriented toward vocational paths. Thus, at the level of *académies*, we observe a certain convergence in the adoption of instruments prescribed by performance-based accountability policy, but their implementation only indirectly serves the objectives of this policy. At this level, therefore, one could say that the instrumental convergence is merely formal.

At the level of schools, the instrumental divergence is most important when one examines their implementation. A number of instruments are available to organize steering by results in the *lycées*: school projects, performance contracts, SSBR,[10]

[10]The secondary schools' budget reform ("réforme du cadre budgétaire et comptable" in French) designates a reform of the budget structure of secondary education the aim of which is to improve transparency and intelligibility of schools' budgetary choices in order to favor their accountability.

and evaluation. In the Eastern *académie*, these instruments are either absent (no performance contracts), are not well developed (evaluation), or are well thought out as regulatory tools for *lycées* (school projects are not communicated to the *rectorat*, or the SSBR is only familiar to a small number of actors who do not envisage it as a tool to transform accountability procedures). In the Southern *académie*, in contrast, instruments are more systematized. All secondary schools have performance contracts linked to their school project, the Dasen[11] are responsible for monitoring and evaluating them, and the SSBR is clearly linked to the content of projects and contracts and, for various reasons, increases the accountability of school principals to their administrative boards. Finally, the Western *académie* seems to constitute a special intermediate case where there are regulatory tools in profusion, but it appears difficult to determine their effectiveness.

This is particularly visible in the case of school projects and their dedicated applications (VCOA[12]). The application provides the possibility of tying the lines of the school project to one of the positions of the *académie*'s project. It is also possible for the school to include "free" indicators, that is, indicators which would neither be included in the national database APAE[13] nor produced by the research department of the Western *académie*'s *rectorat*. However, very few school contracts have been signed to date, which shows that, even in a dynamic *rectorat*, such as the Western *académie*, the instruments for steering by results are not systematically implemented.

In normative terms, the divergence in the framing of the steering by results policy is also considerable from one regional academic council to another,[14] despite their common foundation. Indeed, our interviewees often share their concerns and

[11] *Directeur académique des services de l'Education nationale* (*Académie*'s Director of Services for National Education, see Chap. 2).

[12] "Visualisation des contrats d'objectifs académiques (Visualization of the *académie*'s performance contracts)." This application, created by the Western *académie*'s *rectorat*, is a tool to formalize school projects, in which principals must introduce their project. This application comes with the modeling of the stages that a school project follows, from its inception to its final adoption, including the phase of discussion with the authorities of the *rectorat*. Behind this application was the recognition of the very great diversity in the format of school projects and, in particular, the fact that not all were necessarily based on the *académie*'s project. During interviews, the responsible individuals from the *rectorat* indicate that, on a number of occasions, the introduction of the VCOA application is also the time for the *rectorat*'s managers to "harmonize their practices" and organize departmental services to handle the school contracts systematically.

[13] The base entitled "Aide au Pilotage et à l'Auto-évaluation des Établissements (Help in Steering and Self-Evaluation of Schools)" was created in 2011, based on secondary schools' former performance indicators. It brings together, in the form of summary or more detailed tables, four types of indicators that education professionals may consult online via restricted access: indicators allowing for the identification of the school and indicators characterizing the school population (social background and numbers), the personnel and means available, and, finally, the school's performance (the students' performance, orientation, and examination results).

[14] While it is difficult to conclude in the existence of a mimetic mechanism, nevertheless, we notice that certain regional academic councils serve as examples in the ministerial rhetoric and can be drawn upon for experimentation. This is the case, for example, of the regional academic council of Bordeaux for the RCBC.

point out the limitations of steering by results but without going so far as to express disloyalty to the institution which deploys these instruments. When it exists, steering by results assumes different meanings in the command and control regulation of the *rectorats*. In the Eastern *académie*, it is an opportunity for a reactivation of better management of resources, in particular, personnel. Indeed, the investigation in this *académie* reveals that, for various reasons (the recurring poor performance of the *académie*, regular increases in the number of students, more acts of violence, and strong opposition from trade unions and political actors), it proves particularly difficult for the *académie*'s authorities to define and stabilize regulation which goes further than the management of staff resources and which is not merely a response to the recurring emergencies and protests of all sorts that they are facing. Thus, the choices of regulation that may be observed over the period 2013–2015 often had the common feature of relegating the steering by results to second place, in favor of a proximity management system focused on educational issues. Moreover, these choices rarely survive changes in leadership of *rectorat* (Pons, 2015).

In the Southern *académie*, depending on the period, steering by results is either seen as a means of channeling the effects of a buoyant pedagogical environment (see, e.g., the systematization of performance contracts under *recteur* Debbasch between 2007 and 2012) or as a more discrete form of governance—it was formally put aside in the *académie*'s project of the *Rectrice* Moulin-Civil at the time of the investigation—which then brings the situation back to subtle internal negotiating games among school administrators. In that context, the timing of the actions from the *recteur*'s administrations and their strategic use of delay play a significant role in raising doubts about the funds effectively granted to schools following their management meeting. The purpose here is to encourage them to adopt a logic of accountability. In the Western *académie*, steering by results seems to be a significant component of the *rectorat*'s communication strategies with respect to the modernist steering of a territory which is on the whole, rather privileged although heterogeneous. In our investigation, the discourse of the *rectorat* draws mainly on a vocabulary characterized by the semantic field of efficacy and management. Some rectorat's managers develop a fairly sophisticated analysis of processes to follow and measures to implement to foster more effective management. On the whole, they have largely accepted the idea that the steering and management processes must be systematized. It is also noteworthy that these actors make very similar comments concerning budgetary constraints they are facing. They emphasize the positive role that these constraints could play in the overhaul of the functioning of the Ministry of National Education in general and the modes of functioning and organization of services and schools in the Western *académie*. It is remarkable that each expresses a rather clear vision (and, moreover, one that is, in general terms, shared) of directions in which to go for more efficient management, a genuine steering of educational action in the Western *académie*, and, in the long run, a more precise adjustment of actions undertaken based on the observations of the existing state of affairs and on the basis of very limited resources. Finally, the actors interviewed share a representation of the *académie*'s functioning as a system in which each component con-

tributes to the achievement of objectives set in the *académie*'s project, as well as to good management.

This normative divergence in the implementation of performance-based accountability policy by the *rectorat*s in France could be related to the manner in which steering by results has developed. Much governmental discourse has put forward this policy, in particular, between 2005 and 2012. Numerous official texts have recalled the imperative of steering by results (orientation law and circulars), and a number of policy instruments have been envisaged to support its development (projects, contracts, evaluations, and statistical indicators). Yet, in reality, the concrete and effective modalities of its implementation have remained ambiguous or implicit, and they are frequently described as stemming from the responsibility of the authorities of *académies*. In this respect, one could speak of a strategy to prevent dissensus early on. This strategy of institutionalization, indeed, permitted decision-makers to reject opposition from the trade unions on the subject at the national level and to somewhat minimize the success of the critiques, for example, that of the research institute of the FSU trade union.[15] The latter saw in steering by results the school's submission to neoliberalism and to the social norm of capitalism. In contrast, governmental strategy focused on the possibility given to intermediate and local actors to construct ad hoc compromises in terms of steering in institutionalizing vagueness and uncertainty concerning the goals of instruments and their institutional consequences, for example, in terms of evaluation (Pons, 2010).

Consequently, in the French case of the implementation of performance-based accountability policy by *rectorats* and schools, we can conclude that there were a normative divergence and an instrumental convergence limited to the adoption of instruments prescribed by the central level (and not their implementation).

6.2.3 Comparison of Logics of Mediation

To conclude the description of the implementation of the performance-based accountability policy by French *rectorats* and Quebec SBs, the typology of logics of mediation developed by Malen (2006) is enlightening (See Table 6.1). In describing an organization's responses to a change in policy, it allows us to go beyond the description of degrees of convergence and divergence to a national level to compare and classify the mediation cases studied.

Table 6.1 Typology of logics of mediation (according to Malen, 2006)

	Dilution	Appropriation	Nullification	Amplification
France	Eastern *académie*	Southern *académie*	–	Western *académie*
Quebec	–	Southern and Western SB	–	Eastern and Northern SB

[15] *Fédération syndicale unitaire* (Unitary Union Federation).

In three of the case studies, in the Southern *académie*, the Southern SB and the Western SB, we observe mediation by the *rectorats* and SB management which takes the logic of *appropriation*. For Malen, this type of mediation corresponds to situations where local actors "selectively and strategically embraced policies from afar and then coupled them in ways that advance their local interests" (Malen, 2006, p. 98). These three intermediate entities clearly implement the national policy of performance-based accountability at their level and use the policy instruments supporting it.

Thus, in the two Quebec SBs, this implementation of the policy gives rise to a reinforcement of vertical hierarchical control in a school system which is traditionally decentralized at the intermediate level. It also gives rise to the implementation of other regulatory instruments for schools on the basis of a better knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses, along with regular monitoring and incentives to improve their pedagogical efficacy. In the Southern *académie*, the *rectorat* attempts to better link the development of a consistent set of policy tools with a tighter organization of relations between intermediate pedagogical managers and administrators. The goal is to reassert the priority that the administrative action must give to educational issues (and not bureaucratic ones) while imposing a common concern for performance on all stakeholders (Buisson-Fenet, 2015a).

In the three cases, this implementation of the national policy occurs as a function of two features which allow it to come close to Malen's appropriation logic. On one hand, it proves to be selective and reflects the interests of intermediate educational authorities and the local contexts which they must confront, which are, moreover, often comparable (union opposition, competition from private schools, parents' expectations, budgetary reductions, and so on). On the other hand, these three entities proceed to implement the policy progressively and incrementally.

Thus, the general management of the Southern SB takes some liberties in the writing of the initial management agreement with schools: it lowers the number of targets to attain and encourages dialogue and support rather than an insistence on strict and immediate conformity. Faced with union resistance, the DG of the Western SB gives school managers a room to maneuver. Rather than dictate the paths for pedagogical improvement as a function of indicators, he favors a margin of maneuver for managers in their usage and monitoring of indicators of results and in their usage of tools for pedagogical collaboration, such as professional learning communities (on open themes with teachers' voluntary participation). Therefore, the two SBs develop an implementation logic which is progressive, incremental, and partially negotiated.

In the Southern *académie*, the investigation highlights an instrumentation of steering by results in a long-term view, beyond *rectors*' turnover, which translates into the addition of new tools (such as the "dematerialized template file to support self-evaluation" and the annual management meetings) or the systematization of others (the generalization of contractualization at primary school level) (Buisson-Fenet, 2015a). Steering by results is finally understood by authorities in the regional academic councils as a "reasoned imperative" which cannot be reduced to an "obsession with numbers." In fact, this orientation is interpreted with considerable

discretion (sober public communication by the *rector*, with a preference for organizational responses rather than symbolic ones), with stalling tactics to leave some uncertainties about certain decisions and a discourse around pedagogical considerations rather than performance to favor the internalization of certain approaches (Buisson-Fenet, 2015a).

The second dominant logic is that of *amplification*, according to which the intermediate authorities are not content merely to implement the reform; they also create the conditions for what they hope to be a lasting commitment of local actors to the latter, sometimes going further than foreseen at the national level. We observe such a logic at the level of Western *académie*'s *rectorat* and in Eastern and Northern school boards. In Quebec, this amplification is visible in the high degree of instrumentation of RBM. These two SBs, indeed, are characterized by the deployment of tools beyond those foreseen in the legal texts: the systematization of comparisons of results (among schools, classes, and students); the regular monitoring of student results and teacher evaluation practices; correlated data on the school climate and absenteeism; etc. The amplification is also visible in the development of horizontal coordination among the SB services (between statistical specialists or services and pedagogical services, in particular) and in the occasional redefinition of certain component traits: thus, the Eastern SB, which had had poor results in the past, makes a focus on student success and a culture-vaunting performance the foundations of its new identity. The Northern SB clearly uses RBM to revise internal management procedures and improve knowledge of institutional environments.

Finally, in the Western *académie*, we witness what is essentially a "cognitive amplification" of the principles of performance-based accountability (through the management team's adherence to the policy and the development of devices established to enroll school principals), sustained by an "instrumental amplification" of these principles (with a focus on data, the production of original indicators, the development of procedures of systematization, the harmonization of practices, etc.) (Dupuy, 2015). The Western *académie* is, thus, clearly in the vanguard in taking into account concerns related to the steering of the regional territory. Nonetheless, when we examine the capacity of actors in the *académie* to implement the instruments of steering by results, this seems very limited and affected by the capacity of school principals to resist these new practices and representations. Therefore, at this stage, it seems that, while the Western *académie* is in the forefront in terms of steering, it is not with respect to the performance-based accountability.

The case of the *rectorat* of the Eastern *académie* is an example of a third type of mediation, one which takes the form of *dilution*. This refers to policy strategies which contribute to the erosion, indeed, the complete ineffectiveness, of an educational policy, through actors' various strategies—ranging from simple ignorance to overt resistance, through systematic defiance—all of which contribute to undermining its foundations. The structural difficulties evoked earlier, the priorities accorded by the authorities of the *rectorats* to a proximity management system focused on educational issues, the weak instrumentation of steering by results, or the attention accorded to the latter evident in the cautious approach put forward in the discourse

of interviewees are illustrations of a process of deconstruction of the national policy and a dilution of its effects in the case of the Eastern *académie*.

Finally, we note that none of our empirical cases correspond to mediation by *nullification*. This latter proceeds "on efforts to nullify or revoke policy" (Malen, 2006, p. 98) through legal or institutional means. This radical logic is most often the result of an escalation of conflicts that classic tools of regulation have not managed to contain.

6.3 Varieties of Performance-Based Accountability and Local Educational Orders

How can we explain these different mediation logics among French *académies* and Quebec school boards? What factors and conditions favor their appearance and orientation? Beyond that, how can we explain the varieties of performance-based accountability observed empirically? In this section, we propose to show that these accountability pragmatic logics may be understood as the product of a combination of four principal factors: the local context of the intermediate entity; managers' professional ethos; the specific problematization of the educational issues in the territory; and, finally, the prevailing configurations of relations among actors. We begin by presenting these different explanatory factors. Then, we examine the manner in which they combine to produce the three types of performance-based accountability which we have identified: bureaucratic management by results; reflexive management by results; and regulatory management by results.

6.3.1 Four Mediation Factors

The context of the intermediate entity, in particular, the pressures of competition and expectations of its institutional environment, constitutes the first factor conditioning the various logics of mediation, their sources and processes. This context is, thus, dependent on the school population and its quantitative and qualitative evolution. It is characterized by institutional expectations of supervisory authorities (the ministry) or parents, which vary depending on financial conjunctures or those of school competition. From these come various pressures with respect to academic performances, reputation, or organizational efficiency.

A second factor is the professional ethos of actors in the intermediate entity, in particular, that of upper management. Notably as a function of their socio-professional trajectory, actors contribute to constructing a series of normative definitions (of educational goals, good governance in education, certain actors' roles, etc.) which they internalize and incorporate in the form of dispositions, perception, action, and evaluation schemes. The latter condition their engagement

(or non-engagement) in performance-based accountability, while not in a mechanical manner. The conceptions of performance-based accountability which emerge from the interviews are here particularly useful in considering this since they allow us to determine the type and degree of legitimacy that actors confer on this governance.

The third factor is the problematization of the educational issues in the organization studied. Here, this is a matter of understanding how school authorities define the principal stakes for the entity and how policy choices for regulation are made by the authorities in relation to their convictions and professional ethos but also the (institutional or competitive) context and the configurations of actors and multiple orientations or pragmatic logics (resistance, accommodation, appropriation, etc.) which characterize their action.

The fourth factor brings to the fore actors' configurations, primarily studied through their interests and power relations, as much as these can be determined from interviews or from public discourse (declarations, mobilization, communications, etc.).

As Fig. 6.1 illustrates, these four factors interact and shape specific local educational orders (Ben Ayed, 2009) which allow us to both explain and understand the

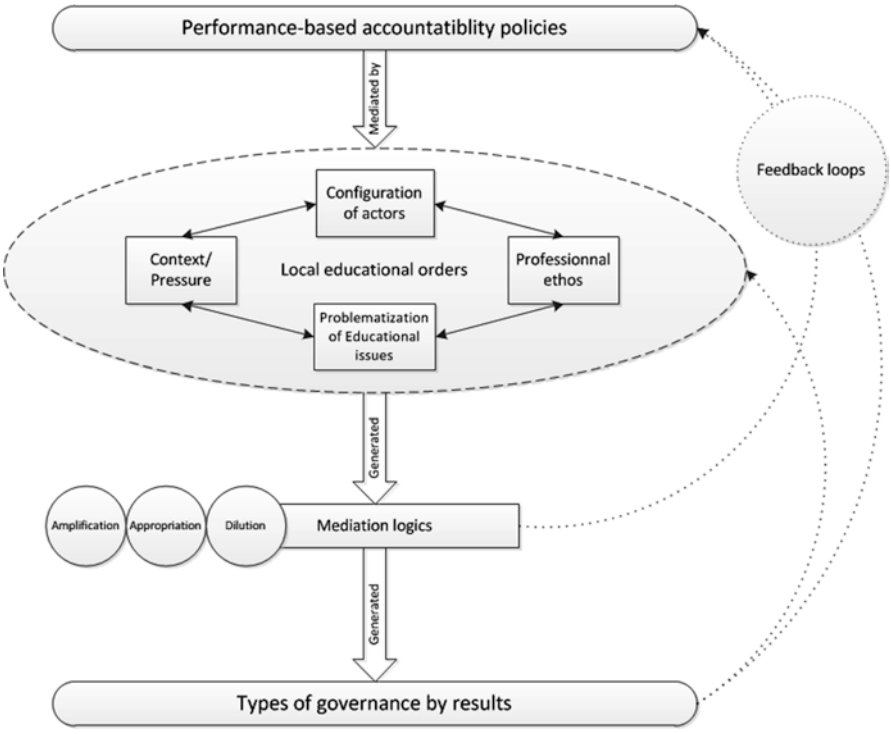

Fig. 6.1 Local educational orders and varieties of performance-based accountability

forms and dynamics of the mediation in each intermediate entity studied. In other words, they allow us to explain the varieties of performance-based accountability observed in France and Quebec.

The composition of local educational orders produces three types of performance-based accountability distinguished in three aspects: (1) the weight of performance-based accountability and the combination of this coordination and regulation mechanism with other regulation logics, for example, bureaucratic, professional, or charismatic (Maroy, 2006; van Zanten, 2008); (2) the variable development of an instrumentation permitting the production of new knowledge concerning the performance or pedagogical action of professionals within schools; and (3) finally, the degree of intervention of intermediate authorities in schools' and teachers' autonomy, in other words, their determination to exercise control over local practices or, on the contrary, their pragmatic respect of the decoupling of the latter and managerial and political orientations.

Mediation through dilution of the national policy is, thus, associated with a bureaucratic management of performance-based accountability, based on a bureaucratic regulation of schools, combined with a proximity management system which ensures that educational teams' sphere of autonomy is respected. The appropriation of this same policy takes the form of a reflexive governance by results, which offers an incentive to improve practices based on new knowledge, but the effects of which vary from school to school. This leads to a management of pedagogy based on incentives, which is characterized by its low-intensity improvements. Finally, the amplification logic takes the form of regulatory governance using tools based on knowledge and regulation of local pedagogical practices which favor a very intense management of pedagogy in Quebec. Table 6.2 schematizes these varieties of governance by results that we have observed.

Table 6.2 Types of governance as a function of school boards' and *académies*' mediation logics

Mediation logics/ dimensions of governance	Dilution	Appropriation	Amplification
Type of performance-based accountability	Bureaucratic management by results	Reflexive management by results	Tool-based management system and close monitoring
Instruments to produce knowledge about results	Weak	Strong (results)	Strong (results and teachers' practices)
Teachers' sphere of autonomy	Decoupling and protection of teachers' sphere of autonomy	Weak management of pedagogy	Intensive management of pedagogy
		Change of teachers' practices based on dialogue/consultation and incentives	Tendency to proactively redefine teachers' sphere of autonomy

6.3.2 Bureaucratic Management by Results

Let us begin with the only identified case of bureaucratic management by results at work in the Eastern *académie* in France. This relatively recent *académie* faces a wide range of difficulties: academic results consistently below the national average; a polarized territory sometimes encompassing areas with great social difficulties; repeated acts of violence in schools giving rise to intense reactions and demonstrations, very often covered by the media, on the part of actors in schools; high staff turnover; considerable alarmist discourse from various observers, etc. We can add to this the presence of powerful countervailing forces, from professional associations (teachers' unions and heads of schools), pedagogical movements, and political actors but also the hesitations from the state when regulating this territory. Indeed, since its creation in 1971, the policies in this *académie* have always alternated between periods of patient stabilization of the local education order (1971–1988 and 1991–1998) and situations of high strategic excitement giving rise to a multiplication of more or less coordinated and lasting initiatives (1988–1990 and 2007–2009) and phases of brutal politicization at times of crisis (1998–2002 and 2003–2007).

In this context, the problematization of the main educational issue in this *académie*, since 2009 in particular, has been the "normalization" of the latter. This process of normalization has occurred through various channels: bridging the gap with national averages in terms of indicators (not only of results); restoring so-called "ordinary legislation" procedures; removing passion and politics from the sensitive debate within the *académie* on the question of personnel resources; or working on the definition of an identity for the *académie* (e.g., "the *académie* school").[16] Each *rector* deploys his or her own strategies of normalization.[17]

This problematization of the educational issues at the time of the fieldwork favored a bottom-up proximity management system which focused on educational issues and which had to remobilize people and invite them to coordinate their

[16] The idea of this slogan that we found in several institutional documents is to stress that working in this *académie* is a highly formative experience for professionals. To some extent, it is an interesting way to talk positively of the difficulties of this *académie* and to reverse the stigmata: there are problems, but these problems teach professionals; the *académie* is not attractive and loses every year many teachers, but it has finally its implicit function within the system to train massively new generations of teachers and so on.

[17] In the course of the New Age project, three different *recteurs* managed this *académie*, and they each implemented distinct strategies of normalization. William Marois (2009–2013) followed a method which he had already been able to put to work in other *académies*. He relied on the intermediate officers (principals and territorial inspectors) to relay and legitimize his policy, with a classic top-down administrative approach. He favored public communication, aiming at constantly dedramatizing the events at issue and stressing pedagogical (rather than budgetary) questions. Finally, he relied a great deal on consensus-based measures to legitimize his general policy. Florence Robine (2013–2014), for her part, instead relied on her charisma and on a proximity management system focused on educational issues, while Béatrice Gille (in the role since May 7, 2014) seems to be putting greater emphasis on the systematization of procedures.

activities in original ways. In parallel, the instrumentation of the steering by results stayed very uneven from a tool to another, very focused on management indicators (radar charts) and heavily dependent on individual initiatives, giving rise to a strategic reflection within an extremely restricted circle of top managers within the *rectorat*. Finally, despite some very recent initiatives regarding priority education, the authorities from the *académie* have seldom called upon external cognitive expertise (in terms of research, private experts or national evaluators).

These characteristics of the *académie*, this framing of its policy, and these choices of governance explain some of the conceptions of steering by results expressed by actors when interviewed. They recognize that it can improve available information and sometimes, thanks to some instruments, the coordination within complex organizations. Yet they have also strongly internalized its negative effects and its practical limitations (how can results mobilize exhausted actors in an *académie* which is always poorly ranked?). Moreover, consistent with the necessary focus in the *académie* on the rationalization of the use of available inputs, they have a tendency to concentrate their attention on the primary chain of production of public action (linking means and achievements) rather than on the secondary one (linking achievements and results) (Duran, 2010). The ethos they display could be considered "neo-traditionalist" in that it grants priority to a traditional regulation of the school system favoring a logic centered around available resources but through new instruments and new forms of coordination of public action.

6.3.3 Reflexive Governance by Results

The cases of appropriation (Southern SB, Western SB, and Southern *académie*) present a number of commonalities, despite their belonging to different school systems. Indeed, in the three cases, the main problematization of educational issues focuses on the need to reinforce or to revitalize the action of the intermediate authorities. This revitalization became necessary due to a certain number of basically similar external pressures: demographic issues; competition from private education; budgetary cuts; and union resistance to the implementation of performance-based accountability. Nonetheless, they take on distinct forms in each context. In the Southern *académie*, the issue is maintaining a vertical and state-national control in a context characterized by the activism of local and regional authorities, i.e., the "pedagogical biotope"[18] of the Southern *académie*'s capital and the local dynamism of some school principals, who may be trade union representatives at the national or *académie*'s level. Since the 1990s, in fact, there has been a succession of so-called "political" *recteurs* at the head of this *académie*, who have not hesitated to take charge of matters which the media could quickly seize upon. Furthermore, the

[18] We talk about "pedagogical biotope" because, as mentioned below, one of the defining features of the Southern *académie* is its important concentration of organizations thinking about educational issue.

context in the Southern *académie* is distinctive in its capacity to structure the connection between research and pedagogical action.[19] The commitment of a number of local personalities, well-known nationally, also contributed to establishing the *académie* as a platform for educational policies throughout the 1990s.[20] In addition to this engagement of certain personalities with public responsibilities and debates on education, it is worth mentioning a local presence of nationally important institutions which the process of decentralization was able to shift from Paris to the Southern *académie*'s capital (the case of the *Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique* [the National Institute of Pedagogical Research], which became the *Institut français d'éducation* (IFé [the French Educational Institute]).

In Quebec SBs, this imperative also proceeds from a concern about the legitimization of the action of the intermediate authority which is harmed both from on high by media and political debates on their raison d'être (see Chap. 5) and from below by some school principals and teachers' unions. This legitimacy stems from its capacity to show that it is not merely a bureaucratic body but genuinely a useful organization, a vector in the service of "success for all students," which might actually be achieved with RBM. The Southern SB combines demographic growth in elementary schools and the loss of students to the private sector at secondary school level. Moreover, while the SB encompasses middle-class neighborhoods, its performance is average for Quebec public schools, and the issue of improving students' performance is formulated both as a means of meeting ministerial expectations, developing as a strategy to respond to the local competition of private schools, and as a way of "mobilizing the teams" working on pedagogy. The new upper management wants to present another side of its administration, more participatory and collaborative, reactive, and professional in terms of pedagogy. In the Western SB, a little smaller and somewhat disadvantaged compared to the Southern SB, with similar performance but facing less dramatic competition from the private sector and more pronounced union opposition, the watchwords are comparable, upper management insisting on the necessity, after years of bureaucratic functioning behind closed doors, of changing the administrative culture (which needed to become much more directly and explicitly oriented toward student success), of being proactive, and of improving relations between the administration and the Council of Commissioners to be accountable publicly and, thus, to channel parents' individualism.

[19] One of the first French chairs in the science of education was created in 1884 in the "Faculté de Lettres," which became the "Institut de Psychologie, Sociologie et Sciences de l'Education" (IPSE) in 1968. It was then attached to Philippe Meirieu's department of pedagogy in 1988 and became the "Institut des Sciences Pratiques d'Education et de Formation" (ISPEF) in 1994.

[20] Aside from Philippe Meirieu, editor in chief of *Cahiers pédagogiques* (*Pedagogical Workbooks*) of the "Cercle de Recherche et d'Action pédagogique" (CRAP [Circle of Research and Pedagogical Action]), we can refer to Alain Bouvier, *recteur* of the *académie* of Clermont-Ferrand, member of the "Haut conseil de l'éducation" (Higher Educational Council), director of the "Institut de recherche sur l'enseignement des mathématiques" (IREM [Institute for Research on Teaching Mathematics]), of the "Mission académique de formation pour l'Education Nationale" (MAFPEN [*Académie*'s Training Mission for National Education]) of the Southern *académie*, and director of the IUFM before P. Meirieu.

This particular problematization of educational issues is based on a professional ethos which we could characterize as "sober organizational modernism." Indeed, in the three entities, the actors interviewed seem to have internalized the idea of a necessary performance-based accountability. The executives and senior management of the Southern SB often share a belief in the "school effect" and consider that the usage of contractual agreements and statistical data contributes to student success.[21] The DG was described and known as a "pedagogical driving force," eager to collaborate with university pedagogical research projects but also open to dialogue with union organizations and school principals, skilled at an approach aiming to progressively involve both principals and teachers in the process. The DG of the Western SB is also convinced of the relevance of RBM and enthusiastic about involving both principals and school teaching teams to work on improving their pedagogical efficacy. Those interviewed in the Southern *académie* (notably the principals) are eager to position their action vis-à-vis certain indicators and to improve their results. Thus, they all accept this governance as legitimate, both in practical terms and cognitively.

Nonetheless, in the three cases, the configuration of actors reveals the diversity, in fact, the conflicting nature, of actors' visions and interests regarding governance by results. In the Southern *académie*, the investigation shows the relatively inexpressible nature of a steering which, however, is emerging, which suggests that the legitimacy of steering by results cannot be taken for granted and that this organizational modernism should remain sober and discreet. Certainly the fieldwork in the *lycées* reveals the institutionalization of management explicitly built on the question of performances, their assessment measurements, and the conditions for their improvement. Certainly also documents collected from the *académies* show the rise of contractualization since 2008, even in the absence of an *académie*'s project, and, since 2012, we can even observe an integration of different instruments, bolstered by the reform of the budgetary and accounting framework (LOLF) for which the *académie*'s statistical office organized a series of training sessions to which school principals, along with their bursars, were invited. However, the interviews contained nuanced turns of phrase and cautious clarifications, indeed, self-critical justifications. The political will has an ambivalent effect on the management imperative. On the one hand, the former serves the interests of the latter by justifying the development of managerial tools, especially at a time of budgetary cutbacks. On the other hand, this political will provides arguments to counterbalance the managerial ideology by insisting on certain values and principles, such as equal opportunity: thus, in one school investigated, for instance, the rate of failure in the 1st year of high school has become "an obsession of DASEN" (Interview n°9), but this is to better "provide support for the educational pathways encouraging ambition and the pursuit of studies and in reducing school and social selectivity at the *lycée*" (Objective 2 of this school contract). This "consensual" implementation of steering by results also refers to the desire to overcome the competitive tendencies of schools, with an

[21] Symptomatically, the person responsible for statistical analyzes has the title of "*direction adjointe à la réussite educative* (associate director of educational success)."

incentive to encourage cooperative behavior and shared pedagogical support: management and performance meetings are organized for a group of schools, regularly gathered together at the French local educational level of the "*bassin*," and various inspection bodies were called up to participate to provide their "pedagogical expertise."

In the Quebec context, the configuration of actors from the Southern SB and the Western SB is characterized by resistance on the part of teachers' unions and some school principals but also by internal divisions within the central services of each of the SBs. Thus, there is a gap between the normative orientations of modernist upper management—convinced of an objective, statistical approach to improve the performance of schools and of the SB—and some school principals and teachers' unions who are less convinced, in fact, opposed to this "accounting approach" of education. In the Western SB, an excessively "transformational" vision of RBM on the part of management was, therefore, blocked by this opposition. In addition, unlike SBs adopting an amplification logic, the central services were far from cohesive. There are cognitive and normative divergences among actors or services, which limit their coordination, as illustrated by the fact that the educational services of the Southern SB do not consider statistical analysis essential in order to learn about schools' principal problems and orient their interventions in schools. In the Western SB, educational services are not drawn upon by upper management in the development of management agreements, although they have long produced statistics on schools' academic performances.

In the three cases, given the configuration of actors present, the implementation of performance-based accountability goes along with a given preference for a strategy based on incremental and negotiated change to adjust the local modalities for reform. It is accompanied by an attempt, with varying degrees of success, to construct a common understanding of the reform direction rather than to apply a rapid and forced conformity.

This preference can be seen in the stated priorities put forward by the Southern *académie*'s authorities (a concern with consistency, continuity, instrumental equipment, the dispassionate organizational response to problems exposed in the media, etc.). Clearly, unlike Eastern *académie*, the Southern *académie*'s interpretation of the managerial renewal of instruments of school public action in education does not reduce its scope or hollow out its orientations. On the contrary, it intensifies them in some ways, to the extent that it attempts to link the process of instrumental integration with a more tightly knit organization of relations between intermediate pedagogical and administrative managers so as to put the administrative line at the service of the pedagogical line, while strongly emphasizing the concern with performance to the pedagogical actors.

This is also perceptible in the weight of the negotiation and of the search for compromise in the Southern SB and Western SB. In these two cases, the director-DG chose a strategy of progressive incremental change, with a tendency to grant concessions to defuse the most virulent opposition. Thus, the management of the Southern SB made a significant effort to enroll school principals in establishing "opportunities for discussion and dialogue," in setting up a participatory mechanism

to develop the second strategic plan (bringing together school principals), as well as strategies of negotiation, selection, or softening of ministerial prescriptions to defuse local opposition: negotiation of "realistic" targets with the ministry, allowing school principals' latitude in their choices of one or two targets in the initial years, and an integration of "success plan" tools with the "management and school success agreement" in the same computerized instrument to limit the administrative work required. Similarly, in the Western SB, "modest" targets could be negotiated with the ministry; moreover, the DG had to consider local opposition and grant greater autonomy to local schools and teams in the implementation of certain statistical monitoring tools (left in the hands of managers/school principals) or in the application of tools for pedagogical collaboration. Thus, in the Western SB, the "professional learning communities" are voluntary and focus on freely chosen themes, without analysis of school and teacher performance data beforehand (contrary to what occurs in the context of an amplification approach logic in the Eastern SB). However, this is not inconsistent with the mobilization of spaces for collaboration which function is also to enroll actors and make them build a common understanding of educational issues (communities of professional learning at the level of teachers in the Western SB and "cooperation tables" for school principals in the Southern SB).

In these three entities, reflexive governance by results is at work through the action of each of the intermediate entities which apply fundamental aspects of performance-based accountability policy defined at the national level, the most important being the contractualization (between the central ministry and the intermediate entity and between the latter and the schools) and an attempt to systematically articulate the instruments in specific repertoires.

This implementation also leads intermediate authorities to generate data, knowledge, and studies (with Lumix playing a key role in Southern and Western SB) or to encourage their production by external actors, such as private experts or researchers (partnerships with universities in Québec, a tradition of research action in the Southern *académie* and the role of the French Institute of Education). In the Southern *académie*, this movement is accompanied by the mobilization of a discourse oriented toward a stronger "educationalization" of the steering by result policy or in other words a stronger focus on pedagogical and educational issues. This educationalization is visible, for instance, in the repeated call for expert support from inspectors of all grades; in addition, it is present in the development of the continuing education mission at the heart of Espé[22]—in particular, with the recruitment of training teachers for the *académies* in the "professionalization hub" established at the start of the school year in 2014. This educationalization of the managerial turn

[22] The *Ecoles supérieures du professorat et de l'éducation* (Espé [Higher Institutes of the Teaching Profession and Education]) in 2013 replaced the former *Instituts de formation des maîtres* (IUFM [Teacher Training Institutions]) created in 1989.They assumed their mission to train future teachers and principal educational counselors. Belonging to a university, their interventions cover the territory at the level of the *academies*. They also take charge of some of the training at the level of *académies* and, depending on each school's project, the training of other educational professionals.

is moreover likely to be renewed, since innovation, largely absent from the orientations of *rectorats*, although the environment in the Southern *académie* proved especially promising in this sense, has become an essential element in the work of "scrutinization" of the central administration.

6.3.4 Regulatory Results-Based Governance

Finally, the three cases of amplification (Eastern SB, Northern SB, and Western *académie*) also present a number of common features. As in the preceding case, there are some comparable external pressures—demographic problems (a growth in the number of students in primary school but a drop in secondary school enrolment in the three SBs, results poorer than expected,[23] budgetary pressures, union opposition, and competition from private education). Furthermore, in Quebec, added to these pressures are those linked to their contested legitimacy as a meso-level governance body and the legal obligation to establish partnership agreements. All of these contextual elements lead intermediate authorities not only to reorient their action but also to clearly display their managerial dynamism in a difficult or competitive context.

Thus, the Eastern SB, labeled as a school board that could "do better," was confronted with strong union opposition but also a "lenient" culture and the considerable de facto autonomy of its schools. Its new director general, appointed in 2010 with the agreement of the Council of Commissioners, gambled politically on restoring citizens' confidence and the SB's legitimacy by initiating a complete overhaul of the SB's governance. Modeled on the experience of an Ontarian school board, a charter of "new governance" redefines the functioning and identity of the SB: student success, managerial dynamism and consistency, collaboration, and respect for differences were the key words displayed. This led to a forceful strategy of organizational coordination, development, and integration of various tools (statistical and pedagogical) aiming to operationalize the management agreements associated with RBM. All of this was accompanied by a formal supervision of school principals (around the development of their agreements or the rendering of accounts on their progress in reaching their objectives), along with training and support strategies to involve them in the reform.

The Northern SB, for its part, in addition to some transversal contextual elements already mentioned, experienced strong tensions with its school principals who

[23] The performance of the Northern SB in 2009/2010 was rather superior to that of the Quebec public school system (e.g., in terms of the graduation rate, dropouts, and mastery of the French language) and slightly inferior or equivalent to that of the Eastern SB (depending on the year). Nonetheless, the targets set by the ministry for these two school boards were categorized according to the ministry's fairly high, or indeed even unattainable and quite unrealistic, targets, according to some of our interviewees (from the Northern SB, in particular).

accord scant legitimacy to the intermediate level of governance[24] and with the strong sense of individualism on the part of the parents with relatively high socioeconomic status who are attracted to the rival private sector despite the good results of this relatively privileged SB. The Northern SB then established a policy of strong decentralization to the benefit of schools allowing principals to develop locally based management practices (of financial and pedagogical resources, notably the service offered by pedagogical counselors). The orientation of the policy is still of primary concern and is closely supervised, both through the use of statistical instruments allowing for surveillance from a distance, and with a hierarchical and professional accompaniment of school principals by central educational services. The SB also established external communication displaying its dynamism, notably to limit the loss of students to the private sector.

In the Western *académie*, in a territory where various interest groups (Catholic associations, major industrial groups, large schools), political forces (in particular, within the right-wing party in government), and principals of historically prestigious schools are powerful, the *rectorat* must display its organizational modernism and its capacities to anticipate. For example, we see this in the number of partnerships created by the *rectorat*, the tradition of professional reflection on new technologies developed in the *académie*, or, very simply, the intense loyalty of the latter to the national policy (visible on a number of occasions on subjects such as the school map[25] reform, the 3-year vocational baccalaureate, or the reform of the *lycée*) making this *académie* a "good student" of the educational policy. Also, upper management there insists on the need to get all personnel on board, to improve coordination among the actors, while still according more power to local entities. In the Western *académie*, the actors interviewed, belonging to a network of reformers recruited by a charismatic *recteur* who remained in his position at the *académie* for a long time, seem fully converted to steering by results and, on a number of occasions, express their concern about efficient public management. These managerial preferences led to a reorganization of administrative services within the *rectorat* of the Western *académie*, based on the institutionalization of a number of meetings and committees of various categories of personnel. In parallel, we also observe the existence of enrolment mechanisms of school principals and their teams. A number of management members of the *rectorat* stress the objective of a "common culture" shared by the school principals. These tools take the form of consultative committees and regular meetings to transmit and communicate the *recteur*'s policy to the school principals or their representatives.

However, this problematization and this ethos combine differently for each configuration of actors. Consequently, the process of institutionalization of governance assumes a variety of forms, depending on the particular case. Thus, the amplification logic proceeds from an incremental institutionalization in the Western *académie* and the Northern SB where, over time, it is part of a succession of measures permitting

[24] They noted their support for an association explicitly challenging the functioning of school boards during the debate on Bill 88 (see Chap. 5).

[25] In France children are assigned to schools by place of residence.

actors to progressively familiarize themselves with the new priorities in effect. For example, in the Western *académie*, the *recteur*, Alain Boissinot, driven by a deep concern about orientation of the *académie*'s policy, remained for 9 years at the head of the *académie* (2004–2013). Similarly, the Northern SB incorporated certain Ontarian accountability practices—based on the comparison of school results and pedagogical support for schools considered problematic— as early as 2006, before Bill 88. During this period, the SB already started to experiment with tighter coupling of the use of statistical data, on the one hand, and the pedagogical support provided by educational services to develop and mobilize schools' teaching teams, on the other. The imposition of targets in conjunction with Bill 88 did not prevent its progressive implementation as a negotiated process: greater decentralization of power toward the schools and flexibility in terms of the time horizon of the initial management agreements to deal with defuse existing tensions between school principals and SB's central headquarters, above all, the abandonment of targets in favor of a quest for "measurable progress" to disarm the teachers' union's opposition to the initial agreements.

In contrast, in the Eastern SB, the implementation of RBM coincided with a relative rupture which occurred on the occasion of the arrival of a new director general and the adoption of the "new governance" charter. This turning point affected relations and the configuration of actors: the new governance redefined relations and the division of labor, which had been judged to be too vague, between political actors (Council of Commissioners) and the administrative ones, the central office of the SB preventing the former from attending to daily logistics, and assigning it the role of orientation and evaluation of the SB's strategy. Furthermore, the new DG selected a fresh upper management team who shared his vision of governance (in line with the principles of RBM and the New Public Management approach). Finally, a very top-down strategy was put in place to communicate the new SB culture to actors at all echelons: a dissemination of various organizational rituals, reminding all that student success was the priority; the establishment of the monitoring of performances through the obligatory use of data; the implementation of monitoring and accountability mechanisms for school principals; and the imposition of local tools for reflection and pedagogical improvement (professional learning communities) for schools that failed to reach their targets. This strategy for significant and relatively rapid change, expanding on the approach amplifying the logic of Bill 88, certainly failed to diffuse either pre-existing tensions with the teachers' union or those within the SB itself.[26]

In these three intermediate entities, the performance-based accountability enacted could be characterized as regulatory in terms of local practices, based both on statistical tools and a close local supervision of pedagogic practices, steered by the intermediate authority. This type of regulatory governance has three major features.

[26] After our period of investigating the school board, in fact, we learned that the president of the Council of Commissioners had not been reelected in the school elections and that, subsequently, the new council did not reconfirm its confidence in the DG. The latter was then suspended and replaced by a deputy directeur (DGA).

First, this governance was well-equipped in terms of instruments at its disposal, often going beyond that foreseen in the national policy. In the Eastern SB, for example, the implementation of RBM involved the deployment of an extended and diversified range of statistical tools and indicators, on which professional development support measures for teachers and principals could be based. These diverse tools are well coordinated and steered by the central offices of the SBs, with a very hierarchical orientation, reinforced by the expertise of pedagogical counselors who intervene in the professional development of principals and teachers. At the Northern SB, the same logic is at work, but with greater autonomy for local schools, counterbalanced at the SB central offices by various places and mechanisms to enroll and supervise school principals (such as "consultative tables") and distance monitoring through the use of databases. The same is true of the *rectorat* of the Western *académie*, whose statistical service is particularly dynamic (to the point of sometimes training members of other *académies*' statistical services) and developed its own applications, such as the VCOA tool for performance contracts.

Secondly, the tools and instruments at work were systematized. This contributed to enhancing the vertical and horizontal coordination between the intermediate authority and the schools, on the one hand, and the core of the intermediate authority, on the other. Indeed, we witness a pronounced "instrumental linkage" between different tools (statistical evaluations, contracts, plans, and rendering of accounts). Furthermore, in the case of the two SBs, a greater meshing of management mechanisms and hierarchical control mechanisms reinforced greater school accountability for their results and the pressure to "improve." In contrast, other tools or legal prescriptions were displayed to strengthen external legitimacy, rather than from a genuine democratic practice of accountability (e.g., the annual report to the educational community, to elected officials of participatory bodies, or to parents in general). The Western *académie* case confirms this observation. The *académie's* orientation, according to all the actors interviewed, is based on "steering tools" produced by the statistical office of the *rectorat*.[27] Since the arrival of its current director in 2007, the production of indicators, describing not only schools but also students' paths, has been intense. Thus, this statistical office has produced a typology of schools of the *académie* which includes the training provided but also students' socioeconomic profile. Yet, in reality, these indicators have essentially descriptive objectives, and one could note that no clear link was established between the "results" and the means available to schools.

Thirdly, this institutionalization sometimes takes liberties with the national framework. This is the case, for example, when SBs simplify the usage of certain tools—in the Eastern SB, the management agreement was merged with the success plan, and the Northern SB took a certain distance from the targets to be attained as defined by the central ministry—or when the *recteur* decided on a specific organization (like the delegation of a significant number of prerogatives to the *académie*'s Director of Services for National Education (Dasen), see Chap. 2).

[27] The DAPEP (Délégation académique à la prospective et à l'évaluation des performances [*Académie*'s Department for Forecasting and Evaluation of Performances]).

6.4 The Effects of Varieties of Performance-Based Accountability

In this final section, we explore the effects of the varieties of performance-based accountability that we have observed in France and in Quebec. In Quebec, the principal effect is the introduction of a new form of pedagogical management. In France, it is a matter of an evolution, perhaps even a reversal, of the usual relations between the central services and deconcentrated services.

6.4.1 New Pedagogical Management in Quebec

In Quebec, as we saw earlier, the mechanisms which produce isomorphisms are significant and give rise to a number of forms of convergence among the SBs, even if the latter also display secondary differences in terms of the mediation of policies. Therefore, it is necessary to consider both these convergences and these mediations in determining the policy effects of the implementation of RBM in Quebec.

The managers of all SBs studied are implementing RBM and its instruments, using it as a "lever" to better "regulate" schools, to monitor and "manage" the efficacy of local pedagogical practices, resulting, if need be, in the application of measures or practices to oversee, indeed, influence or change, directly or indirectly, teachers' pedagogical practices in the classroom.[28] SBs' management has pursued this implementation of a monitoring of pedagogical practices (and, if needs be, of a change) in developing strategies and drawing upon tools, not strictly limited to legal planning, contractualization and accountability tools prescribed by law. In a variable fashion, according to the mediation approach to the national policy, they have sought to intensify the vertical regulation of school principals by SB central offices, to systematize the different tools (contracts, plans, and monitoring indicators) but also to coordinate statistical monitoring tools and professional support instruments of school teams.

Therefore, in a proactive fashion, based on RBM, all the SBs studied seek to broaden the scope and the *forms and tools* of school management (Maroy, Brassard, Mathou, Vaillancourt, & Voisin, 2015). On the one hand, they are attempting to influence the "heart of the school," to return to the use of an image evoked by a school principal, that is, the pedagogical work done in and around classes, as well as its results. On the other hand, the management of pedagogy has taken new forms and is based on a more extensive array of management tools, as well as of new cognitive and normative categories of evaluation and orientation of pedagogical action.

[28] The pedagogical practices concerned must be considered in the larger sense: pedagogical coordination between grades and among teachers of the same discipline; supervision of the relationship to teachers' programs; organization and management of (students with) "learning difficulties;" and consistency and orientation of evaluation practices (among teachers, between internal and external evaluation, and between years of study).

"By analogy with 'New Public Management' which tends (discursively and practically) to distinguish itself from 'public administration,' here we can speak of new school management or of a new form of pedagogical management, the ambition and range of which claim to go beyond that of school administration or pedagogical management, as it is usually understood" (Maroy et al., 2015, p. 7).

Nonetheless, the approaches put in place by SBs for this new pedagogical management differ. SBs contribute to this institutionalization of pedagogical management to varying extents, depending on mediating factors at work at the local educational echelon. On the one hand, the appropriation logic generates a more reflexive governance, based more on incentives and voluntary compliance, the impact of which is more variable, depending on the school (see Chap. 7). On the other, we witness a more regulatory governance of school management, intruding further into the area of teachers' autonomy (the amplification logic). Clearly, SBs differ in their approach to local mediation of RBM, which translates into a variance in the intensity of the means established to influence and remotely manage at a distance the issues and pedagogical practices within schools.

6.4.2 France: Center-Periphery Relations Upside Down?

This chapter has empirically documented the failure of an approach centered on formal regulatory institutions of the education system to account for the implementation of the policy of steering by results in France. Indeed, it has shown the dramatic divergence among the situations in *académies* under examination, both in normative terms and in terms of instruments at work. Yet the chapter has also revealed that this twofold divergence stems from the local educational orders and, thus, that intermediate actors, the *rectorats*, actively contribute to developing the policies of management by results during their implementation. In that respect, the *rectorats* mediate the national policy differently, as we have seen, and the manner in which they do so, by diluting it, appropriating it, or amplifying it, contributes to defining the policy's characteristics in each *académie* studied. Thus, the *rectorats* are certainly actors developing educational policies. Here, we are far removed from the idealized image of the French education system, according to which the policies of the *académies* would merely be applications of a single, uniform national policy.

In the Eastern *académie*, the policy of the *rectorat* is based on a triptych associating management meetings, ad hoc device setting, and the continuous reassertion of the policy by its leaders who are bound to embody it during their numerous displacements throughout the entire territory of this vast *académie*. In the Southern *académie*, it seems to be three-pronged: the first element is the politicization of school issues (examples include the headscarf and questions of secularism under *Recteur* Morvan or, in contrast, the strong promotion of the left-wing policy program called the "Refondation" under *Rectrice* Moulin-Civil); the second comes back to the perpetual diversity of pedagogical initiatives, both stemming from

particular institutions and from regional collectivities in partnership with the decentralized relevant bodies of *Education nationale*; and, finally, the third refers to the contractualization, which is increasing that much more rapidly given that it is supported at the local level by a union of mobilized school principals from secondary education. In the Western *académie*, the policy of the *rectorat* seems to be based on a detailed knowledge of schools and on an institutional communication stressing the new modes of steering which are implemented in the *académie*, two aspects which sometimes tend to mask classic top-down regulation.

Consequently, the central services are not governing at a distance. The deconcentrated authorities play a major role in the implementation of the educational policy, here more specifically concerning steering by results. Yet, this implementation does not go so far as shaping true constitutive policies from the *académies* (Buisson-Fenet, 2015b, p. 120) in the sense that they are strongly linked to the context and to the environment in which they are deployed: the "maelstrom[29] of the gigantic Eastern *académie*, problematic, politicized and receiving a great deal of media attention; the pedagogical effervescence and parallel regulations to be channeled in the Southern *académie*; and the presence of powerful interest groups in the Western *académie*.

Thus, a structural reorientation is in progress in the French case. On the one hand, it consists precisely of a refocusing of public intervention in primary and secondary education—the *recteur*, officially chancellor of universities, sees the universities getting away from him/her to the extent that they are asserting their autonomy more. On the other hand, it involves an affirmation that the sphere of influence of the educating state is the core of educational processes, the regional and local authorities providing not only premises and catering, but also computer equipment for schools, extracurricular activities, social welfare of students and, henceforth, advice and guidance, which has become a "regional public service" (Dupuy, 2017). Furthermore, this structural reorientation is paradoxical since, at a time when the capacity of the central state to steer deconcentrated services is supposed to increase and become more strategic with steering by results, on the contrary, the central services are very largely dependent on *rectorats* and schools for the implementation of this policy. With this policy, an aspect of transformations related to the French budgetary framework, relations between the central services and the deconcentrated services seem to have evolved to the advantage of the latter.

6.5 Conclusion

To conclude, it is still important to emphasize that the two relatively similar performance-based accountability policies, formulated around the same time, inspired by transnational doctrines (*New Public Management* and (*new*) *accountability*) certainly heterogeneous but with a number of common founding principles,

[29] A quote from the chief of staff of the *recteur*'s cabinet when interviewed.

with limited variations and grounded in almost identical policy instruments (project/plan, contract/agreement, and evaluation), could lead to highly contrasting, indeed opposite, policy processes (convergence around a new pedagogical management in one case and a differentiation of state policies in *académies* in the other) when implemented in different educational regions and contrasting school systems.

Quite obviously, this conclusion severely undercuts the vision that the defenders of these policies want to present, that is, that of constitutive policies that can be shifted from one context to another, producing powerful harmonization effects. The mediations are numerous, notably at the intermediate echelon which was the focus in this chapter. Our theoretical approach allowed us to take account of these mediations, the similarities and differences of intermediate entities in two systems, often relying on the typological method and attempting to avoid presenting our data from a purely national perspective. The following chapter provides further details on these mediations at the local level, in analyzing the implementation of various instruments in the schools and the problems resulting from this implementation.

References

Anderson, S. E., & Jaafar, S. B. (2006). *Les politiques d'éducation en Ontario: 1990–2006 L'évolution actuelle du personnel de l'enseignement préscolaire, primaire et secondaire au Canada*. Ottawa, Canada: CRSH.

Ben Ayed, C. (2009). *Le nouvel ordre éducatif local*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.

Brassard, A. (2000). L'institutionnalisation du champ d'études de l'administration de l'éducation: une analyse critique de l'expérience québécoise. *Revue Française de Pédagogie, 130*, 15–28. https://doi.org/10.2307/41201541

Brassard, A., Lusignan, J., et Pelletier, G. (2013). La gestion axée sur les résultats dans le système d'éducation préscolaire, d'enseignement primaire et secondaire du Québec : du discours à la pratique. In C. Maroy (dir.), *L'école à l'épreuve de la performance. Les politiques de régulation par les résultats* (p. 141–156). Bruxelles, Belgium: De Boeck.

Brassard, A. (2014). La commission scolaire comme lieu de gouvernance autonome (1959 à 2013)? *Télescope, 20*(2), 17–34.

Buisson-Fenet, H. (2015a). *Une « refondation silencieuse » ? Enquête dans l'académie B* (NewAge Research Report). Paris: OSC.

Buisson-Fenet, H. (2015b). *Les trois modernisations du gouvernement scolaire. Habilitation à diriger des recherches*. Paris: Paris Sciences Po.

Collerette, P. (2010). *La gestion axée sur les résultats en milieu scolaire. Fondements et défis de mise en oeuvre*. (Document de réflexion). Gatineau, Canada: Université du Québec en Outaouais.

D'Arrisso, D. (2013). *Pressions et stratégies dans la formation professionnelle universitaire: le cas de la formation des directions d'établissement scolaire du Québec (1988–1989 à 2008–2009)*. PhD. thesis, Université de Montréal, Montréal.

Datnow, A., & Park, V. (2009). Conceptualizing policy implementation. In *Handbook of education policy research* (pp. 348–361). New York: Routledge.

Dembélé, M., Goulet, S., Lapointe, P., & Deniger, M.-A. (2013). Perspective historique de la construction du modèle québécois de gestion scolaire axée sur les résultats. In C. Maroy (Ed.), *L'école à l'épreuve de la performance: Les politiques de régulation par les résultats: trajectoires nationales, usages locaux*. Brussels, Belgium: DeBoeck.

DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Collective rationality and institutional isomorphism in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review, 48*(2), 147–160.
DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1991). *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
Dubois, V. (2010). Politiques au guichet, politique du guichet. In *Politiques publiques 2. Changer la société* (pp. 265–286). Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.
Dupuy, C. (2015). *Une académie convertie au pilotage (par les résultats) ? Enquête dans l'académie C* (New Age Research Report). Paris: OSC.
Dupuy, C. (2017). *La régionalisation sans les inégalités. Les politiques régionales d'éducation en France et en Allemagne*. Rennes, France: Presses universitaires de Rennes.
Duran, P. (2010). *Penser l'action publique*. Paris: LGDJ.
Fullan, M. (2010). Positive pressure. In A. Hargreaves, A. Lieberman, M. Fullan, & D. Hopkins (Eds.), *Second international handbook of educational change* (pp. 119–130). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.
Hassenteufel, P. (2014). Convergence. In L. Boussaguet, S. Jacquot, & P. Ravinet (Eds.), *Dictionnaire des politiques publiques* (pp. 180–188). Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.
Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. London/New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
Hattie, J. (2017). *L'apprentissage visible pour les enseignants. Connaître son impact pour maximiser le rendement des élèves*. Québec, Canada: Presses de l'Université du Québec.
Holzinger, K., & Knill, C. (2005). Causes and conditions of cross-national policy convergence. *Journal of European Public Policy, 12*(5), 775–796.
Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Leclerc, M. (2012). *Communauté d'apprentissage professionnelle. Guide à l'intention des leaders scolaires*. Québec, Canada: Presses de l'Université du Québec.
Leithwood, K., Fullan, M., & Watson, N. (2003). *The schools we need: A new blueprint for Ontario* (Final Report). Toronto, Canada: OISE, UT.
Levin, B. (2010). How to change 5000 schools. In A. Hargreaves, A. Lieberman, M. Fullan, & D. Hopkins (Eds.), *Second international handbook of educational change* (pp. 309–322). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.
Lipsky, M. (1980). *Street-level bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the individual in public services*. New York/Russel, CA: Sage Foundation.
Malen, B. (2006). Revisiting policy implementation as a political phenomenon. In *New directions in education policy implementation* (pp. 83–105). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
Maroy, C. (2006). *École, régulation et marché: une analyse de six espaces scolaires locaux en Europe* (1st ed.). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
Maroy, C., Brassard, A., Mathou, C., Vaillancourt, S., & Voisin, A. (2015). *La co-construction de la Gestion axée sur les résultats par les commissions scolaires québécoises* (p. 17). Montréal, Canada: Chaire de recherche du Canada en politiques éducatives (CRCPE).
Maroy, C., & Mathou, C. (2014). La fabrication de la gestion axée sur les résultats en éducation au Québec: une analyse des débats parlementaires. *Télescope, 20*(2), 56–70.
Maroy, C., Mathou, C., Vaillancourt, S., & Voisin, A. (2014). La construction de la politique de "Gestion axée sur les résultats" au Québec: récits d'action publique et trajectoire de la politique. *Education Comparée/Nouvelle Série, 12*, 45–69.
Maroy, C., & Voisin, A. (2014). Une typologie des politiques d'*accountability* en éducation: l'incidence de l'instrumentation et des théories de la régulation. *Education Comparée, 11*, 31–58.
Mazouz, B. (2008). *La gestion intégrée par résultats: concevoir et gérer autrement la performance dans l'administration publique*. Québec, Canada: Presses de l'Université du Québec.
Nonjon, M., & Marrel, G. (2015). Gouverner par les architectures informatiques. Logiciels et progiciels de gestion intégrée dans le secteur social. *Gouvernement et Action Publique, 2*(2), 9–24.

Normand, R. (2006). L'école efficace ou l'horizon du monde comme laboratoire. *Revue Française de Pédagogie, 154*, 33–43.

Pons, X. (2010). *Evaluer l'action éducative* (Education & Société). Paris: Presses universitaires de France.

Pons, X. (2015). *Le pilotage par les résultats dans la « lessiveuse ». Enquête dans l'académie A*. (New Age Research Report). Paris: OSC.

Pressman, J., & Wildavsky, A. B. (1984). *Implementation. How great expectations in Washington are dashed in Oakland* (1st ed.). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973.

Quebec's Ministry of Education (QME). (2009). *La convention de partenariat. Outil d'un nouveau mode de gouvernance. Guide d'implantation* (p. 14). Québec, Canada: Gouvernement du Québec.

Sellar, S. (2015). Data infrastructure: A review of expanding accountability systems and large-scale assessments in education. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 36*(5), 765–777.

van Zanten, A. (2008). Régulation et rôle de la connaissance dans le champ éducatif en France. *Sociologie et Sociétés, XL*(1), 69–92.

Chapter 7
Instrumentation

Hélène Buisson-Fenet, Christian Maroy, Samuel Vaillancourt, and Annabelle Allouch

7.1 Introduction

Performance-based accountability policies are materialized in a number of tools which aim at operationalizing the policy in the routine of intermediate and local regulations (*académies* in the French case, school boards in the Quebec case) and in activities at the school level. In this chapter, we focus on the (non)usages of the repertoire of tools for performance-based accountability policies, in particular, at the school level. Thus, we aim to highlight contrasting local processes of instrumentation, processes defined by Lascoumes and Le Galès (2004, p. 12) as touching on all the problems created by the choice, implementation, and usage of tools to materialize and operationalize public action.

In theoretical terms, in a complementary fashion, we will analyze these (non) usages by observing the manner in which these tools are embedded in variable micro-regulatory devices. By this notion of apparatus (*dispositif*), we mean, in a Foucauldian sense, a network of heterogeneous elements, comprised of actors, tools, and discourse. In following the work of Boltanski (2009), we also show that certain apparatuses lead to "institutional tests," that is, to tensions which galvanize the institutional definition of educational realities or redefine the qualities of practices or actors involved on a daily basis. We will eventually consider these

H. Buisson-Fenet (✉)
Ecole Normale Supérieure of Lyon and the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), Paris, France
e-mail: helene.buissonfenet@ens-lyon.fr

C. Maroy (✉) · S. Vaillancourt
University of Montreal, Montreal, QC, Canada
e-mail: christian.maroy@umontreal.ca; samuel.vaillancourt@umontreal.ca

A. Allouch
University of Picardie Jules Verne, Amiens, France
e-mail: Annabelle.allouch@u-picardie.fr

C. Maroy, X. Pons (eds.), *Accountability Policies in Education*, Educational Governance Research 11, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-01285-4_7

apparatuses as the combined result of an institutional construction (cognitive, normative, and regulatory; Scott, 1995) and a pragmatic construction, forged through school stakeholders' interactions.

As we saw in Chap. 2, the instrumental repertoires of "steering by results" on the French side and RBM on the Quebec side are similar. However, the analysis of (non)usages of indicators and contracts at the school level shows, on the one hand, that the articulations between tools expected institutionally by supervisory authorities are extremely variable, depending on national and local contexts, and, on the other hand, that their expected effects in terms of change, improvement, and "self-regulation" of teachers' pedagogical practices also differ dramatically between the French and the Quebec situations. On one side, we refer to a contingent administrative bricolage in French *lycées*, a concern of principals and little (or not at all) affecting teachers' practices. On the other, the appropriation of the instrumental repertoire is more consistent in Quebec schools, allowing for the simultaneous emergence of a process of semantic institutionalization of a managerial rationality and the implementation, to varying degrees, of tools to manage and monitor teachers' pedagogical practices.

We will conclude this chapter by highlighting the principal effects of these ongoing instrumental reconfigurations, both in organizational terms (effects on the question of coupling/decoupling of managerial policy and teachers' practices) and in institutional terms (the symbolic effects on the (re)definition of schools and the roles and social relationships within schools).

7.2 Tool Repertoires in France and Quebec

French steering by results and Quebec RBM are based on relatively similar instrumentation. An instrumental triptych—comprised of planning (materialized in school projects or strategic plans), contractualization (in "agreements" or "performance contracts"), and evaluation of the action and its results (in indicators and data and statistical instruments)—is central to both policies. This toolbox is the cornerstone of accountability, administrative or political, in both institutional contexts.

The instrumentation of the accountability policies under study is largely deployed at the intermediate level (*académies* or SBs) which plays a pivotal role in the implementation of various tools at the school level. For each instrument, we focused our attention on a limited number of specific tools, drawn upon at the national and intermediate level and appropriated in varying ways at the local level in our empirical fields of study. Table 7.1 underscores their similarities, as well as their specific traits, in each national terrain investigated.

These different instruments and tools were already described in Chap. 2. Moreover, the cognitive and political genesis of this instrumental repertoire is part of the trajectory of performance-based accountability policies in both contexts and reveals an instrumentation carrying diverse and somewhat conflictual institutional meanings (see Chap. 5). In this respect, we should recall that these different

Table 7.1 Toolbox by category of policy instruments

Instruments	Tools in Quebec	Tools in France
Planning	School board's strategic plan	*Académie*'s projects
	School's success plan	School projects
	School's educational project	
Contractualization	Partnership agreement (school boards)	Contracts of the *académie*
	Management and educational success agreement (at the school level)	Performance contracts of schools
Evaluation	Ministry indicators (relative to the ministry's strategic goals) and local indicators	Performance and value-added indicators
		Average target indicators
	Data repositories	Tools for statistical data processing and graphics treatment (radar charts)
	Tools for statistical data processing and graphics treatment (e.g., Lumix)	
	Qualitative questionnaire on the school climate	
	Samples of students' tests in external exams	
Accountability	Annual reports	Management meetings
	Follow-up reports on agreements	

instruments have a tendency to accumulate in a more or less coherent fashion, and the process common to Quebec and France seems to be that of *layering* (Thelen, 2003): new institutional measures are added to the previous left in place, and, in both contexts, there is a hesitant but progressive coordination of tools old and new. Furthermore, when they coexist with new tools, the older ones may change in meaning and function, thus accomplishing a process of institutional conversion (Streeck & Thelen, 2005).

Yet, one cannot deduce from this cumulative movement the actual form of instrumental configurations at the intermediate and local level, with a spectrum ranging from a simple "collection" of tools of diverse origins, piled on top of each other, to a combination constituting a system of interlinked tools. The mediations of performance-based accountability policies lead to variable combinations of instruments and are part of diverse modes of regulation, of which the goals concerning pedagogical practices and their influence over them vary tremendously.

Such findings were already the result of the analysis of the implementation of these tools at the level of intermediate governing bodies (Chap. 6). However, in this chapter, we further explore the actual configurations of the tools (in particular, numerical indicators and data, on the one hand, and the contracts, on the other) through the examination of their uses and nonuses at the level of schools.

7.3 Uses and Nonuses of the Statistical Tools

Important policy tools in both national contexts are, undoubtedly, indicators and diverse statistical tools for data analysis which are used to attest to the reality of schools' "results" or contexts. In terms of theories of action underlying these policies, the tool "indicators" in France, as in Quebec, is one element in a specific configuration and linkage, which is institutionally expected and encouraged. These theories appear, for example, in various actors' formulations of the instrumental project-contract-evaluation triptych in France. In Quebec, the connections between tools are especially detailed in various implementation guides (QME, 2009). According to these theories of action, schools should, for example, elaborate their "success plans" (Quebec) or "school projects" (France) in considering some indicators informing their operating environments or their performances relative to the ministry's objectives or those of the intermediate authority, before negotiating them and establishing a contract (a "performance contract" in France or a management agreement in Quebec) with their supervisory authorities. These contracts should later be evaluated with regard to some indicators selected to measure the degree to which objectives were attained and, thus, allow for adjustments in future contracts. Now, the actual use of indicators and statistical data in schools varies tremendously, depending on the national context and the particular school. They materialize in a very varied fashion and only very partially the theories of action discussed above.

7.3.1 France: A Vertical Accountability Tool Improving State Knowledge

In France, the instrumentation of steering by results at the level of schools is, at the same time, discontinued in terms of usage, disparate, not well integrated, and weak in terms of the enrolment (Callon, 1986) of actors (in particular, teachers). The tools put in place by principals vary greatly depending on the local contexts, and the different tools of the triptych are not well integrated/articulated. There seems to be a clear preference for the use of statistical indicators (e.g., the "radar charts") and for a contract with the supervisory *académie*. Nonetheless, evaluation is not well institutionalized in the six schools studied. Rare are the cases where evaluations (of projects, contracts, schools, or budgetary achievements), whether based on statistical indicators or more qualitative data, give rise to collective, codified, and corrective formalized procedures:

- Earlier you talked about value-added indicators, do you talk about them with your interlocutors or not?
- Well we talked about that, but very carefully. And only with very few people, when the school was evaluated in fact. Because, overall, people here do not understand how we can dissociate good gross success rates and expected success rates. They do not understand that the methods of calculation [of these value-added indicators], which take into account the origin of students and so on, can be somehow opposed

> to the positive and very positive results of the school. You can see that we are far from that. Working more specifically on a section than another, depending on the reality we know of our students, and moving things in the right direction, this is still complicated. Because initially, the external evaluation was taken badly. (Lycée #1, Eastern *académie*, Principal)

Between these two extreme cases, school projects evolve very differently from one *lycée* to another. First, school principals actively make use of indicators as tools with which to analyze their *lycée* and diagnose their situation. The principal of *Lycée* #1 took into account a number of conclusions from the November 2013 external evaluation report of his school, in which the inspectors proposed a number of new indicators. For *Lycée* #4, the indicators were the centerpiece of a presentation to the educational board[1] and board of trustees. The indicators do not seem to demonstrate hierarchical control in this *lycée*, but they do provide a reference point for the steering of the school, whether they are quantitative and developed with the inspectorate, stemming from available statistics, or qualitative, on the basis of pedagogical projects' result feedback by teachers acting as "coordinators":

> [Teachers] are not fond of statistics. They don't really like the fact that we operate on an entrepreneurial control basis, they are not fond of it, so you must not use this kind of words, you must rather… But we talked about that. I told them: 'have you seen the percentage of students from….' Indeed, we have many students coming from underprivileged social categories. They like it when I mention this, because I always think that they don't do enough to make students succeed, obviously. As a result, we could start to think and try to find solutions. (Lycée #4, Southern *académie*, Principal)

For *Lycée* #5, the usage of steering indicators for secondary education, integrated since 2011 in the APAE database, is coupled with indicators produced by the deputy principal on the basis of questionnaires filled by the teachers and students.

In contrast to these more or less proactive uses of indicators to document the *lycée*'s situation, in *Lycée* #2, there is a minimalist usage of statistics aiming at mitigating its effects on the life of the *lycée*. Thus, its management team—its principal, in particular—convinced of having too little leeway, tends to oppose a purportedly expert knowledge of evaluation, supposed to equip them for steering the school, in favor of a more modest experience-based knowledge, consisting in building compromises on a day-to-day basis and, consequently, "navigating visually rather than by GPS." The school principals present evaluations via statistical indicators, as tools reinforcing bureaucratic control, which adds to the workload without fulfilling the promises which the *académie* associates with it. Nonetheless, they somehow adapt because the dominant professional culture is that of conformity.

[1] The orientation and planning law for 2005 planned for secondary schools to have educational boards to speak out on specifically pedagogical issues in the life of the school (the collective work of teachers, preparation of the school's project, the organization of pedagogical activities outside of class, pedagogical experimentations, etc.). The school principal was left free to decide on the composition of this board; as a result, they are not present in every school, this depending on the extent of teachers' opposition to its creation and also on the pre-existing structures of coordination and collaboration.

In the majority of cases, this principally cognitive usage of evaluations and indicators is not linked to other steering tools, with a goal of either mobilizing teams or controlling and monitoring collective or individual practices in the school. Thus, while data from evaluations can be found in school projects, the latter are not used to foster the mobilization of teachers, although the school project, included in the school's policy toolbox since the law of orientation of 1989, could serve as a potential reference for teachers.

Thus, at best, the implementation logic amounts to a concern with acquiring a better knowledge of contexts and, more rarely, reflects a determined effort by the educational team to encourage pedagogical mobilization and activity. Rather, it is a matter of schools' compliance with institutional pressures which are only of concern to the managerial teams and, at best, teachers' representatives on boards of trustees. Change is occurring here following the logic of decoupling (Meyer & Rowan, 1977): new tools are adopted (indeed, in an unequal fashion) with no impact on the core activity at the basis of the organization, that is, teachers' practices in and around the classroom.

7.3.2 Quebec: A Managerial Regulatory Tool for Pedagogical Practices

In contrast, Quebec schools display a more coordinated usage of statistical analyses, along with other tools of the instrumental repertoire, to the extent that they are mobilized, for example, in the elaboration of management agreements. Above all, the usage of statistics is not merely for greater knowledge and "objectification" of school realities but is connected to pedagogical monitoring tools and tools for the mobilization and animation of teacher teams, that is, to tools which are not present in the legal repertoire (such as team meetings by teaching subjects and "professional learning communities"; see Chap. 6). Indeed, these apparatuses for "pedagogical regulation" are based on a statistical data processing tool called Lumix. Lumix is a software which allows for the aggregation of data and which performs various operations of descriptive statistical analysis (see to Chap. 2). The data are linked to individual students registered in each school. They can cover "graduation" (number of graduated students and school's graduation rate), "attendance levels" (students in difficulty, students who do not complete their studies, students who fail to re-register, etc.), and "success" (the academic results in school-level evaluations, the results for external tests of the ministry, and the success rates or failure rates by subject matter and for the officially targeted competencies in these subjects, as "reading" and "writing" in French).

Thanks to Lumix software, to various degrees in all the schools examined, principals (facing strong pressure to do so from their SB—see Chap. 6) engage in "data mining" in order to make visible and objectify certain performance problems and their possible sources. Thus, the principal may focus on various aspects of academic

performance (as a function of acquiring a specific competence), in a very targeted manner, with a breakdown per student, teacher, class, etc. Consequently, from school principals' perspective, the numerical comparisons of teachers' results and practices give them a portrait of their "value" in terms of educational effectiveness. The data infrastructure available (based on the GRICS and ministry data warehouse) and the various usages of these data by school leaders (or SBs) are here crucial, as they are the starting point of the visibilization and the monitoring process of the teacher's pedagogical work. The picture is here close to some use of data in "high-stake" accountability systems (Ozga, 2009; Sellar, 2015):

> Well, I'll give you an example. The first stage [first report card] of the school year has just ended. So there, I just pulled out all my success rates for each of my groups [classes], and for each of the subjects. So, it allows me later... to check... [...] For instance, my regular groups [as opposed to special program groups], what does it look like? This allows me to compare with the previous year, too. Are we up or down on the various indicators? And later it allows me to set up very targeted meetings with people […]. I take out the names of the teachers for each subject: is it always the same teacher who is in trouble year after year? Is this a coincidence? Is it a cohort effect? (Waterfall School, Northern SB, Deputy Principal)

These usages of statistical tools are part of a dominant discourse, that of teachers' and schools' pedagogical effectiveness, largely disseminated in various works, by various experts and professional networks of school administrators (Bissonnette, Gauthier, & Richard, 2006; Hattie, 2009, 2017). Inspired by Boltanski's and Thevenot's sociology of justification (Boltanski & Thevenot, 1991)[2], one could suggest that this discourse stems, above all, from the industrial order (the commensurability of school situations, the comparability of learning situations and their outcomes based on quantitative indicators, close links between various quantitative assessment tools and effectiveness) but also from the civic order (equity vis-à-vis students in difficulty or equal treatment).

Nonetheless, it is worth noting that these statistical analyses are not developing with the same intensity in all the schools under study. An initial determining factor here is the SB's support and supervision of this activity. Statistical analysis is centralized in the Southern SB, and school principals do not use Lumix extensively in an autonomous fashion, despite the ongoing policy of technical training for school principals. The schools of the Northern SB use it much more intensively than those in the Southern SB. Indeed, the Northern SB is developing an amplification logic of RBM policy which goes together with a policy of school's decentralization. Principals are responsibilized in their diagnoses of their performance problems and

[2] Boltanski and Thevenot fall within the category of French pragmatic sociologists. In particular, their work is focused on analysis of actors' competencies related to the "justice." They propose a theory of "the *Economies of Worth*" which models the conceptions of justice in day-to-day situations. These conceptions are linked to different "orders of worth" (industrial, civic, domestic, market, and opinion) and can be found in actors' practical competencies and, notably, in the justifications by which to judge situations. These concepts were drawn upon in education to understand some controversies revolving around educational goals and the meaning of justice in the schools (Derouet, 1992) but also to analyze disputes concerning student and teachers' evaluations (Dutercq & Lanéelle, 2013).

in their follow-up[3] (see Chap. 6). A second factor behind the variation is related to the professional ethos and technical competence of principals and deputy principals: depending on their initial education and training pathway, certain principals were, thus, more familiar with the utilization of Lumix and data in general.

Furthermore, we also observe major variations in the coupling between statistical tools and various tools for pedagogical monitoring and support. Practices vary from school to school in the manner in which statistical findings are coupled with effective monitoring procedures for teaching practices. These procedures take the form of meetings focused on pedagogy with teams of teachers or, more rarely, of individual monitoring and pedagogical supervision. This monitoring is more prescriptive, more systematic, better equipped, and directly supported by the educational services in the Northern SB schools, while in the schools of the Southern SB, the follow-up of analyses of performance relies to a larger extent on collective goodwill and on independent initiatives of teams of teachers.

Indeed, in the schools of the Northern SB, pedagogical follow-ups usually take the form of an "exchange" or a collective "discussion" (among teachers teaching the same level or discipline, in particular those affected by external evaluations) which is based on the principal or pedagogical counselors determining the nature of the problems, notably through data analysis:

> Normally, before meeting the teachers, I always meet the deputy-principal, who is responsible for the dossier along with me–because there are three of us concerned with pedagogy–the deputy principal, me, the pedagogical counsellor. We look at the picture, 'what do you think [about this problem],' and I ask my pedagogical counsellors sometimes to do some data mining, to go a bit deeper than that: 'in French, why do they tell me that they don't succeed in writing, show me the ministry's assessment grid, give me some statistics, pull out a sample of students' tests for me, tell me where the problem is in this bloody assessment grid.' – 'It's criteria 4 and 5.' –'Perfect. What should we do about criteria 4 and 5?' (Mountain School, Northern SB, Principal)

Thus, in the schools of the Northern SB, follow-up and monitoring tools serve to fine-tune the diagnosis established by statistical tools. It is also a matter of forging solutions. The usage of experiential knowledge and the "teams' feedbacks" are then presented as essential components of the device to involve teachers in a search for avenues for improvement:

> So, there, we sit down with each department [group of teachers by subject]. Then we present the results of their department in a more detailed way [...]. We often look at the evolution of our success rates over time, from year to year. Indeed, is it getting better, is it more difficult? […]. So the teachers can see all this, what are the success rates, where we are now… Did the work they did with our pedagogical counsellors pay off? Was it worth it? (Borough School, Northern SB, Principal)

[3] This autonomy and responsibilization go together with supervision and support by the school board during interviews with their superiors. School principals are accountable for the production of their management agreements, according to a predefined format, but also during horizontal "dialogue tables" among principals. At the same time, they are offered technical monitoring and support by the school boards.

However, in Meadow School in the Southern SB, the coupling of data analysis and the work of "self-regulation" on pedagogical practices by disciplinary teams of teachers is far from being as developed. While the principal presents the school's targets and results in a general assembly and communicates, via the deputy principals, the expectations in terms of teachers' practices, the teachers' team meetings are not structured in advance on the basis of statistical analyses. The principal refrains from intervening in teachers' area of professional autonomy and relies on a strategy of co-optation of teachers acting as "relays" to communicate the institutional message, for example, to convince and mobilize teachers to try to achieve a harmonization of evaluation practices. Moreover, the management team does not express particular expectations in terms of pedagogical methods and does not reinforce, through their own institutional discourse, the curricular prescriptions of the ministry (with respect to following the "progression of learning" as laid out in a ministerial document or evaluation criteria), as is the case in the schools of the Northern SB.

Clearly, these tools and their uses today allow for a regulation different from that of principals' traditional hierarchical regulation of teachers, which used to affect teachers' pedagogical work only rarely and marginally.[4]

7.4 "Governing by Contract," But According to What Modalities?

Another key tool in the instrumental repertoire in both contexts is contractualization, which develops vertically between schools and the intermediate bodies. The analysis of the usages and the elaboration process of management agreements in Quebec schools underscores that these agreements should not merely be considered managerial tools in line with the policy goals of RBM and the managerial regulation of pedagogical practices. The way agreements are elaborated in various places and organizational rituals highlights how the use of this tool (and others) contributes to defining the "reality of school," to determining its main problems, and to crafting an internal agreement on avenues to a solution. In short, they contribute to constructing and institutionalizing a language and a formal rationality in which, henceforth, school problems and policies are stated publicly and the solutions legitimized. In contrast, the fabrication of "performance contracts" in France rather bears witness to a form of administrative bricolage, playing with the timing and content of different tools. However, each tool, in particular the performance contract, will not

[4] Indeed, school principals and teachers used to occupy very different and complementary positions in the division of labor in schools (with administration on one side and pedagogical work on the other) organized according to the professional bureaucratic model (Bidwell, 1965; Mintzberg, 1979), which could lead to little effective involvement of principals in the management of the pedagogical domain, even if their pedagogical "leadership" role could be valued in the rhetoric about school management (Brassard, 2006).

become anything more than another administrative tool in the hands of management teams and of their supervisory authority. They remain decoupled from teacher teams and their functioning and are not likely to carry cognitive and normative redefinitions of school realities.

7.4.1 Contracting in Quebec: The Semantic Institutionalization of a Managerial Rationality

In all the schools investigated, the "management and educational success agreement" were effectively established, at least formally. First, they exist in the form of written documents—with a standardized format determined by the SB[5]—which are the result of a formal "agreement" between the latter and the school principal. Furthermore, this document was, at a minimum, presented in the information sites of all school personnel—the general assembly at the start of the year—and was the subject of "discussions" with teacher representatives in the "teachers' participation committee"[6] prior to approval by the governing board.[7]

The management agreement between the school and the SB is purportedly "contractual," but, in fact, it is extremely asymmetrical and hierarchical due to the unequal position of the organizations involved and the legal and obligatory nature of its implementation: "we have no choice, it's in the law" say a number of interviewees.

Table 7.2 illustrates the content of these management agreements, in the case of schools in the Northern SB.

Although the teachers are far from familiar with the entire content of agreements, this document is employed by principals for a number of purposes and functions.

First, management agreements contribute to cognitively and normatively defining the local problematization of school issues, based on a diagnosis of the school's situation stemming from Lumix data analysis, as well as partly from the subjective experience of school principals. The management agreement produces a "diagnosis" of the school and contributes to drawing attention to other significant elements

[5] In the schools under study (in both the Northern SB and the Southern SB), this tool is central, to the detriment of the "success plan," even if the latter remains formally and legally distinct. In reality, indeed, the school boards—at the request of school principals—facilitated their administrative work in practically allowing for the two tools to be superimposed or merged in computer files (see Chap. 6).

[6] The teachers' participation committee is a consultative body of teachers which must be established in each school by virtue of the local agreement between the teachers' union and the employer (school board). Consultation on the management agreement was merely one element among others on which the teachers' participation committee was called to rule.

[7] Comprised of parents and teachers (or of other members of personnel), students, and members of the community (without the right to vote), this board determines the major orientations of the school and makes decisions on the allocation of resources and the various types of services offered (see Education Act, a. 74–95).

Table 7.2 The structure of management agreements of schools of the Northern SB

Objective of the school board and goal of the QME [the ministry]	Increase in the rate of graduation and qualification before the age of 20
Contribution of schools to the school board's objective	Increase in the success rate in a subject deemed problematic (e.g., mathematics, if the success rates are lower than those in other schools of this school board)
The means selected	The "screening" of students in difficulty (considered "unable to graduate") and the tracking of students (tracks/study programs)
	The increase of pedagogical support (e.g., the intervention of "resource teachers")
	Respect of regulations pertaining to the certification of studies and the prescribed curriculum
	Evaluation of the efficacy of certain practices (e.g., one-to-one teaching time offered to students (a form of remediation)
	The deployment of resources for the year prior to that of certification of studies for a given subject (e.g., Grade 9 if the certification takes place in Grade 10)
	Adjustment of the timetable (to devote more time to the subject/year which has proven problematic)
The indicators selected	The success rate of the subject deemed problematic
	The number of students "not able to graduate"
	The number of students failing a subject contributing to the certification of studies
	The number of meetings of the subject team
	The percentage of premises where the regulations pertaining to the certification of studies are displayed
Monitoring and follow-up mechanisms	The production of a "Report on Students' Graduation and Qualification Rate" (in the subjects deemed problematic—this varies from one school to another)
	The production of a "Report on the Number of Drop-Outs in the Course of the Year"
	Analysis of results at the end of the first cycle in problematic subjects (one school only)

of the school's academic state of affairs on which action "must" be taken. This diagnosis is first that of the school principal, but other actors (deputy principals, certain pedagogical counselors, and some teacher representatives) also contribute. This diagnosis is here formalized in a specific format imposed by the SB (the format specified in the management agreement) and is submitted to the scrutiny of other formal bodies: the teachers' participation committee, which must be consulted beforehand, as well as the governing board, which must formally approve it, before it is presented to the higher level, that is, the SB's director general.

Through various formal stages of development of the management agreement, from its validation by the participating bodies, the principal in fact is fulfilling the institutional task of defining the school, its "challenges," and its action priorities. This task is accomplished and performed in various formal places/times which

function as organizational rituals (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) where a semantic definition of the school is developed, confirmed, and adjusted, encompassing its performance issues and some solutions to these issues, the frames of which are limited by the tool (Boltanski, 2009). The pragmatic implementation of agreements enacts and perpetuates these frames, thus rendering their cognitive and normative function operational. The language of efficiency, the institutional representation of the school as a system of production of students' effective learning—with both its strengths and its areas needing improvement—tends to impose itself, and it is difficult for actors to question this, regardless of whether or not they agree.

Indeed, the definition of problems and targets to be attained is the prerogative of principals and SB management. Beginning with an analysis of the school's past results (data provided by Lumix software) and of its context, principals must propose "targets to be achieved."

In this respect, one should remember that the SBs investigated have interpreted the legal prescriptions and made them more flexible, with the explicit goal of attenuating teachers' unions' formal opposition within schools[8] and, thus, facilitating the principals' work. Consequently, the Northern SB very rapidly agreed to abandon the targets in schools' management agreements, in favor of a simple goal of measurable progress (to then re-establish the targets in the final period). In the Southern SB, in the initial years of RBM implementation, principals were authorized to select two or three targets among the five ministerial objectives (see Chap. 6). Moreover, on both sides, a concern with the acceptability of RBM among educational teams led to a definition of "realistic" objectives, with a timeline over several years, rather than working on annual goals, as prescribed by the law. Finally, principals were encouraged to generate interessement (Callon, 1986) and participation by "school teams" in the determination of "means" laid down in the management agreements and, more broadly, their effective implementation (see Sect. 7.5.2).

To that end, principals must first develop arguments to help make sense of the dynamic generated by this process. Accordingly, principals deploy a range of registers of discourse, in variable fashion, depending on the schools, in different places and with diverse rituals with which they present the agreements or develop their content. Hence, the drafting of the management agreement is first associated with the relatively consensual goals to which RBM is supposed to contribute: improving the rates of graduation, reducing the number of dropouts, and improving performance in French.[9] A second discursive register appeals to responsibilization (linked to "contract" rhetoric, a form of reciprocity between resource allocation and self-determination of "means," by the school or the teachers), that is, the commitment to

[8] Teachers' unions have been opposed to RBM and, in particular, the definition of numerical objectives or targets, since the bills institutionalizing RBM were discussed in the Quebec Parliament (see Chap. 5).

[9] This discursive register on efficacy is strongly promoted by management teams but is also echoed by teachers who share the concern about educational success (subject, however, to different interpretations) or academic performance (in terms of the rate of success on ministerial exams) as objectives to pursue.

achieve the contractually defined objectives and to be accountable for them. This responsibilization is justified by drawing upon a hierarchical argument (the school is subordinate to the SB, which is itself dependent on the central government), and a legal one (it's the law), but it may also be justified with a civic and democratic discourse (notably highlighting "participatory" democracy on a local scale), since the school belongs to a community and must render account to its users/parents (represented by the governing board). It must also be accountable to educational authorities who have a "democratic mandate" (the elected government at the central level but also, to a lesser degree, the Council of Commissioners orienting the SB). Finally, the important place given to accountability to parents may also be justified in referring to a market logic: the school must not only respond to the needs of their children; it must also demonstrate that it is doing so.[10]

Furthermore, in a number of the schools investigated, principals ostensibly mobilized "the school team" to define the pedagogical "means" and resources associated with the objectives and targets prioritized by the school. This definition of "means" usually occurs in two phases: (1) a broad consultation of teachers within the "subject teams" affected by the objectives of the agreement with the SB (e.g., teams of teachers teaching French, directly facing ministerial exams affecting the certification of studies) and (2) an adjustment of these suggestions/demands to fit the format of the management agreement (imposed by the SB) which takes place within the teacher participation committee or in an ad hoc committee. In the Waterfall and Borough Schools of the Northern SB, these participatory exercises were presented as forms of "co-management":

- Are there consultations with the school team? How do things work at your school?
- Here we do it with the teacher development committee, and we do it with each [subject-specific] department as well. And so what we do, we define our pedagogical support [support by specialized personnel, e.g. ortho-pedagogue] in connection with the management agreement. Here, our big difficulty was with students in the second and third year [...]. So, when we sell the pedagogical support to teachers, we always bring up the results, because we think that the bug is there, our difficulty is there: we have to use our support measures to put them there [at these years], in order to increase our results. (Borough School, Northern SB, Principal)

These organizational rituals to produce management agreements within teachers' participation committees have, in fact, the advantage of discursively constructing a school logic as that of a "school team." They enact and confirm a definition of the school as engaged not only in a search for improvement to enhance performance but also in a *collective* search, by the entire "school team." According to principals, these consultations/dialogues would have the effect of limiting the teachers' union's opposition strategies and circumventing the most radical critiques questioning RBM on principle.

Other organizational places and rituals will also contribute at a later stage to forging a legitimate institutional definition of the local educational problems. The approval of management agreements by school governing boards—which, in the

[10] This leads to a civic test associated with "transparency," which is partially sustained by a representation of data identical to that used with teachers.

majority of schools, do not raise political issues[11]—and the presentation of (school) results and of the management agreement to general assemblies of school personnel contribute to such rituals. These rituals serve to reaffirm a certain definition of the actual school situation and to put forward some areas of consensus on the issues which the organization must confront. Nonetheless, the different schools studied do not all attribute as much importance to these organizational rituals, and, in certain schools (Mountain and Meadow, in particular), the discourse put forward remains in competition with the union discourse and that of some teachers.

7.4.2 Projects and Performance Contracts in France: Two Tangled Administrative Processes

In the French case, the teachers encountered express a rather positive vision of the school project (unlike their perspective on the indicators). However, we observed that the projects are rarely the result of a collective production or subject to a broad consultation in the school. The project is clearly the result of a collective production in only one school (*Lycée* #6)—a privileged school in the Parisian suburbs whose principal is especially attentive to relations with the parents' associations. Similarly in *Lycée* #5, the school project, a copy of which was given to us by the school principal, is substantial and defines eight objectives: "it actually expires this year, so we will have to look at it again." Yet, in general, at the time of our inquiry, the teachers are asked to vote at meetings of the board of trustees not on a school project but on a "performance contract," modeled on the *académie*'s project indicators, while the school project has most often expired and is sometimes limited to a document listing actions which were never discussed collectively (*Lycée* # 2). In another case, some disparate elements of project are being reused to justify a salient point in the performance contract, and the former was being rewritten at the time of this investigation (*Lycée* #1). While, in this *lycée*, there is no confusion between the school project and the performance contract, the urgent character of the procedure put in place by the principal does not help to clarify the meaning of new instruments, in particular, for the teachers who are least involved in the negotiated regulation of the school.

In these examples, therefore, we see that, from the perspective of the institution and, notably, the *rectorat* authorities, the school project tends to be played down in favor of the "performance contract" which the *lycée* must establish with the supervisory *académie*. As a consequence, what should in theory be their respective functions tend to dissolve in the bureaucratic handling of the performance contract, imposed to principals. In *Lycée* #1, on this subject, the bursar stressed that "we talk

[11] The governing boards of the schools examined tend to accept the latest management agreements presented by the principals, practically without discussion, which, from our perspective, indicates that the institutional representation of the school conveyed by these agreements increasingly assumes an institutional "taken-for-grantedness" character.

about it but we don't have meetings for that" and, indeed, certain regional pedagogical inspectors see therein one of the limitations in a contractualization that a number of them perceive as excessively procedural—that is, favoring the poor quality of the relation between teachers and their institution. In *Lycée* #3, the performance contract is not based on a broad collaboration with teams of teachers, whom the principal excuses from this task "so that they can concentrate on implementing the reform of the *lycée*." In *Lycée* #2, the relation of teachers interviewed to the contract fluctuates between complete ignorance of such a procedure and pure and simple rejection in the name of a refusal of the commodification of the school.

Now, in the French case, it is instead the school project which translates the professional commitment of school principals to a team dynamic, when this dynamic exists. Consequently, school principals attempt to couple the project and the contract, and to inspire or relaunch the former thanks to the latter, but with varying degrees of success:

> There is an old draft [of the school project] that dates back to 1994, so damned outdated. And since then, I believe that my colleagues, like me, have not really dealt with that, first because the teaching staff are very reluctant as soon as we talk about the school project, because they have the impression of having worked on it a great deal. Some work has been done since 1994 but it remained at the stage of work in progress, never resulting in elaborating a document. And given that the teachers were sometimes involved in meetings for the sake of a project which never saw the light of day, from the moment I arrived, they told me: 'We will not work on the school project.' And since this was the period when I had to renew my performance contract which was anyway extremely fragile and light, we worked a lot on the performance contract. And, anyway, my goal was to start with the performance contract and make it the heart of the school project; even if the school project is broader, there could still be in this lycée lots of actions that could stem from a school project. (Lycée #4, Southern *académie*, Principal)

The principal of *Lycée* #1, in a position to provide us all the necessary documents for the writing of a performance contract, as well as the annual evaluation report which he wrote himself, revealed that he was determined to couple the two instruments. However, the very tight calendar proposed by the *rectorat* left schools in the *académie* only 2 months from the distribution of the circular to prepare the contracts, and, in the absence of an educational board in this *lycée*, he could only organize informal consultations with personnel sharing his ideas and a meeting with the coordinators of disciplines. In *Lycée* # 3, the three strands of the first performance contract (2013–2016) came from the diagnosis of the principal, who was concerned about putting his new school on track to follow the recommendations detailed in his mission statement at the time of his appointment. The three strands were picked up again at the conclusion of the meeting to launch the school project, which shows that the principal did not attempt to impose a logical order on the management tools which he developed progressively but instead took advantage of external prescriptions to ensure the conformity of the school with institutional expectations, even if this meant being "a little bossy" (Interview with the principal of the public *Lycée* #3). Yet the same desire to have the school comply with regulatory requirements and to reintroduce formal rules wherever possible—to shift away from personal relations and privileges acquired by certain teachers over time—had completely

different results in *Lycée* #2 where the antagonism between "them" (the principal and deputy principal) and "us" (the teaching staff) intensified.

At the end of the day, the principals of our six *lycées* dealt with the elaboration of a performance contract to be approved by the board of trustees as an opportunity to re-establish a clear steering and a managerial identity which principals expect to strengthen with the new public action instruments. Therefore, they are clearly favorable to this instrument which is congruent with the professional ethos of these educational managers. However, this does not prevent some criticizing the modalities of the implementation of this contractualization:

> As for me, I find this super interesting, first because as I come from the private sector, I find that it's important because it allows … we contractualize, we have objectives, we evaluate the objectives. So, therefore, that places us in interesting positions, it seems to me. Because, there you go, we have to embark on evaluation processes that are necessary. […]. Where I'm less in agreement with contractualization, in any case, with the way they have proposed it to us, is that these are fool's contracts. What does the central administration put on the table? What does the deconcentered administration offer in the contractualization? What margin of autonomy do they allow? We contractualize about what? On the rate of success in the [end of lower secondary school exam] DNB? OK, but… and if I do well, what do I get? If I succeed, what do I get? What do they put in the balance so that I can do well? Peanuts! So, at a certain point, in contractualization, you have to have co-contracting parties. There you go. So, when, finally, there's only one party who is accountable, only one who has to deliver, that's no longer a contract, it's an injunction. In my view, it's more that that poses a problem. (Lycée # 5, Southern *académie*, Principal)

In a world where the need to be more accountable no longer allows an authority to assert its power only on the basis of bureaucratic respect for procedures and where charismatic legitimacy is merely an auxiliary resource for action, the legitimacy of managerial rationality and of the discourse on effectiveness does not seem that easy to promote, as we see in the following section.

7.5 From Instrumentation to Professional Relations

Instrumental regulation of school accountability is not limited merely to the renewal of management techniques: its usages are a component of professional relations which forms the backbone of such regulation in both contexts studied, with varying effects and directions.

In the French case, most often the instruments are used separately, in a logic of conformity with what is expected by principals' bureaucratic supervisory authority. Therefore, they are not actively articulated, as central complementary tools in the principal's proximity management system for greater pedagogical efficacy in their school. Thus, change is occurring with a decoupling logic (Meyer & Rowan, 1977): new tools are established without this affecting the "technical core" of the organization, that is, the practices of teachers in and around the classrooms. Principals and teachers still occupy very different and complementary positions in a division of labor (administration on one side and pedagogical work on the other). As a result,

schools are still organized on the model of professional bureaucracy (Bidwell, 1965; Mintzberg, 1979). This continues to foster little effective involvement of principals in the pedagogical domain, even if, in terms of discourse, their pedagogical "leadership" role is valued today (Barrere, 2010; Pelage, 2009). The persistence of this division of labor and this model of professional relations despite the instrumental renewal has led us to coin the term "resilient decoupling," in contrast with the Quebec case, where the usages of instrumentation reveal a common process of "recoupling" in the schools studied, even if we should not underestimate local differentiation.

7.5.1 A French Configuration of "Resilient Decoupling"

In drawing on to the typology of Betty Malen (2006), used to model the intermediary regulations in the preceding chapter, we can position the different French public *lycées* according to their usage of steering by results instrumentation. Among the different logics mentioned by Malen—dilution, appropriation, nullification, and amplification of a policy—two specific cases stand out.

The first, an isolated case, corresponds to a case of pronounced dilution of the policy of "steering by results" in *Lycée* #2. This dilution is first visible in the marked loss of the instrumentation of this management: the school project is limited to a four-page document listing a series of actions implemented several years earlier, and it was never evaluated nor updated; the performance contract had not been established at the time of our investigation; and the school evaluation had taken place, but its regulatory power was clearly limited, for various reasons.[12] This dilution is also visible in the modes of regulation used by the *rectorats* for this problematic *lycée*, which take other paths than that of results-based steering (feedbacks from the school principal, regulation by inspectors, and performance audits), and in the principal's difficulty in establishing collaborative structures in which discussions on the school's results could take place (Pons, 2015b):

> When the first team meeting [of teachers] took place at the initiative of the inspector of mathematics, it took 20 minutes to explain why my presence was legitimate. (Lycée # 2, Eastern *académie*, Principal)
>
> Everything is a fight in this school […] I am regarded as an enemy, as pro-management. I am too close to administration and inspection. (Lycée # 2, Eastern *académie*, Teacher)

The second scenario, which is also the most likely, alternates between a very selective appropriation logic and a soft nullification logic. This can be found in four public *lycées* in three different *académies* which, beyond their differences in school

[12] There was no significant communication about the evaluation among teachers. In fact, this evaluation neither allowed nor helped the principal to establish his steering of educational issues nor to anticipate the problems which would break out a few months later. Finally, this procedure was replaced by a relaunch of contractualization, which undermines the legitimacy of establishing actions on the basis of such evaluations.

populations, results, socioeconomic environment, and institutional trajectories, share a similar situation of decoupling. On the one hand, in these *lycées*, the school principal tends to take sole responsibility for accountability to the institution and for steering by results. On the other hand, this steering does not really reach the teachers, or it affects them in ways which would allow them either to be confirmed in their actions or to ignore certain prescriptions without major institutional consequences.

In *Lycée* #1, we see this, in particular, in the duality of the principal's steering approach. While he is determined to implement all the instruments and procedures foreseen by the institution, to interlink their content in a coherent fashion, and to make them part of his communication with the institution, he is clearly choosing an informal proximity management system in the school and refuses to formalize his action in an overly procedural manner. While this duality does not prevent him from circulating his diagnoses and imperatives among the school personnel, it hinders the formation of bodies in which students' results could be analyzed and discussed with school personnel, while the teachers are concerned about their students' success in the baccalaureate and are involved in eight different schemes to prepare students for this exam. The idea of an educational board is, thus, clearly rejected by the team of teachers, as is the idea that the school principal could have some legitimacy in pedagogical matters. In *Lycée* #1, therefore, there is certainly a process of selective appropriation at work, both on the side of the principal (bureaucratic conformity vis-à-vis the hierarchy while preserving an informal and classic steering) and the teaching team (concerned with improving results, but not on the basis of instruments and bodies proposed by the institution). Yet this process also sometimes leads to a nullification logic when, for example, the teachers, in the name of pedagogical freedom and their considerable involvement in student success, conceive accountability as being only accountable to themselves and when they reject the principal's intervention in the pedagogical domain (Pons, 2015a).

Within *Lycée* #3, we find the same duality in the principal's steering style: conformity with the command and control regulations of the institution, on one side, and, on the other, a refusal to adopt a logic of evaluation of results internally, so as not to antagonize the teaching team. This twofold steering is the consequence of the steering by the Southern *académie* itself, a steering characterized by a "reasoned" accountability logic and a widespread perception among the teaching team, according to which (1) the raw success rates in the baccalaureate are improving and everyone can see it, (2) this is due to the efforts of teaching teams committed to a multitude of projects, and, therefore, (3) any other form of accountability seems of little relevance and not very legitimate. There too, there are both a selective appropriation and a form of nullification or, at least, of neutralization of steering by results as formalized by the institution (Buisson-Fenet, 2015).

This logic is also found in *Lycée* #4. Once again, the school principal "does not turn out to be so much the expected "go-between," the one who transmits/conveys a new framework, new categories of thought to teachers, and is, instead, the main recipient of these reforms" in terms of results-based steering, so that the chain of accountability does not go beyond the principal (Allouch, 2015a, p. 11). There too,

the instrumentation of this steering is very selective and rather weak and does not affect the teaching team, who are, moreover, mobilized and unionized.

Finally, we find this logic in *Lycée* #5, with a few slight variations:

> once again [we observe] a management team which takes upon itself alone the implementation of accountability policy but […]: the school principal does not carry out this mission single-handedly; on the one hand since the management team, substantial in this school, is generally involved; on the other hand, the management team designates stake holders in a much clearer fashion than elsewhere: in a privileged school, it is the parents who present themselves as the users of the national education system who must be convinced.

"Thus, we are responsible for our reputation [with parents]" declares the school principal. Nonetheless, this type of accountability does not seem to mobilize teachers or even have much effect on them (Allouch, 2015b, p. 1, 5).

Clearly, despite a managerial rationality widespread among principals, the diversity of work relations in French schools leads to a management of teachers' work which can vary considerably. The instruments are established by principals, with tremendous variation, depending on the local contexts and with very little linkage of the different tools. The uses made of them stem at best from a concern with a better knowledge of contexts, much more rarely from a desire for pedagogical mobilization and coordination of the educational team, still present in *Lycée* #1. In most other cases, it is more a matter of schools conforming with institutional pressures which only concern the management teams. Teachers in their daily practices are not affected or only very indirectly affected. Here, the change occurs in the logic of decoupling (Meyer & Rowan, 1977): new tools are set in place (indeed, in an unequal fashion) without this affecting the heart/core of the activity at the basis of the organization, that is, teachers' practices in and around the classrooms.

7.5.2 A Quebec Configuration of "Robust Recoupling"

In Quebec schools, the situation is very different. First, all the tools are actually implemented by management teams, even if this implementation occurs under variable conditions and with diverse ambitions and effects. Second, we might consider that, in this enactment and these uses of tools by principals, there is a genuine connection/coupling of the different tools related to RBM policy. Not only do we observe that management agreements are partially constructed[13] from statistical tools and in relation to targets and indicators defined at higher levels, but we also note that certain tools were coupled to the point of being practically "merged," to make them more operational (in particular, the success plans and management agreements). They are also coupled with formal pedagogical meetings or teachers' professional development tools (e.g., meetings of teacher teams by discipline or year of study to consider students' results; training schemes for teachers on certain

[13] To take stock of school performances and define priority goals and the means of evaluating them.

evaluation practices or teaching methods; or "professional learning communities" organized on the basis of the analyses of results).

Thus, principals—with variations across schools—draw upon these tools in a logic of management of pedagogy and regulation of teaching practices, with the aim of improving performance and partially reinforcing their influence on teachers' work through monitoring and coordinating their pedagogical efforts. The use of tools here reinforces the technical rationality and coordination of teachers' work, to serve predefined organizational objectives in management agreements and, more broadly, school performance.

It is also principals' teams (in particular, deputy principals) who play a leadership role, often in collaboration with pedagogical counselors, who have legitimate pedagogical expertise and whose role is to disseminate this expertise. Teachers, individually or collectively (in particular, in school subject teams), are directly affected since the tools especially aim to regulate their *pedagogical work*. Finally, these tools also involve the users (parents and students).

Principals' practices (and, more broadly, their discourse on performance) are underpinned, for some actors, by theories on teacher effects and "effective" practices, as advanced by much international research on education (Normand, 2006) and actively disseminated by the SB.[14] These theories become, for principals' teams, a "theory-in-use" (Schön, 1994), and teachers' professionalism is gauged according to their capacity to ensure that their students succeed. This element is central to the call for self-regulation[15] by teachers who, to become *true* professionals, must agree to question themselves and reflect on their way of improving their practice and engage in "professional development," with the primary objective of enhancing their capacity to ensure students' success. From this perspective, teachers must integrate dispositions, indeed techniques, which favor this *effective* practice. The analogy of the jogger used by the principal in Mountain School is particularly revealing:

> […] if you don't reach your goal in the competition at the end of the year, when you render accounts to yourself, well, there are reasons for that; it's not a huge tragedy if you didn't reach your goal. If you broke a leg and had to stop your training, you certainly wouldn't reach your goal, and no one will slap you on the wrist for that! However, if you're personally aware that it's because you didn't do the training and that you watched tv instead if going to train, what are you going to say? You'll say 'damn, why didn't I do it?' At a certain point, if we give ourselves goals, it's also to give ourselves some little kicks in the backside [...] and to say to ourselves 'I should kick myself, I should go and do my jogging if I want to reach my goal.' So, I always try to sensitize [the teachers], to educate them a bit to not be afraid of that [the monitoring of results] and to see it as a motivational tool rather than see it as a tool of coercion. (Mountain School, Northern SB, principal)

[14] And, more broadly in Quebec, education faculties or bodies in charge of "transferring" research results on the ground.

[15] And this, rather than an administrative power which constrains the practice; in this, one may refer to Foucault's self-governing techniques which, along with the techniques of domination, contribute to the "Governmentality of populations" (see *Dits et Écrits IV*), that is, the "techniques and procedures designed to direct the conduct of men" (Dits et écrits II, p. 944).

Thus, teachers are asked to analyze their own performance in the light of the results achieved by students, to give themselves targets and question themselves when these are not attained in order to, ultimately, make the necessary corrections to their practice (unless the clearly identified imponderables—the analogy of the broken leg—serve to justify these shortcomings).

In this context, the principal's job is to transform (this is, indeed, what underlies the recurrent usage of the term "educate") the teacher's relationship to the knowledge provided by statistical tools so that they become sources of "motivation" and foster change. Therefore, principals establish a link between statistical monitoring tools, a managerial diagnosis of the school's problems and pedagogical monitoring or supervision of teachers—individual or collective.

The local uses of RBM tools, therefore, provide new tests—in the sense of Boltanski and Thevenot (1991)—serving to characterize the pedagogical efficacy of schools' and teachers' practices.[16] Its instrumentation connects statistical data, standardized exams and teachers' "good practices," and rests on a collection of tools held together by a normative discourse on the responsibilization of teachers and the development of their efficacy. At the heart of this apparatus (*dispositif*), in fact, the principals and deputy principals act prudently and aim, above all, to enroll teachers (Callon, 1986). The test for efficacy is constructed and oriented in such a way as to particularly develop disciplinary teaching teams' self-regulation. Rarely are teachers individually held accountable. The *visibilization* and the process of comparing teachers' work—and the (dis)qualifications or judgments which it potentially leads to—are, to some degree, mitigated. School management and pedagogical counselors put more emphasis on "what works," "what wins." These judgments subsequently orient the pedagogical monitoring and support that will be put in place. Pedagogical counselors stress the changes (presented as inevitable) to be made and the necessary improvements in the name of a shared principle, student success. Nonetheless, the judgments passed on individual teachers' respective efficacy are certainly present, even if they are made discretely by management teams, on the basis of tests of effectiveness made possible through statistical analysis of their students' results or the analysis of indications of their practices (notably from evaluation).

[16] For Boltanski and Thevenot, the notion of a test designates a pragmatic mechanism providing actors with a way out of "troubled" situations and controversies with respect to a principle of justice (e.g., Is a particular teacher truly effective? Does he treat all students in the same way?). The tests are related to different principles of legitimacy or justification (e.g., industrial, civic, or market). Thus, a performance test in the industrial order is a format to test the efficacy of a tool or a production line; and an election serves to characterize the representativeness of a candidate for a civic assembly. For actors, therefore, tests serve to establish (e.g., with regard to a particular principle of justice, industrial or civic) "the true worth" of beings or objects in controversial situations. The notion of a test belongs to a pragmatic sociology, implying attention to local practices and actors; our interviews in schools provided sufficiently detailed descriptions of utilization of tools for us to make use of this concept, even if pragmatic sociology is not central to our theoretical approach (see Note 1).

While, on one side, we observe in Quebec schools different forms of political activities (teachers' critiques of the targets, negotiations with principals on the means and resources to reach these targets), we ultimately see that the shaping of management agreements has become progressively institutionalized and that the formal rationality (in the Weberian sense) of RBM instruments tends also to impose itself cognitively and practically in these schools. This goes hand in hand with the lessening or channeling of critiques (especially those from unions). On the other hand, the use of these tools allows principals to operationalize a management which monitors teachers' practices in relation to their performance objectives more closely. With varying degrees of acquiescence from teachers (Maroy, Mathou, & Vaillancourt, 2017) and more or less participatory or prescriptive modalities, indeed, management teams rely on statistical tools, comparison, and the visibilization of class and students' performances in the school to foster a more or less supervised self-regulation of teachers' practices. In the Quebec case, we certainly see a recoupling—to various degrees—of policies and practices, not only school practices but also individual teachers' practices. However, this tendency leads to diverse impacts, depending on local variations in work relations and the particular SBs to which schools belong.

7.6 What Are the Impacts of the Performance-Based Accountability Instrumentation on School Regulation?

Beyond the classic theoretical meaning of decoupling (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Weick, 1976), the power of instrumentation and its usages to transform internal social relationships in schools needs further investigation, specifically to determine the impacts of performance-based accountability tools. Thus, our inquiries reveal two distinct types of impacts. The first type gathers organizational aspects of schools, that is, the set of functional characteristics on which ordinary school regulation is based and that the tools of New Public Management are attempting to modify. The second type of effects has to do with the institutional construction of the identity of the school and the cognitive and normative impact of accountability tools. These effects are present in both contexts studied, but they are distinctive in their respective range.

7.6.1 Two Types of Organizational Effects

In the first place, we observe that the usage of instruments contributes, on the whole, to a temporary improvement in personnel's and users' information on school performances and its students' characteristics. In this way, it produces *an effect of knowledge and qualitative characterization*. In France, the two tools most used in this

respect are the performance contract, which henceforth establishes itself as an ad hoc space of *visibilization* of knowledge on the school for the supervisory authorities, and typical statistical indicators, which students' parents consult and which principals draw upon. Yet instrumentation here does not give rise to the production of new knowledge about the school, even if it could be used to reinforce competitive logics already at work (during school rituals of open houses, welcome days, etc.).

Such usages of data to position schools in the school market are also observed in Quebec. However, the statistical processing tool Lumix does not merely allow for "taking a snapshot of the school" (principal, Borough School) and, thus, measuring and comparing the school's and teachers' performances. Unlike in France, this activity of *data mining* is accompanied—to varying degrees—by a monitoring, permitting follow-up and adjustment of the initial diagnosis, and using the latter to justify and orient the support and regulation of pedagogical practices.

The second organizational effect associated with performance-based accountability policies is related to *modalities of regulation, in particular, concerning relations and the division of labor between the pedagogical mission and the administrative mission*. In the case of French schools, the instruments contribute to reinforcing the distinction between administrative hierarchy (principals' responsibility) and pedagogical hierarchy (inspection's responsibility), to the disadvantage of the latter. Those interviewed most often associate this transformation with a particular interpretation of the relations between various categories of actors, notably those between principals and teachers, which they find conservative and ideologized. This observation is that much more evident since school principals remain the centerpiece of reforms associated with New Public Management and they are constantly involved in forms of translation of ongoing reforms affecting personnel. The teachers are, therefore, relegated to a secondary role, including in the development and monitoring of instruments for which their role would prove to be pivotal—as, for example, with the school project. This type of strategy contributes to widening the gap between teachers and management staff.

In Quebec, the implementation of RBM in schools varies, especially with respect to the role of evaluation and monitoring instruments in school principals' toolboxes. Some principals are more proactive and closely link evaluation and monitoring to accountability (individual and collective), through a strategy of co-opting teachers and of visibilization of their work. When RBM is enacted in this way, it has the notable effect of redefining areas of competence and influence of principals in relation to teachers' work. This opens up a partial breach in the boundaries of teachers' pedagogical area of competence. In fact, in a variable fashion from school to school, there is a greater capacity for management to make the practices and performance of each teacher visible and to confront them with standards of "good practices." As a result, there is an erosion of teachers' degree of autonomy and power (Maroy et al., 2017). In this redefinition of boundaries and social division of labor inside the school, we should also mention the important role of pedagogical counselors, who serve as experts capable of interpreting and analyzing results. These counselors promote changes in practice and present the rationale for change as purely objective, based on a problem (e.g., a deterioration of the performance in writing), almost

undeniable since this is attested to by the statistical analysis. The relation between counselor and teacher—formally equal—becomes in fact more asymmetrical since, on the one hand, they intervene with certain groups of teachers in response to hierarchical demands from the school principal (or the SB) rather than based on demands from teachers themselves and, on the other hand, because their intervention is often legitimized by an "expert" diagnosis based on numerical data.

Finally, the increased importance accorded to collective follow-up (of "subject teams" and "school teams") contributes to a redefinition of the teaching "collective" within the school. This is particularly the case in reference to its collective "responsibilization" for overall performances of the school. What is more, teachers are increasingly called upon to participate (even superficially) in school management, especially through their required involvement in the definition of choices imposed by contractualization and planning associated with RBM. We could even argue that this entails an institutional redefinition of teacher's professionalism to which RBM contributes, as we will see in the following section.

7.6.2 Two Institutional Impacts

In the first place, the enactment of performance-based accountability policies leads to an *evolution in representations of schooling and education* among professional actors. Principals and teachers appropriate the instruments differently, as a function of political characteristics with which they associate it.

The cognitive dimension of instruments provides an initial polarity which opposes efficacy and inefficacy: while the actors in both contexts adhere overall to the need for instrumental control of the system's efficacy, above all, they massively reject an interpretation tainted with *economic ideology*, especially when this seems to be free of any moral interpretation of student success at school. The ritualized appropriation of instruments and results-based management, in fact, gives the impression to actors (in particular, teachers) that institutional logics have penetrated social spheres which, until this point, had been seen as strictly pedagogical and where professionals used to exercise (or seemed to exercise) relative autonomy. Discourse on instruments is established, consequently, in terms of an opposition between the formal rationality of external conformity to reforms and professional autonomy, threatened by data-based instrumentation.

In France, the professional dimension, whether concerning pedagogical competence or axiological commitment, justifies strategies of avoidance or hollowing out with regard to the use of instruments—notably for an instrument such as the school project which is only really used when it is defined as the public version, readable, not overly technical, of the performance contract (the case of Lycée #4). As for instruments of evaluation (indicators), they seem to contradict the individualized treatment of students, justified by teachers in the name of educational success, particularly in schools with disadvantaged students.

The Quebec investigation reveals greater institutionalization of cognitive and normative categories which progressively allow for a perspective of the school as a system of production, the efficacy of which must be improved. This can be achieved through a participatory approach favoring a school climate and organizational conditions allowing for a team to work together and mobilize to collectively improve the school's functioning and results (according to certain interpretations of "transformational leadership"; see Hallinger, 2003). Beyond this, however, it implies the perspective of a vertical management of pedagogy, through the mediation of technical instruments which could condition or directly affect the ongoing practices because their supposed capacity to objectify the reality allows to proclaim the official "truth" on (school or teacher) performance. School boards and school principals are thus apparently able to align schools' pedagogical practices with RBM tools to a greater extent than are the *académies*, in aligning *lycées* with a stricter steering by results. Therefore, the first signs of a pedagogical isomorphism of schools seem more palpable in Quebec.

Then, the question of the impact of instrumental accountability *on the professional roles within schools* arises. In Quebec, we observe, to varying degrees, a desire to "manage pedagogy" which, as we have indicated, changes the regulation of teachers' work in schools but, more broadly, reintroduces the very idea that educational work is not beyond the reach of the managerial action of school "managers." This idea is reflected in the cognitive/normative dimension of the main instruments associated with RBM. It is especially evident in the "contract" which puts forward an association between a "diagnosis" of pedagogical issues and a definition of actions and their follow-up in a contractual and hierarchical relation. We argue that when this approach, inherent to the contract, is fully integrated by SB management and principals (e.g., in Waterfall and Borough Schools of the Northern SB), RBM and its entire repertoire of instruments are converted into a apparatus (*dispositif*) to manage pedagogy.

In the French case, the teachers questioned consider that the performance indicators are not a valid reflection of the pedagogical work but they mostly reflect student characteristics. This approach to accountability means that teachers can keep their distance with the "mobilization at work" as a prescriptive goal of steering by results: it is a matter of defending themselves against the constraints imposed by the organization on the individual quality produced. Yet this is also the rejection of a form of "dirty work" (Hughes, 1996) which would give priority to the measuring of standards over individualized acquisition of knowledge by students. So, this is a matter of defending the mastery of the teacher's work, faced, as it is, with the requirements of a "numbers culture." Faced with the objective of transparency that evaluation mechanisms are supposed to bring about and faced with the development of client relations encouraged by the ideal of the school market, the teachers interviewed oppose the complexity of the pedagogical relation, the obligation of means as indispensable to the quality of service, and the recognition of teaching authority as a principle to safeguard a teacher's identity, under threat from the managerial ideology. We find again the same type of discourse in the positions adopted by certain teachers' unions, opposed to an obligation of results (see Chap. 5), but also in some

discourses from professionals interviewed on teachers' perception of evaluation tools (e.g., Buisson-Fenet & Pons, 2014, 2017; Demailly, 2003; Derouet & Normand, 2003; Verdière, 2001). Such reactions can be found among teachers in Quebec as well (Maroy et al., 2017), but we have to acknowledge that this does not prevent the deployment of an extension of the managerial domain into pedagogy, even if, in certain schools (such as in Meadow School in the Southern SB), principals will try to spare teachers and take their resistance into account, respecting teachers' professional autonomy.

In contrast, French principals' regulatory work tends more to focus on reaching a compromise, developed around a strong participatory component in the school, self-regulating and ultimately "egalitarian" (Hood, 2012). The principals of *lycées* who were questioned certainly seem to be the cornerstones of reforms associated with NPM; yet, because they are required to negotiate instrumental procedures more than to transmit a new cognitive framework, they seem not so much "brokers" of these reforms, as their principal recipients. Based on the need to temporize the conflicting effects of institutional exigencies of accountability, their professional position concentrates the tensions and accentuates more than ever their commitment to the work and the resulting professional exhaustion.

7.7 Conclusion

Finally, in the French case, the tools meant to ensure accountability have been mostly implemented, but often only by principals and with a conformity logic. They are generally treated as separate mechanisms, implemented for the sole purpose of complying with the expectations of bureaucratic supervisory authority, but without being actively interlinked by principals as useful complementary tools or tools central to their proximity management system to enhance their school's pedagogical efficacy. Between the managerial model prescribed by the new instruments of public action and bureaucratic functioning consisting in conforming with classic formal procedures, French school principals say they must bring together fairly incompatible realities. The instrumentation analyzed here tends to follow a logic of creating a pool of instruments from which actors, depending on particular needs and contexts, may draw, often spurred by individual initiatives, rather than a convergent and systematized accumulation of tools introducing a regulatory change of the entire school system.

However, in Quebec, we see that RBM tools, in particular, contracts, but also and above all statistical tools and pedagogical coordination and monitoring tools are drawn upon more by school principals as "invisible pilots" of public action (Lorrain in Lascoumes & Le Galès, 2004). They serve to enroll the teaching staff on the basis of a local dynamic in which the principals mostly rely on the objectification and comparison of "results" to encourage forms of self-evaluation and self-regulation of teams, supported by deputy principals or pedagogical counselors. In being more directly involved in the translation of ongoing transformations, Quebec school

principals are intensifying interactions between pedagogical teams and the hierarchy and exercising greater control, even if these relations can still be said to be cautious.

Although the idea of the necessity of an "educational leadership" did not originate with RBM, nevertheless, it has been transformed under its stimulus into a more advanced and renewed institutionalization of the management of pedagogy, in two essential forms. First, the orientations of the action are based on the circulation and/or perpetuation of various management tools, criteria to evaluate practices, actions, and results, which allow school principals (and beyond, SB administrators) to seek to "manage" and orient the objectives and content of teachers' work, that is, to control and regulate their practices as a function of objectives of expected results, often originally set by the ministerial supervisory authority. Then, data analytical tools, the creation of new organizational routines that this analysis entails, and professional development based on the results define at this time a new management of pedagogy, meaning that teachers are caught in a constraining network of expectations and of statistical monitoring and demands for accountability (Maroy, 2017). Data-based information and management systems which now occupy a very significant place at different levels of the school organization play not merely a technical role but also a managerial and indeed a political one when steering is based primarily on their algorithms and configuration. Because certain instruments do not face major resistance and are sufficiently internally consistent, their layering on top of former instruments certainly leads to an incremental evolution, but one which, nevertheless, becomes more profound, as illustrated in the adoption of an evaluative perspective on schools and teachers. Thus, as we have observed, Quebec schools seem to be in the process of "circumventing" the decoupling logic as described for educational organizations from the 1970s onward (Weick, 1976), while the French *lycées* in our inquiry demonstrate greater inertia and resistance.

References

Allouch, A. (2015a). *Etude cas dans l'académie B. Lycée#4* (NewAge research report). Paris: OSC.

Allouch, A. (2015b). *Etude cas dans l'académie B. Lycée#5* (NewAge research report). Paris: OSC.

Barrere, A. (2010). Ce que l'évaluation fait aux établissements scolaires. Une année ordinaire au collège Salvador Allende. *Ethnologie française, 40*(1), 141–149.

Bidwell, C. E. (1965). The school as a formal organization. In J. G. March (Ed.), *The handbook of organizations*. Chicago: Rand McNally.

Bissonnette, S., Gauthier, C., & Richard, M. (2006). *Comment enseigne-t-on dans les écoles efficaces? Efficacité des écoles et des réformes*. Québec, Canada: Presses de l'Université Laval.

Boltanski, L. (2009). *De la critique. Précis de sociologie de l'émancipation (NRF Essais)*. Paris: Gallimard.

Boltanski, L., & Thevenot, L. (1991). *De la justification. Les économies de la grandeur*. Paris: Gallimard.

Brassard, A. (2006). L'évolution de la gestion scolaire depuis les années 1950. *Le Point en administration scolaire, 8*(4), 25–27.

Buisson-Fenet, H. (2015). *Etude cas dans l'académie B. Lycée#3* (NewAge research report). Paris: OSC.

Buisson-Fenet, H., & Pons, X. (2014). *School evaluation policies and education states: Trends in four European countries*. Berne, France: Peter Lang.

Buisson-Fenet, H., & Pons, X. (2017). Un "sujet qui fâche". L'évaluation des enseignants en France, entre défense statutaire, injonction au professionnalisme et autonomie professionnelle. *Revista de la Asociación de Sociología de la Educación (RASE), 10*(3), 441–456.

Callon, M. (1986). Some elements of a sociology of translation: Domestication of the scallops and the fisherman in St Brieuc Bay. In K. Knorr-Cetina & A. V. Cicourel (Eds.), *Advances in social theory and methodology: Toward an integration of micro and macro-sociologies* (pp. 196–223). Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Demailly, L. (2003). L'évaluation comme apprentissage et négociation. *Revue française de pédagogie, 142*, 107–121.

Derouet, J.-L. (1992). *École et Justice. De l'égalité des chances aux compromis locaux?* Paris: Métaillé.

Derouet, J.-L., & Normand, R. (2003). *Le développement d'une culture de l'évaluation dans l'Education nationale: comment les enseignants utilisent-ils les résultats des évaluations nationales?* Lyon, France: INRP.

Dutercq, Y., & Lanéelle, X. (2013). La dispute autour des évaluations des élèves dans l'enseignement français du premier degré. *Sociologie, 4*(1), 44–62.

Hallinger, P. (2003). Leading educational change: Reflections on the practice of instructional and transformational leadership. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 33*(3), 329–352. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764032000122005

Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. London/New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Hattie, J. (2017). *L'apprentissage visible pour les enseignants. Connaître son impact pour maximiser le rendement des élèves*. Québec, Canada: Presses de l'Université du Québec.

Hood, C. (2012). Public management by numbers as a performance-enhancing drug: Two hypotheses. *Public Administration Review, 72*(1), 85–92.

Hughes, E. (1996). *Le regard sociologique. Essais choisis*. Paris: Édition de l'EHESS.

Lascoumes, P., & Le Galès, P. (2004). *Gouverner par les instruments*. Paris: Presses de la fondation nationale des sciences politiques.

Malen, B. (2006). Revisiting policy implementation as a political phenomenon. In *New directions in education policy implementation* (pp. 83–105). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Maroy, C. (2017). La nouvelle gestion publique de l'école au Québec: vers une gestion de la pédagogie. Sociologie du Travail [En ligne], 59 (4, Octobre–Décembre), mis en ligne le 07 décembre 2017, consulté le 07 décembre 2017. http://sdt.revues.org/1353.

Maroy, C., Mathou, C., & Vaillancourt, S. (2017). La « gestion axée sur les résultats » au cœur de l'école québécoise: l'autonomie professionnelle des enseignants sous pression. In Y. Dutercq & C. Maroy (Eds.), *Professionnalisme enseignants et politiques de responsabilisation* (pp. 13–32). Bruxelles, Belgium: De Boeck.

Meyer, J., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology, 83*(2), 340–363.

Mintzberg, H. (1979). *The structuring of organizations: A synthesis of the research*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Normand, R. (2006). L'école efficace ou l'horizon du monde comme laboratoire. *Revue française de pédagogie, 154*, 33–43.

Ozga, J. (2009). Governing education through data in England: From regulation to self-evaluation. *Journal of Education Policy, 24*(2), 149–162.

Pelage, A. (2009). Les chefs d'établissement scolaires: Autonomie professionnelle et autonomie au travail. In C. Gadéa & D. Demazière (Eds.), *Sociologie des groupes professionnels* (pp. 40–50). Paris: La Découverte.

Pons, X. (2015a). *Etude cas dans l'académie A. Lycée#1* (NewAge research report). Paris: OSC.

Pons, X. (2015b). *Etude cas dans l'académie A. Lycée#2* (NewAge research report). Paris: OSC.

Quebec's Ministry of Education (QME). (2009). *La convention de partenariat. Outil d'un nouveau mode de gouvernance. Guide d'implantation*. Québec, Canada: Gouvernement du Québec.

Schön, D. A. (1994). *Le praticien réflexif: à la recherche du savoir caché dans l'agir professionnel*. Montréal, Canada: Éditions Logiques.

Scott, W. R. (1995). *Institutions and organizations: Toward a theoretical synthesis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sellar, S. (2015). Data infrastructure: A review of expanding accountability systems and large-scale assessments in education. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 36*(5), 765–777.

Streeck, W., & Thelen, K. (2005). *Beyond continuity: Institutional change in advanced political economies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Thelen, K. (2003). Comment les institutions évoluent: Perspectives de l'analyse comparative historique. *L'Année de la régulation, 7*, 13–43.

Verdière, J. (2001). *Les pratiques d'évaluation du travail d'enseignement*. PhD thesis, Université de Lille I, Lille.

Weick, K. E. (1976). Educational organizations as loosely coupled systems. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 12*, 1–19.

Chapter 8
Conclusion

Christian Maroy and Xavier Pons

8.1 Introduction

Numerous studies have examined performance-based accountability policies' institutional formulation or public action instruments, discursive orientations, or effects, particularly in contexts of high-stakes or "strict" accountability. Our comparison of French and Quebec policies extends the field of studies to "soft" accountability policies and is innovative in the manner of understanding them, with a focus on both their trajectories over time and their mediations and instrumentations at the intermediate and local levels. The analysis of trajectories underscores both these policies' dependence on the historical and political context of school systems and the translation of transnational models and discourse. With respect to research on these policies' main institutional discourse and content, the study of mediations at work leads to a more complex and contextualized intelligibility of these policies, depending on the intermediate entities studied, but also brings out some factors and conditions of mediation logics at play. Furthermore, the analysis of the local instrumentation of these policies leads to contextualizing their real effects on the functioning of schools and the education system.

We will start by summarizing the principal results of our research with an emphasis on the contributions of an approach which is both comparative and multi-scalar (Dale, 2005, 2006). Thus, we will stress what this research teaches us from the perspective of the theoretical analysis of education policies. In particular, we will highlight its contribution in terms of the globalization of education policies and the role of the state in this transformation and in the governance of systems and policies.

C. Maroy (✉)
University of Montreal, Montreal, QC, Canada
e-mail: christian.maroy@umontreal.ca

X. Pons
University of Eastern-Paris Creteil, Paris, France
e-mail: ponsx@wanadoo.fr

C. Maroy, X. Pons (eds.), *Accountability Policies in Education*, Educational Governance Research 11, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-01285-4_8

Finally, we will present what our research teaches us from the perspective of the analysis of the effects of soft and reflexive accountability on education practices, notably in comparison to the effects of strict accountability policies.

8.2 Three Major Conclusions

Three principal results emerge from our research. First, we have shown (especially in Chap. 5) how important it is to take into account the history and the political, educational, and institutional context in which the trajectory of a country's domestic accountability policy has developed. While much of the international literature has stressed the fact that national policies are becoming increasingly sensitive to the circulation of ideas and policy models promoted by epistemic transnational organizations or communities (Grek, 2010; Meyer, Boli, Thomas, & Ramirez, 1997; Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012), we have analyzed in detail *how* and *why* these ideas and models have been profoundly filtered, selected, cobbled together, and translated once again in the course of the trajectory of the construction of these policies in different intertwined national forums (notably policy, administrative, and expert forums). Thus, a number of principles of New Public Management (transparency and evaluation, autonomy, responsibilization, and accountability of local operators) can be found in the statements on accountability policies developed in France and in Quebec but in eliminating market competition as a key element. In opposition to this neoliberal variant of New Public Management, we witness instead the establishment of a neo-statist version, where, above all, it is vertical policy and administrative regulation which is reinforced. The power of regulation by the central state has grown, due to the force of increased cognitive framing of reforms in France, based especially on a greater knowledge of the *académies* and local contexts, and a reinforcement of vertical and bureaucratic regulatory instruments in the hands of the state in Quebec. The latter seeks to align the actions of intermediate and local entities around "results-based management." In contrast, the more participatory and democratizing dimensions of accountability (giving new life to Quebec "school democracy") have proven to be merely rhetorical promises.

In theoretical terms, we have primarily shown (Chap. 5) the central mechanisms and processes by which these trajectories are oriented: *translation* of transnational orientations (benchmarks linked to the European policy agenda in education in France or NPM models in Canada) and cognitive or political *bricolage* of these ideas or instruments in forums bringing together the principal parties and stakeholders of Quebec school policy or in more discrete discussion forums in France (administrative or expert circles). Furthermore, the mechanism of *path dependence* with respect to existing institutions is very important to consider, along with a number of mechanisms of gradual institutional change, such as the partial *conversion* of certain institutions' functions (e.g., those of the school boards in Quebec)

or the *layering* of tools or policy solutions stemming from different temporalities, indeed different philosophies (e.g., school projects and targets). Thus, in Chap. 5 we certainly developed a flexible theoretical modelling of processes and mechanisms of recontextualization of New Public Management and of accountability.

Nonetheless, this initial analysis of French and Quebec policies—essentially situated at the level of their administrative or political genesis—was merely one stage in our approach to these policies. Indeed, our process was extended and deepened in an analysis of processes of mediation and instrumentation which affect or orient what classic political analysis considers "the implementation" of policy at the intermediate and local levels. Now, rather than analyzing this implementation by examining its degree of conformity with the central intentions or prescriptions, we have considered the localized recontextualizations and interpretations of these policies, that is, the mediations by intermediate actors as forms of "co-construction" and enactment of these policies. Furthermore, the analysis of (non)usages of instrumentation of these policies in the schools (with a focus on indicators and contracts, in particular) provides information on the degree of practical (in)consistency of these tools in the schools and on their appropriation by management teams. It shows what accountability instrumentation produces (or fails to produce) in terms of coordination of the action in the school (particularly teachers' pedagogical action), the progressive redefinition of professional roles, and the division of local work and, more broadly, with respect to the mechanisms of semantic and institutional redefinition of a school. In other words, analysis of mediation and instrumentation contributes to determining the orientation and meaning of accountability as it is, in fact, implemented on the ground, in *académies*, in SBs, and in schools.

Thus, two main empirical results emerge from Chap. 6. First, there is a paradox. While the French system is formally more centralized, we observed major variations among the *académies* studied, in terms of effectiveness and orientations given to steering by results. In contrast, in Quebec, in a system which remains formally more decentralized than the French system, we identified a considerable convergence of the four SBs studied: not only do they implement the core of the legal prescriptions of RBM, but they all tend, to varying degrees, to appropriate the latter to seek to "regulate" practices within schools, in particular, teachers' practices which affect their results and the targets which they must reach, more effectively. This paradox was made clear in bringing forward the fact that a number of factors of institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) were at play in the Quebec situation: (1) a normative convergence favored by a professional milieu of school administrators already established and relaying techniques and ideas mostly in accordance with the philosophy of "RBM," (2) the explicit borrowing of practices and a form of "reflexive" accountability developed in SBs of the neighboring province of Ontario, (3) the circulation of instruments and "RBM" guidelines from various experts in SBs, and (4) more explicit ministerial prescriptions, accompanied by relatively detailed implementation guides. In contrast, in France, these factors were absent, but we could also note there some powerful elements which favored very

diverse recontextualizations of the national policy of results-based management. While, of course, there are also variations among the Quebec SBs, we could say that they were much more obvious in France.

The second key result in this chapter is, indeed, to have identified the sources of these variations through a typological analysis of logics of mediation present in the two national contexts. Logics of dilution, appropriation, and amplification of national policies are present transversally and result from a number of internal processes within the *académies* or SBs. In fact, these bodies constitute local educational orders, where mediations are modulated and affected by the context (institutional and market), managers' ethos, actors' configuration, and the problematization of educational issues. From these logics and factors of mediation stem different varieties of intermediary performance-based accountability: bureaucratic, reflexive, and regulatory.

It is worth noting that these forms of governance differ in their greater or lesser usage of statistical tools but also in the school administrators' handling of teachers' space of professional autonomy. Bureaucratic governance associates a respect for teachers' professional autonomy with the school's compliance with the bureaucratic requirements from "on high." The governance is reflexive if, above all, intermediate authorities seek to spur teachers' voluntary collective involvement, as well as use the data as a more sophisticated knowledge tool for the school. It is regulatory if this call to "mobilization" is circumscribed by a complex interlacing of instruments of visibilization and of comparison of results and practices (of schools or of teachers) such that the responsibilization and involvement of teachers is subject to normative, cognitive, and sometimes hierarchical pressures. Thus, it leans toward a "management of pedagogical practices" of low or high intensity, through the use of statistical, managerial, and pedagogical monitoring tools, especially in Quebec.

Chapter 7 completes this analysis with an examination of (non)usages of indicators and contracts, two pivotal tools in the instrumental repertoire which is relatively similar to these policies (i.e., projects, plans, contracts, and indicators). Analysis reveals that the theoretical connections between tools promised by the theories of action behind these policies materialize very differently, depending on national and local contexts. Consequently, their expected effects with respect to an improvement and "self-regulation" of teachers' pedagogical practices are also dramatically different in France and Quebec. On the one hand, we might speak of a contingent instrumental bricolage in French *lycées*, something of concern to management and having little (or no) impact on the structure of teachers' practices. On the other hand, the appropriation of the instrumental repertoire is more consistent in Quebec schools and leaves the impression of both a process of semantic institutionalization of managerial rationality and the establishment, to varying degrees, of management tools and instruments to monitor teachers' pedagogical practices.

8.3 What Can Be Learned for the Analysis of Education Policies?

In reviewing some of the main results of our research, the contributions and advantages of our multi-scalar and comparative approach to analyze education policies in general seem to us to be of three types.

1. First and foremost, consideration of the multiplicity of levels of educational action and a methodological and theoretical comparative approach prove to have been fruitful avenues for research, though not always the easiest, to pinpoint the mediation and translation processes at play between the transnational and the national or, even more, between the national and other levels of regional or local actions. While, at the theoretical or programmatic level, a number of scholars stress the necessary analysis of these processes (Ball, 1998; Dale, 2005, 2006; Lingard & Rawolle, 2011; Steiner Khamsi, 2010), research which has allowed for their empirical definition has been rather scarce (see Ball & van Zanten, 1998; Bonal & Tarabini, 2013; Engel & Frizzell, 2015; Maroy, 2006, 2009; Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012; Verger & Curran, 2014). In that respect, our research contributes to partially closing the gap.

   Thus, it is certainly the comparative, detailed analysis of political and cognitive bricolage, as well as processes of inertia or of institutional change at play in the development of two national accountability policies, which has allowed us to show how and why they are oriented toward "neo-statist" trajectories, translating transnational doctrines into a distinct sense of a more "neoliberal" version at play in certain English-speaking contexts, American or British, for example. Furthermore, certain empirical paradoxes only become clear when looking at the process in operation at the local or intermediate level. The centralized French system produces more variations and divergences in effective accountability practices than the formally decentralized Quebec system. Now, it is factors at the meso level of these systems which can explain this paradox: a greater diversity of local educational orders at the level of *académies* in France and mechanisms of isomorphism (reducing variations) which are spread transversally at the level of SBs in Quebec.

   In short, in contrast to analytical trends stressing processes of isomorphism due to either the influence of a global culture transmitted by professional networks or international organizations (Meyer et al., 1997; Smith, 2016) or to the emergence of a political voluntarism of transnational actors, contributing to the adaptation of national systems to the new constraints of global capitalist accumulation (Dale & Robertson, 2002; Robertson & Dale, 2014), the multilevel comparative analysis can bring to light specific social or regional traits in this context of globalization and underscore the existence of sometimes contradictory or, in any case, distinct tendencies, depending on national contexts.

2. Next, once again, let us emphasize the fact that multilevel analysis helps us avoid the risks of reductionism or bias of an analysis based only on the observation of a single level of public action, whether local or more central and institutional (in the limited sense of legal or regulatory content). Our empirical research perfectly illustrates this potential bias, since the accountability policies studied appear quite similar in their wording by the central authority (in their relatively low stakes and their analogous tools of public action), even if they are not all formalized in the same way in terms of regulatory prescriptions. Nonetheless, when one observes intermediate bodies' enactments of policies, a very great disparity appears between the two contexts since, as we have seen, we are witnessing, on one side, *centrifugal mediations* in the French case, accentuating the differences in effective practices, depending on the *académies* and, on the other, *centripetal mediations* in the Quebec case, since we have stressed the importance of observable convergences among SBs. A symmetrical bias could result for comparative research which limits itself to local analyses of schools, insufficiently contextualized with respect to policy trajectories or regional contexts and policies of intermediate authorities on which they depend. The risk, for example, would be to generalize, from only one or two school cases, about an amplification or dilution logic of the national policy, imputing this exclusively to actors' local interpretations and concretizations, while we have underscored the significance of the intermediate entity.
3. Finally, in addition to these first two contributions, well documented by all of our empirical analysis, our research allows us to nuance and further explain the very many current analyses focusing on the performative effects of neoliberal discourse on education, in general, and on system governance policies, in particular. It does so in permitting us to observe and draw attention to the dialectical tensions between (local) practices and discourse. Thus, considering a number of levels of public action is a way of showing that the cognitive and normative orientations of this dominant discourse could be hybridized and, sometimes, diluted in the policy enactment at the intermediate or local level.

Thus, a number of studies—bearing on a variety of national contexts but especially English-speaking contexts—have emphasized the performative effects of the neoliberal discourse informing accountability policies, as with other associated policies (such as the ones promoting a competence-based curriculum, the market, and stronger school/labor market relations). This neoliberal[1] discourse would

[1] Let us specify that this discourse is qualified as neoliberal in the broadest sense of this term, going beyond the return to economic dogmas or theories promoting privatization, the market and private financing of educational, social or cultural services, to the detriment of the state maintaining this responsibility. In this analysis, "neoliberal" refers to any form of policy thematizing public action and the problems to be resolved in terms of (neoclassical) economic analysis, with this public action tending, as a consequence, to transform the actors and their environment in a performative fashion, to then bring them closer in practice to terms by which economic analysis understands them–that is, as a collection of individuals driven by their own interests and strategies, more or less limited or regulated by various institutional or social mechanisms (Bourdieu, 1998; Dardot & Laval, 2010).

contribute, on the one hand, to transforming the educational institution into that of a system of academic production in which efficacy, performance, and responding to users' needs must be improved. On the other hand, it would contribute to forging a new social and educational subject, around the figure of the entrepreneur, a relatively autonomous individual, within organizations which are themselves under pressure from competitive environment (Ball, 2003, 2012; Laval, 2003; Laval, Vergne, Clément, & Dreux, 2012).[2]

The analytical and heuristic significance of this critical analysis of education policies seems to us undeniable in that it reveals the potential effects and cognitive and normative orientations of current policies in a context of globalization and intense restructuring of capitalism. For these analysts, this is a critical manner of becoming aware of the meaning of the profound and multifaceted redefinition of institutions inherited from the period of Fordist capitalism, encased in diverse forms of the social nation state. Obviously, the educational institution falls within this framework. However, such an analysis risks becoming simplistic and reductive, if it is not completed and informed by more empirical and nationally contextualized analyses of the variety of forms and paths taken by the transformations in progress. Thus, our comparative and multilevel analysis draws attention to a number of processes and dynamics which contribute to either modulating the rhythm of transformations in progress or specifying some distinctive trajectories. In other words, there are a number of "versions" or forms of the neoliberal revolution taking place, at least in the educational field and especially in the realm of accountability policies.

More precisely, in order to support this argument, we would like to underline three points stemming from our empirical analysis. First, the forms taken by neoliberal globalization remain "vernacular" and dependent on the political and institutional contexts in which they are established. In Chap. 5, in extending an earlier paper (Maroy, Pons, & Dupuy, 2017), we emphasized the processes which can explain why there is not a single version of neoliberal globalization, but rather diverse forms of "vernacular globalization," notably shaped by the play of processes of translation of transnational ideas feeding the "neoliberal discourse" (e.g., the

[2] More precisely, the performative function of neoliberal discourse would be to semantically transform and operationalize the functioning and regulation of school systems by relying on an analysis inspired more or less by an economic paradigm (neoclassical). Thus, schools would become a system of production and consumption of educational goods, subject to varying degrees of centralizing regulation by the state or decentralized by the market. Inspired by economic theory and New Public Management, neoliberal policies would lead to a transformation of the nature of education by school professionals but also of the meaning of the school experience for its users (Apple, 2004; Ball, 1998, 2003, 2012; Robertson, 2005). Thus, the performative effects of neoliberal discourse would favor the emergence of a newly defined educational subject, following M. Foucault's research, an individual "entrepreneur" (Olssen & Peters, 2005). For the youth or users of the system, it is a matter of becoming an "entrepreneur of oneself" through the virtues of the "project" and an educational path appropriate for his or her own capacities and aspirations. For administrators and school principals, it is a case of becoming "managers," and "leaders," directing autonomous schools and answerable for their performance. For teachers, this involves becoming "professionals," capable of contributing to these school performances, due to their skills and commitment (Ball, 2003, 2009; Gewirtz, 2002; Ranson, 2003).

discourse of NPM or of accountability). This translation is, indeed, characterized by a dependence of policies on existing institutions which especially condition the legitimacy of changes proposed and, consequently, alter their content or the associated policy narrative. It is also associated with multiple and complex political and cognitive processes of bricolage of policies which depend on power relations in the political and policy field but also on discourse and compromises among actors (civil servants, stakeholders, or national experts) who, more discretely, influence the content of policies pursued (notably accountability). Finally, and above all, as we have seen, the content of the law voted or the content of the policy finally promoted by governments and central administrations is still very largely mediated by political-administrative bodies and actors at the intermediate level, leading to various forms of results-based governance, even within each national context. Consequently, as we were able to describe in detail elsewhere (Maroy, Pons, & Dupuy, 2017), two distinct forms of vernacular globalization may be highlighted: "centralization through institutional linkage" in Quebec and "globalization through discursive internalization" in France.

Then, the role of the state in the application of these neoliberal orientations is crucial and, thus, could appear paradoxical, since this concerns a policy which is supposedly (with a narrow interpretation of neoliberal terminology) reducing the state's role. In this respect, we have stressed the "neo-statist" orientation of results-based governance policies which were developed both in France and in Quebec (see Chap. 5). While, indeed, many analysts of "neoliberal" discourse in the broader sense recognize that its application does not signify the lessening of the role of the state but rather its reorientation and its greater hold over "individual actors" at a distance and by indirect means (see, e.g., Ball, 2003; Laval et al., 2012), we must acknowledge a certain polysemy of the term "neoliberal" which often tends to be understood (especially in a North American context) as related to the rise of the market and loss of power of the state. For the systems which concern us, we can, in both cases, say that the state is seeing its weight reinforced in what some have called its "strategic" (Bezes, 2005) or "regulatory" role (Majone, 1996), while, moreover, its more traditional activity of promoting a public education service for all remains at the center of tensions and major political battles. Our research, in extending recent studies on diverse forms of implementation of New Public Management in education, according to the types of states and administrative traditions at play (e.g., Gunter, Grimaldi, Hall, & Serpieri, 2016), has, thus, in its way, clarified the recompositions of educating states. With performance-based accountability policies, the latter can use a new policy grammar, a series of instruments and institutional arrangements allowing them to renew politically legitimate forms of control over teaching (Buisson-Fenet & Pons, 2014).

Last but not least, while the performative power of neoliberal discourse cannot be ignored, neither should it be exaggerated. In this respect, the analysis of effective implementation of policies seems to us a necessary and inevitable path to measure distances which might remain between discourse and practices, for various reasons and factors which our empirical analysis has attempted to highlight. Indeed, this is that much more important in that it also allows us to question the character, sometimes bland and supposedly "implacable," of "neoliberal" discourse. Thus, in

particular, in France at the level of *lycées*, as with *académies*, we have shown that the dilution of the policy engenders an often purely formal and bureaucratic implementation, with a continued proximity management system focused on educational issues. In Quebec too, the logic of mediation of intermediate bodies tends to take account of resistance on the ground from schools or teachers and leads to diverse tactics of adaptation which, on the one hand, attenuate and anticipate opposition (through a lessening of constraints and an investment in a strategy of support teams) and, on the other hand, seek to put in place the tools of the policy, in playing on the cooperation and involvement of principals and teachers. These cases of mediation leading to a selective appropriation or dilution of accountability policies attest that the performative effect of neoliberal discourse is neither universal nor homogeneous, at least in the short and medium term.

However, we have also drawn attention to the case of Quebec SBs which amplify the provincial policy, where, in certain schools, we witness the establishment of mechanisms contributing, in fact, to "managing pedagogical practices" and to institutionalizing a formal management rationality which does seem very close to an enactment of neoliberal discourse in education. Pedagogical management, indeed, limits teachers' autonomy, concentrating attention on a central preoccupation with efficacy and school performance, while setting in place a policy of responsibilization which is no longer merely professional and associated with the ethos and identity of a teacher concerned with student success. The teacher's practice is tracked and monitored, his or her professional responsibility may be questioned, and practices of compulsory monitoring and improvement may be imposed by school principals or, beyond, by SBs. Moreover, it is also principals and their schools that are subject to these expectations of efficiency and this responsibilization with respect to their results. Furthermore, the diverse organizational rituals which include RBM tools—contracts and plans—establish a formal and discursive rationality in schools and affect the "language" employed by the actors (a vocabulary of targets, indicators, "means" to employ to succeed, "winning practices," "evidence-based" practices, etc.). More broadly, they clearly contribute to a semantic redefinition of what constitutes a "good school," and, indeed, this redefinition brings together the terms of economic analysis and school management. The performative effects of neoliberal discourse seem here to be well at work, even if these effects still remain to be investigated over the long run and could still be called into question, notably due to persistent union opposition.

However, our research highlights a few conditions and factors favoring this realization of a managerial logic of efficacy in schools, which is not the only result of the performative efficacy of "discourse" over the heads of actors in the education system. On the one hand, the convergence of amplifying action logics from SB managers, as well as from school principals, in line with their SBs, was necessary; on the other hand, RBM had to be based on instrumentation bringing together statistical tools (Lumix), management tools (managerial agreements and accountability reports), and pedagogical monitoring tools for teachers, instrumentation which was, in fact, adopted with diverse, very concrete mechanisms in schools. The neoliberal discourse was, therefore, not performative merely due to its own symbolic impact.

8.4 Coming Back to Soft Accountability Systems

To end this conclusion, we ask ourselves what our research teaches us about accountability issues and effects in "soft systems" (the focus of our study) in comparison to what we know about effects of "strict" accountability systems on the functioning and internal practices of schools.[3]

While the effects of the latter on efficacy and the equity of students' results are, at a minimum, controversial (see Chap. 3), nonetheless, the academic literature has stressed a number of perverse or unexpected effects on pedagogical practices: the curricular reduction of subjects and skills taught as a function of external exams, teaching practices oriented toward passing exams (cramming and "teaching to the test"), the tendency to select students who will be sitting external exams, the tendency to steer students in greater difficulty toward special measures which do not require external evaluations, the selective and strategic character of teachers' remediation work with students in difficulty the more likely to progress and pass the exam, and the development of diverse fraudulent practices and cheating (Figlio & Loeb, 2011; Lee, 2010; Mons, 2009; Rozenwajn & Dumay, 2014).

Moreover, as we have just underlined, critical analyses have emphasized the symbolic transformations which affect the very definition of education in this new context, while stressing the redefinition of professionalism and professional relations which is currently taking place. For administrators and school principals, it is a matter of becoming a "manager," an entrepreneur, "a leader," promoting a dynamic organization, open and eager to learn, and concerned about performance in a competitive context. For teachers, this involves becoming "professionals," capable of participating in their schools' collective projects, of contributing with their skills and commitment to build an autonomous but also more "accountable" school for the users or their hierarchical authority for its performance (Ball, 2003; Maroy, 2009; Normand, 2011).

With respect to these findings, what "lessons" does our research on the softer and more reflexive accountability systems examined have to offer? At the outset, it is worth noting that there is no homogeneous effect, either between national contexts or within them.

First and foremost, concerning effects on pedagogical practices themselves, our research can only document them in a very partial and indirect manner. In Quebec, we may point out that in the SBs and schools which have adopted what we have referred to as "pedagogical management," there is, indeed, a tendency toward

[3] We do not discuss effects for the beneficiaries foreseen by the policy—the improvement in the rate of graduation in the entire Quebec population and the reduction in the drop-out rate among certain disadvantaged groups—boys, those from disadvantaged neighborhoods, etc. Such an evaluation of these policies, in fact, deserves a study of its own, which goes far beyond the subject of our research and, indeed, would prove challenging, especially in Quebec, since it would be difficult to meticulously isolate the effect of the policy itself, in controlling for all the other factors which could play a role in either school success or the strength of school democracy (official objectives of the policy).

curricular reduction to the extent that school principals and SBs are attempting to better monitor and control whether teachers are following the ministerial prescriptions in terms of the curriculum, whether they are orienting their teaching as a function of the competencies relevant to the external exams, and whether they adopt the criteria and adjust to the requirements of these same ministerial evaluations (see Chap. 7). Moreover, the practices of cramming or cheating were denounced by certain teachers during interviews carried out in the context of an ongoing complementary research project (Maroy, Mathou, & Vaillancourt, 2017). This result is not challenged by the limits of our sample of schools (lacking underperforming schools) since, within all SB studied, the focus of the attention of statistical or pedagogical services was mainly focused on these underperforming schools. Thus, for these schools, monitoring of school's results and development of a management of pedagogical practices were presented as crucial by our informers.

In short, in some Quebec schools and SBs which are developing performance-based accountability which we have characterized as regulatory, we may plausibly hypothesize that some of the negative effects of hard accountability systems are also present, even if the Quebec system is a soft system which does not impose formal sanctions affecting schools or the careers of personnel, or offer financial incentives. This seems to be due to the fact that the pedagogical management involved in this regulatory governance tends to diminish the decoupling of policies, management strategies (of intermediate school authorities or principals), and teachers' pedagogical practices. In other words, even without sanctions, the accountability system becomes intrusive and reduces teachers' professional area of autonomy, as could be observed in the situations of high-stakes accountability in the USA (Rowan, 2006; Spillane & Burch, 2006).

However, at the level of French schools, indeed, the decoupling of school administration and pedagogical practices seems relatively unchanged, regardless of the *académies* or *lycée* concerned. In fact, the policy had very little effect on teaching practices, with the exception of a *lycée* which was already very strongly "mobilized" to work on student success, even before the emergence of the policy. Steering by results remains bureaucratic or, at best, reflexive, without any visible evidence of particular effects on teaching practices.

What about, then, the question of the effects of "soft" accountability on professionalism and professional relations between professional categories within schools or, more broadly, of the symbolic effects on the institutional definition of school situations (what is a "good" teacher? a "good" school?)? The absence of homogeneous effects in this area should also be noted.

In Quebec, the rise in symbolic power of managerial and economic language for thinking about the functioning of schools and defining personnel and their practices is due to, or at least reinforced by, the implementation of RBM. As we have already indicated, the preoccupation with school and system performance and efficacy was already introduced in debates on school policies in the 1990s; a vocabulary tinged with managerialism was present even then, indeed, institutionalized, in school administrative circles, it being a matter of reflecting on the "leadership" role of school principals and of worrying about schools' "outcomes" and "performance" or

"client" satisfaction (Brassard, 2000, 2006; Lessard & Levasseur, 2007; Pelletier & Charron, 1998). However, the RBM implementation logics of the SBs studied and the associated statistical or pedagogical instrumentation served to better equip "pedagogical leaders" for the roles expected of them; in other words, the semantic change and institutional expectations of seeing principals "concerned with pedagogy," and not only "administration," tend to translate into effective practices, thanks to RBM instrumental mechanisms (the coupling of Lumix tool, pedagogical monitoring tools, and management agreements). Consequently, relations between principals and teachers are now transformed and have become more asymmetrical, to the extent that principals have more means to exert pressure and legitimize their demands for improvement in teachers' performances (notably, through the potential statistical spotlight on practices and their efficacy, through the support of management agreements and the legal and bureaucratic legitimacy which accompanies them). In other words, pedagogical management in Quebec is not merely a "technique" to reorient the work of principals and school administrators; instead, it connotes a shift in social relations and power between the latter and the teachers. Moreover, pedagogical counsellors, through the use of various modalities, depending on the school, become pedagogical experts supporting the performance goals of school principals and SBs, rather than resources at the service of independent requests from teachers. Finally, the latter tend to lose part of their professional autonomy in terms of choice of content to teach or evaluation practices, while a normative obligation of instrumental reflexivity on their performances and pedagogical practices is developing (Maroy, Mathou, & Vaillancourt, 2017).

For all that, these transformations of professional roles in the division of labor and relations between professionals in schools do not signify that they have been actually enacted to the same degree everywhere and perfectly institutionalized; individual and collective opposition (especially from unions; Maroy and Vaillancourt 2013) persists and is more or less active locally, as we have seen. Nonetheless, this is only partial, and many teachers share, in part, the goals or action theories proposed by RBM (Maroy, Mathou, & Vaillancourt, 2017) and are ultimately relatively ambivalent.

In France, the situation is much more conflictual and controversial. While in terms of semantic and lexical transformations, managerial vocabulary is increasingly employed in the school environment, as attested to by our case studies and previous research (Barrere, 2006; Dutercq, Gather-Thurler, & Pelletier, 2015), these changes remain rhetorical. Case studies of *lycées* and *académies* often emphasize the strong union and teacher opposition to certain tools of steering by results (notably the use of particular indicators), and the resistance to the use of these tools to induce changes in teaching practices is very common. This situation, anticipated by school principals or *rectorats*, leads, as we have seen, to pronounced decoupling of the implementation of accountability, which remains a purely administrative operation, on the one hand, and teachers' practices, on the other hand. In the French case, we do not witness profound changes in the relations between professional categories or significant shifts in professional roles (except for that of principals). We could advance the hypothesis that the present situation is more that of a symbolic

confrontation between some institutional discourse on school and its governance, opposing the managerial (and neoliberal) discourse of results-based management to critical or "nostalgic" discourse, concerned with protecting or limiting changes to teachers' autonomy and practices. At the end of the day, the reality of the French school (that which we have studied in any case) remains far from what the neoliberal discourse on accountability would desire. From this perspective, the situation is more mitigated in Quebec, which reminds us once more, if this was needed, of the importance of international multilevel comparisons as powerful substitutes for experimentation when testing the empirical range of certain theories regarding educational globalization.

References

Apple, M. W. (2004). Creating difference: Neo-liberalism, neo-conservatism and the politics of educational reform. *Educational Policy, 18*(1), 12–44. https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904803260022

Ball, S. J. (1998). Big policies/small world: An introduction to international perspectives in education policy. *Comparative Education, 34*, 119–130.

Ball, S. J. (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy, 18*(2), 215–228.

Ball, S. J. (2009). Privatising education, privatising education policy, privatising educational research: Network governance and the 'competition state'. *Journal of Education Policy, 24*(1), 83–99.

Ball, S. J. (2012). *Global Education Inc. New policy networks and the neo-liberal imaginary*. London/New York: Routledge.

Ball, S. J., & van Zanten, A. (1998). Logiques de marché et éthiques contextualisées dans les systèmes français et britannique. *Éducation et sociétés, 1*, 47–71.

Barrere, A. (2006). *Sociologie des chefs d'établissement*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.

Bezes, P. (2005). Le renouveau du contrôle des bureaucraties. *Informations Sociales, 6*, 26–37.

Bonal, X., & Tarabini, A. (2013). The role of PISA in shaping hegemonic educational discourses, policies and practices: The case of Spain. *Research in Comparative and International Education, 8*(3), 335–341.

Bourdieu, P. (1998). L'essence du néolibéralisme. *Le Monde Diplomatique* (mars), 3.

Brassard, A. (2000). L'institutionnalisation du champ d'études de l'administration de l'éducation: une analyse critique de l'expérience québécoise. *Revue Française de Pédagogie, 130*, 15–28. https://doi.org/10.2307/41201541

Brassard, A. (2006). L'évolution de la gestion scolaire depuis les années 1950. *Le Point en Administration Scolaire, 8*(4), 25–27.

Buisson-Fenet, H., & Pons, X. (2014). *School evaluation policies and education states: Trends in four European countries*. Berne, Switzerland: Peter Lang.

Dale, R. (2005). Globalisation, knowledge economy and comparative education. *Comparative Education, 41*(2), 117–149.

Dale, R. (2006). From comparison to translation: Extending the research imagination? *Globalisation, Societies and Education, 4*(2), 179–192.

Dale, R., & Robertson, S. L. (2002). The varying effects of regional organizations as subjects of globalization of education. *Comparative Education Review, 46*(1), 10–36.

Dardot, P., & Laval, C. (2010). *La nouvelle raison du monde. Essai sur la société néo-libérale*. Paris: La Découverte/Poche.

DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Collective rationality and institutional isomorphism in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review, 48*(2), 147–160.

Dutercq, Y., Gather-Thurler, M., & Pelletier, G. (2015). *Le leadersphip éducatif*. Bruxelles, Belgium: De Boeck.

Engel, L. C., & Frizzell, M. O. (2015). Competitive comparison and PISA bragging rights: Subnational uses of the OECD's PISA in Canada and the USA. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 36*(5), 665–682. https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2015.1017446

Figlio, D., & Loeb, S. (2011). School accountability. In E. A. Hanushek, S. Machin, & L. Woessmann (Eds.), *Handbooks in economics* (Vol. 3, pp. 383–421). Amsterdam, The Netherlands: North-Holland.

Gewirtz, S. (2002). *The managerial school: Post-welfarism and social justice in education*. London: Routledge.

Grek, S. (2010). International organisations and the shared construction of policy "Problems": Problematisation and change in education governance in Europe. *European Educational Research Journal, 9*(3), 396–406.

Gunter, H. M., Grimaldi, E., Hall, D., & Serpieri, R. (Eds.). (2016). *New public management and the reform of education*. Londres: Routledge.

Laval, C. (2003). *L'école n'est pas une entreprise. Le néo-libéralisme à l'assaut de l'enseignement public. (Cahiers Libres)*. Paris: La Découverte.

Laval, C., Vergne, F., Clément, P., & Dreux, G. (2012). *La nouvelle école capitaliste*. Paris: La Découverte.

Lee, J. (2010). Trick or treat: New ecology of education accountability system in the USA. *Journal of Education Policy, 25*(1), 73–93.

Lessard, C., & Levasseur, L. (2007). L'école publique généraliste est-elle en train de voir sa vocation transformée ? *McGill Journal of Education, 42*, 337–353.

Lingard, B., & Rawolle, S. (2011). New scalar politics: Implications for education policy. *Comparative Education, 47*(4), 489–502. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2011.555941

Majone, G. (1996). *La Communauté européenne, un Etat régulateur*. Paris: Montchrestien.

Maroy, C. (2006). *École, régulation et marché: une analyse de six espaces scolaires locaux en Europe* (1st ed.). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Maroy, C. (2009). Convergences and hybridization of educational policies around "Post-Bureaucratic" models of regulation. *Compare. A Journal of Comparative and International Education, 39*(1), 71–84.

Maroy, C., Mathou, C., & Vaillancourt, S. (2017). La « gestion axée sur les résultats » au cœur de l'école québécoise: l'autonomie professionnelle des enseignants sous pression. In Y. Dutercq & C. Maroy (Eds.), *Professionnalisme enseignants et politiques de responsabilisation* (pp. 13–32). Bruxelles, Belgium: De Boeck.

Maroy, C., Pons, X., & Dupuy, C. (2017). Vernacular globalisations: Neo-statist accountability policies in France and Quebec education. *Journal of Education Policy, 32*(1), 100–122. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2016.1239841

Maroy, C., & Vaillancourt, S. (2013). Le discours syndical face à la nouvelle gestion publique dans le système éducatif québécois. *Education et Sociétés, 2*, 93–108.

Meyer, J. W., Boli, J., Thomas, G. M., & Ramirez, F. O. (1997). World society and the nation-state. *The American Journal of Sociology, 103*(1), 144–181.

Mons, N. (2009). Effets théoriques et réels des politiques d'évaluation standardisée. *Revue Française de Pédagogie, 169*, 99–139.

Normand, R. (2011). *Gouverner la Réussite Scolaire: Une Arithmétique Politique des Inégalités*. Lyon, France/Berne, Switzerland: ENSL/Peter Lang.

Olssen, M., & Peters, M. A. (2005). Neoliberalism, higher education and the knowledge economy: From the free market to knowledge capitalism. *Journal of Education Policy, 20*(3), 313–345.

Pelletier, G., & Charron, R. (1998). *Diriger. En période de transformation*. Montréal, Canada: Éditions Afides.

Ranson, S. (2003). Public accountability in the age of neo-liberal governance. *Journal of Education Policy, 18*(5), 459–480. https://doi.org/10.1080/0268093032000124848

Robertson, S. L. (2005). Re-imagining and rescripting the future of education: Global knowledge economy discourses and the challenge to education systems. *Comparative Education, 41*(2), 151–170. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050060500150922.

Robertson, S. L., & Dale, R. (2014). Towards a 'critical cultural political economy' account of the globalising of education. *Globalisation, Societies and Education, 13*(1), 149–170. https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2014.967502

Rowan, B. (2006). The new institutionalism and the study of educational organizations: Changing ideas for changing times. In H.-D. Meyer & B. Rowan (Eds.), *The new institutionalism in education* (pp. 15–32). New York: SUNY Press.

Rozenwajn, E., & Dumay, X. (2014). Les effets de l'évaluation externe sur les pratiques enseignantes: une revue de la littérature. *Revue Française de Pédagogie, 189*, 105–137.

Smith, W. C. (2016). *The global testing culture: Shaping education policy, perceptions, and practice*. Oxford: Symposium Books.

Spillane, J. P., & Burch, P. (2006). The institutional environment and instructional practice: Changing patterns of guidance and control in public education. In H.-D. Meyer & B. Rowan (Eds.), *The new institutionalism in education* (pp. 87–102). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Steiner Khamsi, G. (2010). The politics and economics of comparison. *Comparative Education Review, 54*(3), 323–342. https://doi.org/10.1086/653047

Steiner-Khamsi, G., & Waldow, F. (Eds.). (2012). *World yearbook of education 2012. Policy borrowing and lending in education* (World Yearbook of Education). London/New York: Routledge.

Verger, A., & Curran, M. (2014). New public management as a global education policy: Its adoption and re-contextualization in a Southern European setting. *Critical Studies in Education, 55*, 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2014.913531