HAL
open science

How do school actors deal with “early school leaving”? A French-German comparison about the interpretations and usages of a political watchword

Célia Barrez

To cite this version:

Célia Barrez. How do school actors deal with “early school leaving”? A French-German comparison about the interpretations and usages of a political watchword. Political science. Université de Rennes; Eberhard-Karls-Universität (Tübingen, Allemagne), 2020. English. NNT : 2020REN1G013 . tel-03659230

HAL Id: tel-03659230

https://theses.hal.science/tel-03659230

Submitted on 4 May 2022

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L’archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d’enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

THESE DE DOCTORAT EN COTUTELLE DE

L'UNIVERSITE DE RENNES 1

COMUE UNIVERSITE BRETAGNE LOIRE

ECOLE DOCTORALE N° 599
Droit et Science politique
Spécialité : *science politique*

ET L'UNIVERSITE DE TÜBINGEN
(*Institut für Erziehungswissenschaft*)

Par
Célia BARREZ

Que font les acteurs scolaires du « early school leaving »? Comparaison franco-allemande des interprétations et usages de ce mot d'ordre politique

Thèse rédigée en anglais, Résumé substantiel en français (30 pages).
Thèse présentée et soutenue à Paris, EHESP, MSH, le 23 janvier 2020
Unité de recherche : Arènes UMR 6051

Rapporteurs avant soutenance :

Dr. Isabelle Danic, Maître de Conférences, HDR, Université Rennes 2

Pr. Thierry Berthet, directeur de recherche CNRS, LEST, Aix-Marseille Université

Composition du Jury :

Pr. Thierry Berthet, Directeur de recherche CNRS, LEST, Aix-Marseille Université

Dr. Tom Chevalier, Chargé de recherche CNRS, Arènes, Université Rennes 1

Dr. Isabelle Danic, Maître de conférences, HDR, Université Rennes 2

Pr. Patricia Loncle, Directrice de thèse, professeure des Universités, EHESP

Dr. Axel Pohl, Senior lecturer, Université St. Gallen

Pr. Barbara Stauber, Co-Directrice de thèse, professeure, Institut des sciences de l'éducation, Tübingen Université

Dr. Eric Verdier, Directeur de recherche émérite CNRS, Université Aix-en-Provence

Contents

Acknowledgements 5
Résumé Substantiel (French) 7
Portraits et chiffres 9
Allemagne et Bade-Wurtemberg 9
La Gemeinschaftsschule (GMS) « Geschwister Scholl » étudiée. 10
France et Bretagne 11
Le collège REP « La Balikan » 12
Tableau statistique « sortants précoces sans diplômes » 13
Introduction 14
Approche située d'un concept médiatique d'action publique au sein de deux écoles secondaires allemande et française 17
Contexte d'émergence de la thèse : agenda, ancrage disciplinaire et distanciation 17
Choix théoriques et implications méthodologiques 19
Construction de la comparaison, terrains, collectes des données: de l'asymétrie au levier analytique 20
Partie 1 « Les sorties précoces »: une structure d'opportunité discursive 20
Partie 2 Les Principaux 22
Partie 3 Les Enseignants 24
Partie 4 Les "Autres" 28
Approche comparée des résultats 31
Conclusion 33
Bibliographie 37
DISSERTATION: ENGLISH VERSION 43
Introduction: understanding the interactive nature of educational policy through the object "early school leaving" 45
A "situated" approach to a policy concept in two French and German secondary schools 50
Personal relation to the subject, self-reflection 51
Favourable political context for the research to exist 54
Disciplinary anchorage and relevance 61
Preliminary considerations resulting from a grounded approach of the subject 63
An approach of educational policy resulting from governance shifts 63
The actor-centred and interactionist perspective 66
The critical policy ethnography: definition and methodological implications 70

Local schools and conditions of investigation: a surmountable asymmetry? 72
An ethnographic immersion 76
From asymmetry to analytic leverage 79
Harvesting and analysing the data 82
Part 1 85
"Early-school-leaving" as a discursive opportunity structure 85
1 The discourse "early school leaving" 85
1.1 Definition 85
1.1.1 The discourse "early school leaving" as a "discursive opportunity structure" 85
1.1.2 The enforcement of the political rationality 87
1.2 A subject to understand the influence of the EU on (national, regional, local) educational agendas 89
1.2.1 The indicator 90
1.2.2 The whys and wherefores of the narrative "knowledge economy", national and regional repercussions 94
1.3 The school in charge of promoting "equal opportunities" and supporting/controlling "at risk" students 100
1.3.1 "Early school leaving" challenges the ideological principles of a meritocratic ideology based on "equal opportunities" 101
1.3.2 Making schools responsible… 103
Part 2 125
Principals 125
2 The role of principals, contexts and representations in understanding the issue of "early-school-leaving." 125
2.1 National contexts and principals' perceptions of their roles and of the issue of "early leaving" from education 126
2.1.1 France 128
2.1.2 Germany and Baden-Württemberg 140
2.2 "*Schulverweigerung*," "*décrochage scolaire"*: different principals, different school contexts, different ways of doing? 160
2.2.1 In La Balikan: "My definition… mirrors the National Department of Education […] because I am representing the state" 166
2.2.2 In the Geschwister Scholl *GMS*: "There is a plan of procedure (…), which we apply" 183
Part 3 197
Teachers 197

3 Teachers and students' "negative school participation" 198
3.1 Socio-history of a profession: Role of teachers in educating, "elevating", sorting out individuals 198
3.1.1 The role of teachers embedded in the socio-history of the school institution 199
3.1.2 Socio-economic recruitement 201
3.1.3 Changing settings 202
3.2 The relations between the classroom, teacher and students' "negative participation" 203
3.2.1 The availability of support 203
3.2.2 Influence of teachers on orientation and class-based relations 204
3.2.3 Theoretical elements to analyse teachers' positioning 208
3.3 Teachers and "*Schulverweigerung*" in the Geschwister Scholl *GMS* 210
3.3.1 Adolescent deviance and parental collusion: personal perceptions of the issue "*Schulverweigerung*" 211
3.3.2 Institutional settings influencing teachers' perceptions of "*Schulverweigerung*" 230
3.3.3 Critical voices to the "*Gemeinschaftsschule"* reform 244
3.4 Teachers and "*décrochage scolaire*" in La Balikan 252
3.4.1 "Territorial ethnicity" and "décrochage scolaire" 254
3.4.2 "Décrochage scolaire": the result of "poor living conditions" and "cultural incompatibility" 259
3.4.3 Fears and misunderstanding 279
3.4.4 Teachers' apprehension of the national priority against "décrochage scolaire" 291
3.4.5 Obstacles to a collectively reflected institutional change 302
3.5 Comparative lessons 317
3.5.1 The subjective experience of teaching 320
3.5.2 Teamwork with the non-teaching staff 327
Part 4 "The others" 333
4 Who are the "others"? 336
4.1 In the Geschwister Scholl GMS, professionals are finding their niches 337
4.1.1 "Here we work in a more interconnected manner […]" 339
4.1.2 "Afternoon" educational assistants 353
4.2 La Balikan : the negative impact of hierarchies in the formulation of support 364
4.2.1 The diversity of professionals involved in student support 366
4.2.2 The "others": Different understandings of institutional measures, depending on their position as 'established' or 'challengers' 398

4.2.3 An examplary portrait. Thinking the problem "*décrochage scolaire*" in its interactive dimension. 424
Conclusion 439
Bibliography 449
Appendix 473
The „ideal" educational system in France 483
The „ideal" educational system in Germany 484

Acknowledgements

I want to thank warmly:

Patricia Loncle, Axel Pohl, Barbara Stauber and Marc Rouzeau, who provided with academic and also emotional support and patience. Thank you very much.

My supportive parents Annick and Philippe, sisters Solène and Roxane and great partner Philipp. Thank you so much.

Popo. So good to have you.

Benedikt E. and Bev R., who corrected my awful English and add some reflective feedback that helped to end up with this final product. Thank you for your great work and support.

I want to thank you also the professionals in the school. This research could have never taken place without their cooperation and support. And the students, even if I did not mention their views much in this dissertation. Thank you also Marylène and Frau Albat for the crucial administrative support!

I want to thank as well the institutions which granted this thesis with additional financial and academic support, such as Rennes Metropole and the University Bretagne Loire, which granted this research project with extra scolarships to support the international mobility. The International Centre of studies and research about Germany organised and supported the participation to research training and seminars, which helped me a lot.

Résumé Substantiel (French)

Le contrat de cotutelle stipule que, si la thèse en rédigée en anglais, un document de trente pages en français donnant une idée du contenu de celle-ci doit l'accompagner. Aussi, ce document reprend, partie par partie, les points principaux qui furent développés en quelques centaines de pages dans le cadre d'une recherche qualitative menée entre 2014 et 2018.

Cette thèse porte sur l'étude, comparée, de l'appréhension d'un concept d'action publique : les « sorties précoces » (« *early school leaving* »). Elle commence par la citation d'un extrait de protocole de terrain reportant la rencontre entre une principale allemande d'une école du secondaire inférieur et l'auteure de cette recherche. Cet extrait annonce l'angle d'approche du sujet, les thèmes qui seront traités et illustre l'approche théorico-méthodologique qui a été choisie : « ancrée », la recherche part du « terrain » pour suggérer une lecture théorique originale basée sur la métaphore des « murs » (pour reprendre le titre d'un roman et film français éponyme). Elle consiste en une approche inductive des perceptions qu'ont les acteurs « entre les murs » de l'école de ce problème façonné par une vision idéologique de l'éducation censée participer, à l'échelle européenne, au développement de « l'économie de la connaissance la plus compétitive et la plus dynamique du monde, capable d'une croissance économique durable accompagnée d'une amélioration quantitative et qualitative de l'emploi et d'une plus grande cohésion sociale »[1] et à une meilleure prise en compte de « l'égalité des chances ». A quelles réceptions et usages est sujette cette priorité donnée à la norme de la certification dans les contextes allemands et français ? Quelles reformulations/ constructions divergent ou se rejoignent ? Les publics « prioritaires » sont-ils les mêmes ? Les défis à relever sont-ils perçus de façon similaire ou au contraire, interrogent-ils des aspects différents de la vie sociale ? L'analyse de documents censés modeler l'action des acteurs dans la prise en charge des « sorties précoces sans diplômes » revient sur les justifications idéologiques de ce problème (perspective constructiviste), les recommandations, les publics « prioritaires ». Elle illustre également l'influence discursive et cognitive de l'Union Européenne sur les gouvernements nationaux et régionaux. A l'aune de cette année 2020[2], et à travers le prisme des perceptions et des usages autour du problème « décrochage scolaire » (entendu comme concept d'action publique visant à renforcer la norme du diplôme) au sein de deux écoles du secondaire inférieur situées dans le Bade-Wurtemberg (Allemagne) et en Bretagne (France),

[1] Conseil Européen Lisbonne 23 et 24 Mars 2000, conclusions de la présidence.
[2] La « stratégie » et « horizon 2020 » marquent le prolongement du plan d'actions développés dans le cadre de la « stratégie de Lisbonne ».

comment peut-on penser ce problème en lien avec les défis auxquels les sociétés de ces deux pays sont confrontés : forces eurosceptiques, urgence climatique, migrations et diversité culturelle, dissolution des Etats-Providence, précarisation de l'emploi et activation, retour à des dynamiques nationales et mondiales fortement inégalitaires de distribution des richesse et revenus ? Ce que m'a appris cette recherche, c'est que les perceptions du problème « sorties précoces » renvoient à ces dynamiques macroscopiques de déstabilisation. Enfin, au vu des « décrochages » professionnels observés au niveau de l'école et au vu de volontés, parfois frustrées, d'autres professionnels de s'engager pour la transformer, cette thèse invite à reformuler le problème de façon encore plus systémique : au-delà du ou de la seul.e « décrocheur.euse » et des actions fondées sur le repérage, le « décrochage » interroge, plus que jamais, les conditions favorisant un climat de normes et un horizon partagés. L'organisation de réflexions collectives sur le « décrochage » au sein de l'école pourrait permettre de débattre des préjugés et des difficultés que chaque participant rencontre et la mise en place d'actions fondées sur l'expertise légitime des intéressés.

Portraits et chiffres

Les éléments suivants visent à donner une idée de la comparabilité des contextes français et allemands.

Allemagne et Bade-Wurtemberg

L'Allemagne possède 82, 8 millions d'habitants (Eurostat 2017) et est en cela le pays le plus peuplé de l'Union Européenne (UE) (16, 2% de la population européenne totale). Selon Eurostat toujours, le taux de chômage en Allemagne se situe en janvier 2019 à 3,2 % tandis que la moyenne européenne se situe à 2017 à 6,5%, 8,6% pour la France)[3]. Ces chiffres cependant ne disent rien sur les fortes disparités géographiques de ces taux, ni sur la problématique croissante des « travailleurs pauvres » ou des retraités pauvres. L'Allemagne contribue à 21, 2 % au produit intérieur brut (PIB) de l'UE. En tant que République fédérale, elle consiste en 16 Etats (ci-après *Land* ou pluriel, *Länder*), qui sont complétement responsables de leur système éducatif.

En 2014, le budget total pour l'éducation, la recherche et la science s'élevait à 267 milliards d'euros. Cela correspondait à 9,2% du produit intérieur brut (Eurydice). Länder et autorités locales contribuent pour 90% aux dépenses éducatives. Les fonds privés (entreprises, associations…) sont proportionnellement plus élevés concernant l'éducation professionnelle (apprentissage, système dual), dans le domaine de l'éducation tertiaire et de « l'éducation tout au long de la vie ».

Le Bade-Wurtemberg est le troisième pays le plus peuplé d'Allemagne avec 11 millions d'habitants. Cette région est située dans le sud-ouest. Depuis la fin de la seconde guerre mondiale et particulièrement le début des années 1950, c'est une région d'immigration à laquelle elle doit ses récents gains de population (à hauteur d'environ 75%, contre 25% pour l'accroissement naturel). Les immigrants sont en moyenne dix ans plus jeunes que la population autochtone, ce qui cependant ne compense pas le vieillissement de la population. Ce vieillissement est visible notamment dans la pyramide de distribution d'âge des enseignants. En effet, comparé à d'autres pays européens excepté l'Italie, l'Allemagne compte de façon disproportionnée un nombre élevé d'enseignants âgés (sans compter la

[3] Le taux de chômage européen est calculé sur la base du nombre de personnes sans emploi en âge de travailler sur la population active (définition de l'Office international du travail).

problématique de renouvellement). Le Bade-Wurtemberg a la plus grande proportion d'habitants de nationalité étrangère en Allemagne (12% de la population totale). 40 % des habitants étrangers viennent des pays membres de l'Union (Italie, Grèce) tandis que le second plus gros groupe est d'origine turque. A Stuttgart, Mannheim et Hallstadt, une personne sur quatre ou cinq est d'origine étrangère. Le Bade-Wurtemberg est un *Land* qui est économiquement dynamique basé sur un tissu de petites, moyennes et grosses entreprises à la réputation internationale (industrie automobile, électronique). La région possède aussi de nombreuses villes universitaires, telles que Stuttgart, Tübingen, Heidelberg et Mannheim.

Sources: Eurostat [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20171003-1?inheritRedirect=true], 27/03/19. Eurostat, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs/visualisations#Ecotrends], 29/03/19. Eurydice [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/funding-education-31_en], 27/03/19. BpB: Wer finanziert das Bildungswesen? [http://www.bpb.de/208333/wer-finanziert-die-verschiedenen-bildungsbereiche-in-deutschland-2011], 27/03/19 Official Website of Baden-Württemberg [https://www.baden-wuerttemberg.de/de/unser-land/land-und-leute/bevoelkerung/], 27/03/19. Cramer, Bohl, du Bois-Reymond, "Comparative report teacher training", WP 3, GOETE, 2013 [http://www.goete.eu/project/work-programme/153-for-teachers]. BpB, Armut trotz Arbeit, 26.6.2018 [http://www.bpb.de/nachschlagen/zahlen-und-fakten/globalisierung/52684/armut-trotz-arbeit].

La Gemeinschaftsschule[4] (GMS) « Geschwister Scholl » étudiée.

La « *Gemainschaftsschule* » est une école du secondaire inférieur en « transition » depuis 2013 du modèle *Realschule* au modèle de l'école « intégrée » et « à la journée » (*Ganztagsschule*). L'école qui a accueilli une partie de cette recherche est située dans une ville moyenne et rurale (selon la perception allemande)[5] du Bade-Wurtemberg, entre la capitale Stuttgart et la ville universitaire de Balenstadt. D'après les statistiques internes (au 1er juin 2017), 423 élèvent sont inscrits dans cette école, dont 70 sont issus de l'immigration (première ou seconde génération). Parmi les 21 nationalités recensées par l'école, les élèves

[4] Mot à mot : « école communautaire ». Ce modèle d'école publique créé en 2012 dans le primaire et le secondaire, s'ajoute aux autres formes existantes (*Förderschule*, *Hauptschule*, *Realschule*, *Gymnasium*). Comme il est développé dans cette thèse, les motifs invoqués de cette réforme sont entre autres de pallier la perte démographique et la reproduction des inégalités sociales et scolaires particulièrement importantes dans les systèmes éducatifs basés sur une orientation et une séparation des publics et des curricula précoces.

[5] Cf. Houillon Vincent, Thomsin Laurence. Définitions du rural et de l'urbain dans quelques pays européens. In: *Espace, populations, sociétés*, 2001-1-2. Repopulation et mobilités rurales. pp. 195-200

d'origine turque ainsi que de Bosnie-Herzégovine et d'Italie sont les plus nombreux. Dans la catégorie « inclusion », relativement au projet de cette école qui est d'accueillir tous les élèves (qui auraient pu être autrefois orientés dans des écoles spéciales (*Förderschule*) par exemple), l'école recense trois élèves avec des « troubles du développement et émotionnels ». En moyenne, une classe compte 26, 4 élèves. Tandis que l'appartenance religieuse et la nationalité font partie des statistiques établies par l'école, je n'ai pas pu accéder à des statistiques portant sur l'origine sociale et éducative des élèves. Dans ma thèse, je vais apporter des éléments concernant la distribution inégale des élèves selon les milieux sociaux et le fait d'être issu de l'immigration ou non entre les différentes types d'écoles (*Förderschule, Hauptschule, Reaschule, Gemeinschaftsschule, Gymnasium*) –qui est également un indice pour un achèvement inégal des diplômes.

France et Bretagne

La France compte 67,19 millions d'habitants (Insee 2018) –environ 15 millions de moins que l'Allemagne. D'après Eurostat, le taux de chômage en France fluctue autour de 9% en 2018. En 2016, les dépenses domestiques en éducation atteignent 149, 9 milliards d'euro, qui correspondent à 6,7% du PIB. Contrairement à l'Allemagne, l'Etat est le principal contributeur (57, 3% en 2016). Viennent ensuite les autorités décentralisées (23, 4%), les entreprises (8,4%) et les ménages (7,7%). En 2018, 79% d'une génération a obtenu le bac général et technologique tandis qu'en Allemagne, *l'Abitur* est obtenu, en 2017, par 42, 2 % d'une génération. Cette proportion augmente continuellement tandis que le niveau de qualification d'une génération sur l'autre s'élève également.

La Bretagne est une région située dans le nord-ouest de la France. En 2015, elle compte 3 293 850 habitants, dont 47,1% ont 45 ans et plus. 34,5% de la population totale a entre 0 et 29 ans (Insee). Un rapport de l'Inspection générale en 2000 notait de similaires évolutions qu'en Bade-Wurtemberg, à savoir un gain de population qui provient essentiellement d'un solde migratoire positif tandis que la population vieillit. 73,1% de la population active (15-64 ans) a un emploi, 8,8% n'en a pas. Les jeunes femmes sont les plus affectées. La capitale est Rennes, qui est aussi une ville universitaire. Plus généralement, la Bretagne est très diverse, recouvre des zones rurales et urbaines plus ou moins dynamiques et affectées par les changements économiques structurels (désindustrialisation, économie locale maritime…) ; ainsi que de fortes inégalités en termes d'accès aux services publics ou en termes d'offres de formation. En 2000, le rapport de l'inspection générale note une structure favorable aux performances

éducatives avec une évolution positive de la proportion de cadres et de professions intermédiaires. En matière d'éducation et au vu de certains indicateurs de réussite (comme le taux de réussite au bac par exemple, tests réguliers d'évaluation des performances des élèves en mathématiques et français…), elle est considérée comme l'une des académies les plus performantes du territoire. A l'instar du Bade-Wurtemberg, c'est également le territoire français où les sorties sans diplôme sont les moins nombreuses.

Sources: educ. gouv. [https://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/ENC_2018/90/6/enc18_web_1073906.pdf], 27/03/19 Eurostat: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/guip/countryAction.do], 27/03/2019. Insee [https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/2011101?geo=REG-53#chiffre-cle-1]. Der Statistik Portal [https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/255393/umfrage/anteil-der-schulabsolventen-innen-mit-abitur-in-deutschland-nach-bundeslaendern/], 26/04/2019. Edelstein, B. & Grellmann, S., 2013, « Welche Abschlüsse erreichten Schüler früher und heute? », BpB [en ligne] [http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/159282/welche-abschluesse-erreichten-schueler-frueher-und-heute], 26/04/2019. Rapport de Inspection générale de l'Education nationale et de l'administration de l'Education nationale et de la recherche (Septembre 2000) [en ligne] [http://media.education.gouv.fr/file/08/6/6086.pdf], 26/04/2019.

Le collège REP « La Balikan »

Il a accueilli la recherche de janvier à juin 2015. Il est situé dans l'un des quartiers prioritaires « politique de la ville » et rassemble une population à bas revenus. Selon une organisation parapublique locale[6] qui produit régulièrement les portraits sociodémographiques des quartiers de cette grosse ville pour la municipalité, ce quartier est celui qui compte en 2015 le taux le plus important de familles et familles à bas revenus, ainsi qu'issues de l'immigration. La population issue de l'immigration a augmenté depuis quelques années, ainsi que la proportion d'adolescents. Par ailleurs, la population locale est relativement mixte en ce qui concerne les âges, bien qu'elle se rejoigne sur les bas et très bas revenus. 400 élèves sont inscrits au collège La Balikan en 2014 selon les statistiques internes. 66 élèves sont en « inclusion », 10 malentendants sont intégrées dans les classes ordinaires, 56 sont scolarisés dans une unité séparée (SEGPA). Selon les statistiques internes, les élèves boursiers sont en augmentation depuis trois ans (65,10 % en 2012 ; 68,09% en 2015). A ma demande, une

[6] On ne peut citer cette association ni le document (non public) sur lequel repose ce portrait et qui nous a été transmis gracieusement. En effet, cela risquerait de porter atteinte à l'anonymat de l'école étudiée.

auxiliaire de vie scolaire a établi une statistique des origines des élèves d'une classe de cinquième ordinaire. Voici les résultats sur 19 élèves : Guyane (1), Guadeloupe (2), Portugal (1), Italie (1), Turquie (3), Cap Vert (1), Guinée (1), Mayotte (1), République Tchèque (1), France (5). On notera que sur 12 élèves issus de l'immigration, la moitié provient d'anciennes colonies.

La France et l'Allemagne sont comparables du point de vue de leur « régime de transition », l'aspect sélectif et standardisé de leur système éducatif[7].

Table 1 Transition regime, source : Parreira do Amaral et al., 2014 in Walther and al., 2015, p. 49

Dimension / régime	éducation	Formation professionlle	Régime d'emploi	Concepts de jeunesse	Concept de désavantage	Focus des politiques de transitions
Centré sur l'emploi	Sélective	standardisée (dual)	Fermé, risque à la marge	Adaptation aux positions sociales	individualisé	employabilité

Voir annexe du document principal pour un schéma des systèmes éducatifs français et allemand.

Tableau statistique « sortants précoces sans diplômes »

Table 2 « sortants précoces sans diplôme », données régionales (NUTS 2 regions) (%) [edat_lfse_16] (Last update : 31.01.2019)

année / Pays	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

[7] Généralement les comparatistes se réfèrent à la typologie des systèmes éducatifs établie par Allmendinger (1989, in Walther and al., 2016, p. 148). Dans les systèmes éducatifs hautement standardisés et différenciés, il existe une forte différenciation organisationnelle, une sélectivité moyenne à élevée et les transitions sont caractérisées par un seuil moyen à élevé pour passer d'un niveau à un autre. Inhérents à ces systèmes sont des moments « d'engorgement » (*bottlenecks*) aux points d'orientation sélectifs caractérisés par des choix d'orientation précoces. Ces mécanismes renforcent potentiellement les inégalités et désavantages sociaux et scolaires, qui par conséquent réduisent potentiellement les conditions favorables permettant un égal accès effectif en mitigeant notamment l'impact des inégalités. Dans ces systèmes également, les mécanismes de soutien ne sont pas disponibles universellement mais s'adressent de façon compensatoire à des élèves et étudiants catégorisés comme désavantagés (*ibid.*).

/région					
Allemagne (ancienne RFA)[8]	9.8	9.5 (b)	10.1	10.3	10.1
Bade-Wurtemberg	7.5	7.8	8.5	9.3	8.7
France	9.7 (b)	8.8 (b)	9.2	8.8	8.9
Bretagne	5.7 (b)	4.1 (b, u)	6.0	3.7 (u)	6.0

(b) : ruptures de séries chronologiques

(u) : faible fiabilité

Introduction

Cette thèse s'effectue à la suite d'une recherche de master qui portait sur l'étude de parcours de jeunes qui avaient quitté l'école secondaire sans diplôme et s'étaient engagés dans un volontariat de service civique. Cette thèse porte moins sur les parcours de « décrocheurs » que sur la construction politique d'un problème public et l'appropriation (par les professionnels de l'école) de ce concept. Ces appropriations sont replacées dans leurs contextes nationaux, institutionnels et organisationnels. Comment les différents professionnels de l'école « entre les murs » [9] légitiment ou non, s'emparent ou non, du problème visant à réduire les « sorties précoces » en Bretagne et en Bade-Wurtemberg, dont les gouvernements nationaux ont un rôle moteur dans l'intégration européenne. Plus spécifiquement, cette recherche consiste à interroger les « formes d'action » que la notion est censée « susciter » au niveau local, et plus

[8] Il y a de grosses différences entre l'ancienne Allemagne de l'Est (RDA) et L'Allemagne de l'Ouest (RFA) concernant les taux de chômage et les de "sorties précoces". De plus, les statistiques allemandes considèrent normalement comme "jeune sans diplôme" une personne sans qualification "*Hauptschule*" (le plus bas diplôme, ISCED 2). Le lien suivant (données allemandes) montre les disparités entre les deux anciennes régions : [http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/216421/schulabbrecher-wie-hoch-ist-der-anteil-der-schulabgaenger-ohne-abschluss-je-bundesland-2013] 12/02/2019.

[9] Je reprends ici le titre d'un livre (2006, François Bégaudeau) et de son film éponyme (adapté par Laurent Cantet en 2008).

particulièrement, au niveau de l'école (Bernard, 2013, pp. 18-19). Quelles sont-elles ? Que nous apporte une comparaison dans ce domaine?

Parler de « sorties précoces » et non de « décrochage scolaire », qui est le terme français *en vogue,* vise à dépasser une polysémie de concepts français et allemands qui ont pour objet les comportements « déviants » à la norme ancienne d'obligation scolaire et celle, plus récente, « d'assiduité ». Le terme de « sorties précoces » renvoie à la construction d'un problème public qui participe de l'établissement d'une norme d'achèvement d'un niveau minimal de qualification (Bernard, 2013). S'interroger sur cette norme revient à expliciter le rôle de l'Union européenne dans la mise en forme discursive de cette nécessité, fondée sur l'espérance d'une société économiquement plus dynamique et socialement plus cohésive.

La thèse est introduite par un extrait d'un protocole de terrain relatant la rencontre avec une principale allemande d'une « *Gemeinschaftsschule* », qui eut lieu après la clôture du terrain français au collège La Balikan (Bretagne). Cet extrait peut être considéré comme un moment crucial qui orienta par la suite l'analyse comparée de l'appréhension du problème « sorties précoces » [10] en France et en Allemagne, ainsi que le plan de raisonnement. Cet extrait se veut être une illustration de la méthodologie qui fut employée dans cette recherche, basée sur une approche « ancrée » des phénomènes sociaux. Elle suppose l'analyse systématique des données issues du terrain et la mise à l'épreuve de concepts et d'approches théoriques existants ou générés de façon inductive (*theoretical sensitivity*) qui conditionnent ensuite la collecte approfondie de nouvelles données ou l'analyse nouvelle de données déjà collectées.

Cette rencontre avec une principale allemande, Madame Hummel, illustre aussi un des processus inhérents à la recherche qualitative, qui consiste à trouver et à négocier les terrains d'observation (participante) –dans mon cas au sein d'écoles du secondaire inférieur en Bretagne et dans le Bade-Wurtemberg. Cela demande du temps et n'aboutit pas toujours, ce qui explique aussi pourquoi la comparabilité apparente des deux écoles étudiées n'est pas parfaite (voir ci-après).

L'invitation par Madame Hummel à une rencontre qui résultait de son intérêt pour le problème et phénomène « *Schulverweigerung* »[11] a conduit notamment à s'interroger sur ses

[10] Mot à mot, refus/renonciation scolaire. Ce fut le mot que j'employai en Allemagne comme équivalent du terme « décrochage scolaire » en référence au terme employé par le ministère fédéral allemand qui s'attaque ainsi au problème de la « non qualification ».

[11] Mot à mot, refus/renonciation scolaire. Ce fut le mot que j'employai en Allemagne comme équivalent du terme « décrochage scolaire » en référence au terme employé par le ministère fédéral allemand qui s'attaque ainsi au problème de la « non qualification ».

motivations. En effet, j'avais écrit à d'autres écoles, qui n'avaient pas répondu. Qu'est ce qui peut expliquer que certains principaux font de ce thème leur bataille et d'autres non ?

La rencontre avec Madame Hummel informe aussi sur le rôle de l'UE dans la gouvernance éducative, ainsi que sur le rôle des « technologies gouvernementales » au sens foucaldien du terme, tel que le projet pour les « refuseurs de l'école » subventionné à 50% par le Fonds social européen et que Madame Hummel souhaite implanter dans son école. Ce projet, comme j'ai pu le constater par la suite, dissémine à la fois définitions et catégories spécifiques (une façon de voir et de définir le problème) comme il participe au renforcement de la norme de la certification. Ainsi, cet entretien a conduit à questionner le rôle et la nature du discours développé par l'UE sur ce problème.

De plus, le discours tenu par Madame Hummel a conduit à considérer la diversité des acteurs impliqués dans la lutte contre les « sorties précoces », ou susceptibles de l'être. Ces acteurs sont aussi bien ceux de l'école que ceux qui en sont extérieurs, tels que les autorités éducatives locales, les institutions de protection sociale, d'enfance et de jeunesse, comme mentionnées par Madame Hummel, avec lesquelles elle doit composer concernant sa vision du problème et le projet qu'elle souhaite mettre en œuvre dans son établissement.

En outre, Madame Hummel fait également référence à un répertoire existant de mesures de contrôle et punitives, qui permettent de gérer les cas de « participation négative » des élèves. L'expérience de l'« inefficience » de ces mesures explique en partie pourquoi elle se tourne vers « autre chose ». C'est aussi un exemple de la marge de manœuvre qu'ont les professionnels incarnant le service public de l'éducation auprès des usagers (« *street level bureaucrats* ») dans la mise en place de leur politique scolaire.

Le discours de Madame Hummel informe également sur le rôle des structures du système éducatif qui influencent en Allemagne la composition de la « clientèle » au sein des différents types d'école. Cet aspect impacte possiblement l'interprétation des problèmes rencontrés. Même si ce n'est pas vraiment mis en valeur dans cet extrait, qui fut raccourci, Madame Hummel mentionne régulièrement, au cours de l'entretien, la réforme qui vise l'établissement d'une école (secondaire) intégrée dans le Bade-Wurtemberg (*Gemeinschaftsschule*), supposément plus démocratique. Elle lie ainsi explicitement les problèmes rencontrés avec la nature segmentée et sélective des structures éducatives. De quelles relations s'agit-il exactement ?

Approche située d'un concept médiatique d'action publique au sein de deux écoles secondaires allemande et française

Contexte d'émergence de la thèse : agenda, ancrage disciplinaire et distanciation

Cette partie fait état du contexte d'émergence de la thèse dont le sujet et le financement ont été fortement favorisés par la mise à l'agenda du problème « décrochage scolaire » en France, et plus particulièrement en Bretagne. En effet, depuis la loi de décentralisation concernant l'orientation et l'éducation tout au long de la vie (2014), les régions ont été invitées par le gouvernement à intégrer sur leur agenda éducatif la lutte contre le « décrochage scolaire ». J'évoque à ce sujet quelques éléments de mon terrain exploratoire, et notamment d'une recherche-action dont l'objet était d'analyser l'activité des 17 « plateformes régionales de soutien et d'appui aux décrocheurs » (PSAD). Ces entités administratives sont créés en 2011 et ont pour but de renforcer le repérage des « sortants précoces » et de leur proposer des « solutions ». Cette recherche-action a mis en lumière des éléments de transformation de la gouvernance de l'éducation en France: importance des cadres discursifs transnationaux et de leurs usages à des niveaux subnationaux de l'action publique, le rôle des chercheurs dans la dissémination de ces cadres, la gouvernance multi-niveaux (*multi-level* and *rescaling*), multi-acteurs, qui se veut intersectorielle, les discours sur « l'autonomie » des établissements d'enseignement secondaires (Walther and al., 2016; Pareira do Amaral and al., 2015).

La lutte contre le « décrochage scolaire » dans le secondaire (ou autres concepts renvoyant aux ruptures de scolarité perçues comme précoces) est un thème extrêmement traité depuis les années 1980, et particulièrement depuis le début des années 2000, que ce soient dans les média, la recherche, et différents champs institutionnels et professionnels (action sociale et éducative, éducation formelle et non-formelle, protection de la jeunesse, justice des mineurs….), tant en France qu'en Allemagne. La littérature en sciences sociales traitant de ce thème est abondante, tout comme les termes qui sont employés[12] pour le décrire et qui renvoient dans leur ensemble à l'émergence d'une norme sociale (celle d'une formation secondaire complète, de la qualification). Comme toute norme, elle suscite bien sûr l'étude des déviances qu'elle engendre. Certains ouvrages se penchent sur l'intérêt historique des autorités publiques pour les manquements à l'obligation scolaire –qui sont aussi vieux que l'école obligatoire. Les chercheurs s'interrogent également sur la construction récente du phénomène en problème d'action publique. Ici, les préoccupations relatives à la

[12] Cf. Document principal en anglais pour les exemples français et anglais, ainsi que les références d'auteurs.

transformation des économies structurelles et au problème de l'insertion professionnelle des moins ou non qualifiés impliquent des justifications d'ordre universaliste et peuvent être reliées à des peurs anciennes et sécuritaires liées au contrôle de la déviance des jeunes (p. ex. Stamm et al., 2012, Wagner (dir.), 2007; Herz, Puhr & Ricking, (dir.), 2006, pour l'Allemagne; Berthet & Zaffran (dir.) 2014; Bernard, 2013, Glasman & Œuvrard (dir.), 2004; Brucy, 2003). Au-delà du respect de l'obligation scolaire, nombre de recherches sur ce thème soulignent également le contexte européen dans la mise à l'agenda nationale, régionale et locale de ce phénomène. La lutte contre les « sorties précoces » est, depuis 2003, un indicateur de performance des systèmes éducatifs européens jugés à leur capacité de réaliser « l'égalité des chances » et à produire la « matière grise » nécessaire à l'établissement d'une « économie de la connaissance ».

La référence à l'UE dans les différents programmes de lutte contre les « sorties précoces » en France et en Allemagne suite aux engagements pris dans le cadre de la stratégie de Lisbonne (2000) oblige à faire l'état de la recherche sur les questions liées à « l'européanisation » des politiques publiques d'éducation. Cette question cependant est à mettre en perspective avec les réinterprétations et configurations institutionnelles spécifiques au niveau national et local (Walther and al., 2016, Parreira and al., 2015, Buisson-Fenet & Pons, 2012). Aussi, bien qu'on ne puisse pas parler de « transfert » direct ou d'imposition verticale des injonctions et/ou recommendations prises au niveau communautaire jusqu'au niveau de l'école, l'UE a un impact sur la formulation et le cadrage cognitif des problèmes publics domestiques.

On dispose aujourd'hui d'une connaissance importante concernant les phénomènes de « décrochage scolaire » et des « facteurs de risque ». Ceux-ci sont liés à l'environnement individuel des élèves tout comme au contexte scolaire. On connait statistiquement, les territoires les plus « touchés ». On connait également les leviers pédagogiques et organisationnels possibles au niveau de l'établissement. Très souvent, la question du « décrochage scolaire » recoupe la question sociale (et migratoire). En cela, elle comporte un effet « dynamite » potentiel pour sociétés françaises et allemandes (Delaye, 2015; Stamm and al., 2012). La recherche à ce sujet souligne également le rôle du « décrochage » dans la construction identitaire de l'individu (Stamm *ibid.*) ainsi, que du « décrochage » comme moyen de gérer une situation éprouvante pour l'individu (*coping*) : « il y a des décrocheurs pour qui partir, c'est vivre un peu » (Berthet & Zaffran, dir., 2014, p. 58). Enfin, la recherche souligne le rôle des structures et des institutions scolaires dans la production des « décrocheurs ». Par ailleurs, il est intéressant de constater que celles-ci diminuant

tendanciellement (ou restant stables dans le temps), la médiatisation de ce phénomène est allée croissante ces dernières années (Bernard, 2013). Cette recherche vise à apporter des éléments de réponse.

La recherche, déjà très fournie sur ce sujet, ainsi que le contexte politico-médiatique existant, m'ont obligée à trouver un angle original sous lequel l'aborder. Dans un perspectif constructiviste, étudier le « décrochage scolaire » consiste à interroger la construction de ce problème en problème public, affiché comme priorité au niveau communautaire. La construction intellectuelle du problème peut ainsi être mise en perspective et interrogée en fonction de la façon dont les acteurs appréhendent, utilisent et mettent en forme ce discours au niveau de l'école. Il n'existe à cette heure aucune recherche comparant les perceptions de ce concept par les acteurs de l'école en France et en Allemagne, ni d'étude faisant l'analyse comparée des justifications intellectuelles à l'origine de nombreuses programmatiques et mesures visant à lutter contre les « sorties précoces ».
Outre l'état de la recherche allemande et française, cette partie est également dédiée à l'exercice de distanciation subjective comme étape inhérente à toute recherche qualitative, accentuée dans l'approche ethnographique, qui engage l'être social du chercheur ou de la chercheuse, et le champ disciplinaire dans lequel il ou elle s'inscrit (Bouveresse, 2003; Noiriel, 1990).

Choix théoriques et implications méthodologiques

A l'image de Vincent Dubois qui retranscrit dans son travail de recherche la politique sociale en train de se faire par l'observation et l'analyse des interactions « au guichet » entre bureaucrates et bénéficiaires de prestations sociales dans deux caisses d'allocations familiales (Dubois, 2009), je questionne les perceptions et on observe les interactions des acteurs de l'école à l'égard de la « lutte contre le décrochage scolaire ». Ce travail s'inscrit ainsi dans une sociologie politique de l'éducation, qui s'intéresse à la mise en œuvre concrète par les acteurs de l'école de priorités politiques dans le cadre d'une gouvernance « par les résultats » (Walther and al., 2016) tandis que les établissements sont invités à trouver les meilleures façons de lutter contre le « décrochage scolaire ». Il s'agit « d'ethnographier l'action publique » (Dubois, 2012) en prenant acte de la nature interactive de la production des inégalités éducatives à différents niveaux: structurels, organisationnels, institutionnels au niveau de la politique publique et au niveau institutionnel, discursif, positionnement des acteurs en fonction de leur être social et institutionnel, et dont les pratiques s'expliquent

également en interaction avec les précédents niveaux) (Stauber and al., 2016). Ces interactions s'inscrivent dans des contextes nationaux culturels spécifiques.

L'institution scolaire est comprise comme un héritage historique de croyances et valeurs partagées susceptibles d'évoluer dans le temps, notamment à travers la légitimité que les acteurs accordent aux demandes de changement et de réformes (Rey, 2016) –ce qui suppose également l'étude des rapports de force au sein de l'organisation. On reprend les deux postulats classiques de la sociologie des institutions 1) « une institution n'existe que par les usages qui en sont faits ; aucune institution n'existe en elle-même ; toutes les institutions se définissent par des pratiques qui définissent l'institution autant qu'elles sont définies par elle » ; 2) « aucune institution, aussi contraignante soit-elle, ne peut obliger à ce que les usages institutionnellement prescrits soient effectivement réalisés, ni empêcher que des usages non-prévus ne se déploient » (Dubois, *op. cit*. pp. 37-38). Cette approche se rapproche plus spécifiquement des analyses portant sur la *street-level-bureaucracy* (Lipsyk, 1980), qui étudie le rôle des individus pris dans la « toile » de l'institution (qui répond aussi à une organisation spécifique) et de leur être social.

La collecte et l'analyse des données s'effectuent, comme déjà mentionnés, selon les principes de la « théorie ancrée » et plus particulièrement avec le support des outils d'analyse et réflectifs développés par A.E. Clarke (*situational analysis*) (2012).

Construction de la comparaison, terrains, collectes des données: de l'asymétrie au levier analytique

Cette partie interroge le caractère asymétrique des établissements, de l'accès au terrain, de la collecte quantitative et qualitative des données. Il s'agit d'une réflexion sur la construction de la comparaison franco-allemande, et de sa pertinence. Je me suis appuyée sur des réflexions développées à la suite d'un séminaire de doctorants portant sur les « ratés de terrain » et comment ceux-ci, éventuellement, pouvaient être un « levier » pour l'analyse (Stavo-Debauge, Roca i Escoda & Hummel, 2017).

Partie 1 « Les sorties précoces »: une structure d'opportunité discursive

Cette partie s'intéresse à l'analyse de programmes politiques (discours) à différents niveaux de la gouvernance éducative (européen, gouvernement national français & fédéral allemand, régional –Bretagne et Bade-Wurtemberg) et qui définissent le problème « sorties précoces », ainsi que les voies d'action et mesures.

En effet, « les promoteurs d'une action publique adossent leurs projets réformateurs sur une conception globale de la société, une vision du monde et des 'récits' visant à présenter leurs actions comme nécessaires » (Bernard *in* Berthet & Zaffran (eds.), 2014, p. 67).

Une structure d'opportunité discursive est définie comme délimitant les frontières des opportunités politiques, culturelles ou symboliques qui déterminent quelles idées deviennent visibles pour le public, résonnent avec l'opinion publique et sont tenues légitimes par leur audience (Kriesi, 2008, p. 72, quoted by Dale & Pareira do Amaral, in Pareira do Amaral, Dale & Loncle, 2015, p. 32).

La première section de cette partie s'attache à définir le cadre discursif du discours sur la réalisation d'une « économie de la connaissance », dans lequel s'inscrit la lutte contre les « sorties précoces ». L'analyse pointe par exemple les hiérarchies entre connaissance cognitique et activité manuelle que cette expression perpétue. Les représentations liées à ces deux ensembles influent sur les représentations du travail, donc de l'orientation scolaire caractérisée schématiquement par le choix entre voie générale ouvrant aux études supérieures et à des qualifications élevées et voies professionnelles « courtes ») (Decreau, 2019)[13]. Ce schéma a des effets potentiels de renforcement de la stigmatisation selon l'orientation « choisie » et le niveau de qualification atteint (Danic & Loncle (dir.), 2017). Cette analyse peut être mise en perspective critique avec le discours sur « l'éducation tout au long de la vie » que les institutions européennes tentent de promouvoir également.

Cette section s'intéresse également aux aspects « techniques » des discours, c'est-à-dire, sur la base des analyses foucaldiennees du pouvoir, à la mise en œuvre d'instruments et de principes gouvernant la « conduite des conduites » des individus (Laval, 2018 ; Foucault, 2004). Les différents subchapitres s'intéressent ainsi à la notion de « responsabilité sociale » de l'école, de « décentralisation », de « partenariats » et finalement de « responsabilisation » et « d'activation ».

Ces programmes ont ceci en commun qu'ils placent les parents et élèves (principalement de milieux « défavorisés » et « issus de l'immigration ») au centre des préoccupations de l'école. En échange, la responsabilité sociale de cette institution est mise en exergue par les discours politiques, tandis qu'elle est aussi le réceptacle d'injonctions contradictoires (socialiser, trier, réaliser la justice sociale et « l'égalité des chances »).

Les parties suivantes analysent la façon dont les acteurs de l'école se positionnent face à ces discours et à la responsabilité qui leur est attribuée de « lutter contre les sorties précoces ». La recherche questionne leurs visions du phénomène et ce qu'elles disent sur l'appréhension de

[13] Cf. (France Culture, 2019).

leur marge de manœuvre dans la gestion du rôle « incluant » et « excluant » de l'institution scolaire. Dans quelle mesure ces retours peuvent-ils me permettre, peut-être, de reformuler le problème « décrochage scolaire » ?

D'un point de vue comparatif, on retiendra l'importance accordée par les textes allemands à la question migratoire, tandis qu'elle est quasiment absente des textes français. Cette remarque peut être expliquée par une conception historique et culturelle de la citoyenneté différente en France et en Allemagne. En effet, tandis que le discours français parle « *d'intégration républicaine* », qui postule l'égalité de tous les citoyens devant l'Etat –et en revanche menace d'oblitérer les différences culturelles et sociales et leurs conséquences en termes de chances égales à la participation à la vie civique ; le discours allemand comprend l'intégration davantage comme un combat pour les chances sociales et culturelles de participation et tend ainsi à comprendre l'intégration comme une question d'assimilation des normes sociales et culturelles plutôt que comme une question de droits civiques (King, Müller (eds.), p. 19).

Partie 2 Les Principaux

Une étude du Centre d'études et de recherches sur les qualifications (CEREQ) en France, paraphrasant le programme national de lutte contre le décrochage scolaire (2014), soulignait la diversité de la mise en œuvre de cette politique par un titre évocateur : « Tous 'mobilisés' contre le décrochage scolaire : variations autour d'un mot d'ordre national » (Maillard, Merlin, Rouaud, Olaria, (collab.), 2016).

Dans le cadre d'une « autonomie » plus grande accordée aux établissements d'enseignement locaux et aux transformations inhérentes à la gouvernance éducative (de *l'input* à *l'output*), le pouvoir des principaux dans la mise en œuvre de la politique de son école s'est accentué, ainsi que sa responsabilité et l'obligation de résultats. On s'interroge sur ce que ce contexte fait aux chefs d'établissement spécifiquement en lien avec la question du « décrochage ».

Cette partie intègre également des données issues de terrains exploratoires afin d'illustrer la diversité des interprétations et des usages que principaux français et allemands peuvent avoir à l'égard de la question du « décrochage ».

En France, la sociologue Anne Barrère (2006) parle de « managers de la République » ; en Allemagne, on les décrit comme des « étoiles polaires dans le ciel des enseignants » (cité par Languth, 2016, p. 7). Le premier chapitre de cette partie donne quelques éléments historiques et actuels pour comprendre les contextes institutionnels dans lequel les principaux français et allemands évoluent. On retiendra par exemple que les principaux allemands sont

obligatoirement d'anciens enseignants et qu'ils continuent d'avoir une charge d'enseignement à laquelle leur identité professionnelle reste attachée ; en France en revanche, les compétences des principaux ont été élargies au domaine pédagogique récemment tandis qu'ils ne sont pas forcément d'anciens enseignants.

On notera dans les deux contextes que les principaux doivent gérer l'implantation de réformes structurelles et pédagogiques importantes (« réforme du collège » d'un côté, « *Gemeinschaftsschule* » et « école à la journée » de l'autre) censées promouvoir et améliorer « l'égalité des chances ». Au-delà d'un niveau d'attentes très important dont ils se sentent l'objet, ils mentionnent tous deux des marges de manœuvre très contraintes par les indicateurs d'évaluation ou la gestion des ressources humaines et financières, dont ils ne sont pas vraiment maitres. L'état d'épuisement moral et physique du principal allemand dont la critique envers les politiques de libéralisation de l'offre éducative et le renforcement de la pression scolaire est acerbe, a amené à questionner le « décrochage scolaire » comme un phénomène systémique qui engage, au-delà de la responsabilité des professionnels de l'école, celle des politiques dont les discours et les décisions sont parfois très contradictoires et privent certains professionnels de l'espoir de réaliser les attentes qui leur sont adressées.

La deuxième partie essaie de montrer la façon dont l'être social et institutionnel du principal se combine dans la réponse qu'ils font de 1) la manière dont ils définissent le problème « décrochage scolaire » 2) la façon dont ils estiment qu'il est pris en charge au sein de leur établissement.

Tandis que la principale française semble vouloir montrer qu'elle applique en tout point les recommandations qui sont faites par « le ministère » et qu'elle intègre dans sa politique les indicateurs d'évaluation locaux, la lutte contre le « décrochage » est surtout comprise comme un contrôle renforcé de l'absentéisme et des premières déviances (la mesure de l'absentéisme est, au niveau du rectorat, un indicateur de « climat scolaire »). Les mesures « éducatives » sont associées aux mesures punitives et/ou de redressement et la lutte contre le « décrochage scolaire » est basée sur une division du travail dont sont exclus enseignants et assistants éducatifs qui partagent le plus de temps avec les élèves. On notera l'influence du chef d'établissement dans la nature des partenariats qui vont être tissés ; dans l'exemple de La Balikan, le partenariat avec la police nationale semble être préféré à celui avec les éducateurs de rue locaux par exemple. Schématiquement, on pourra dire que les acteurs donnent un poids plus ou moins important aux facteurs individuels et/ou scolaires dans les phénomènes de « décrochage ». La principale de La Balikan met l'accent sur les origines sociales, familiales

défavorisées auxquelles se mêlent des difficultés associées à l'origine migratoire (langue, « culture ») tandis que l'école « fait ce qu'elle peut ».

Du côté allemand, la lutte contre le « décrochage scolaire » n'est pas affichée explicitement, telle qu'elle est formulée par les autorités politiques. Pour traiter l'absentéisme, des procédures spécifiques existent, qu'il s'agit « d'appliquer ». Les représentations du principal à l'égard du « décrochage » sont indissociables de son expérience professionnelle épuisante (il quitte avant la fin de l'année l'établissement pour « *burnout* »), ainsi que de la réforme de la *Gemeinschaftsschule* qui a diversifié le public accueilli du point de vue des origines sociales (et migratoires) et qui a davantage confronté les professionnels à la « question sociale ». Le discours sur la nécessité d'individualiser l'enseignement et le soutien aux élèves correspond chez ce principal allemand à une vision de la relation école-élève-parent qui doit être constamment et individuellement (re)négociée. L'école comme projet de socialisation au vivre-ensemble se heurte selon ce principal notamment au manque de ressources, comme la présence des travailleurs sociaux scolaires (*Schulsozialarbeiter*innen*) dont la pédagogie est souvent collective. La question du « décrochage » engage essentiellement, pour ce principal, la responsabilité des responsables politiques, qui ne donnent pas les moyens de faire une école qui permette de contrer les pressions scolaires qui pèsent sur les parents et sur les enfants.

Les enseignants sont peu abordés dans le discours des principaux. L'évolution « nécessaire » de l'enseignement et du rôle des enseignants qu'ils mentionnent sont relégués au second plan. La principale française renvoie cette question à la réforme en train de se faire ; quant au principal allemand, il la renvoie au « temps » nécessaire à l'évolution des pratiques. Son discours mentionne néanmoins pour ce corps professionnel des états d'épuisement. Dans les deux cas, des indices suggèrent l'existence de tensions entre ces deux corps, que ce soit le principal allemand qui se dit obligé de « leur demander toujours plus », ou du cas français qui souhaiterait que « le lien se fasse davantage » avec les autres personnels éducatifs.

Aussi la partie 3 interroge la façon dont les enseignants de ces établissements considèrent le problème « décrochage scolaire » et voient la manière dont l'établissement s'approprie ou non la question.

Partie 3 Les Enseignants

Les enseignants et les techniques d'enseignement sont des sujets extrêmement traités par la recherche en éducation. En effet, ils jouent un rôle crucial dans les trajectoires éducatives que le fameux concept « effet-maitre » ou « *Lehrereffekt* » illustre. La recherche comparative sur

la gouvernance des trajectoires éducatives en Europe (Walther, Parreira do Amaral, Cuconato, and Dale (dir.) 2016), montre très bien comment les enseignants, par leurs pratiques discrétionnaires en termes de choix et postures pédagogiques, d'évaluation, de soutien ou de « refroidissement » des attentes (*warming up* / *cooling out*), d'engagement personnel, … peuvent influencer positivement ou négativement l'expérience de la scolarité et favoriser l'accès démocratique à l'éducation. Dans une étude allemande qui évalue le poids des facteurs institutionnels et organisationnels vis-à-vis du phénomène de l'absentéisme, Sälzer souligne néanmoins que la qualité perçue par les élèves de la relation avec les enseignants ne peut pas peser exclusivement. Au contraire, elle est à penser en interaction avec plusieurs caractéristiques institutionnelles et relatives au climat de la classe et de l'école (Sälzer, 2010, p. 188) .

Ainsi cette partie s'ouvre sur une présentation de l'analyse du « changement » en éducation par Olivier Rey, qui souligne que la multiplication des réformes structurelles depuis les années 80 dans les pays occidentaux continue de se heurter à un « immobilisme dans les classes » (Rey, 2016). Les perspectives théoriques portées par le courant institutionnaliste permettent d'analyser cet « échec » du point de vue de la *légitimité* que les acteurs accordent ou non aux incitations au changement et aux réformes.

Ma recherche montre que dans les deux cas français et allemand, le sujet du « décrochage » n'est pas discuté avec les enseignants, dont le métier cependant subit des transformations profondes dues à la multiplication des autres tâches qu'ils doivent assumer en dehors de la préparation des cours et de l'activité d'enseigner. Cette activité est rapportée comme émotionnellement et professionnellement très éprouvante en France comme en Allemagne, bien qu'en Allemagne l'épuisement semble être plus perceptible: sur trois enseignants interviewés, un quitte le métier à la fin de l'année, une a fortement réduit son temps de travail et a refusé la fonction de principale (qui induit une charge pédagogique plus importante qu'en France), un autre a également réduit son temps de travail –qui s'élève en Bade-Wurtemberg à 27 heures de face à face par semaine contre 18 en France. Lors des entretiens, on fait l'expérience de pleurs, de colère, d'attitudes cyniques ; mais aussi de passion et de militantisme.

Dans le Bade-Wurtemberg, les perceptions relatives au « décrochage scolaire » renvoient à la réforme très critiquée (moins pour ses principes que pour ses modalités d'application) et au changement des publics accueillis: moins sélectionnés en amont, ils se diversifient socialement, ce qui contribue à transformer le métier en augmentant « l'hétérogénéité » des classes. Ce concept « d'hétérogénéité » est l'objet de nombreuses recherches et discussions en

Allemagne (Bohl, Budde, Rieger-Ladich (eds..), 2017; Prengel, 2013). C'est pourquoi je me suis autorisée à analyser les représentations des enseignants allemands concernant leur rôle et le problème « décrochage » à travers l'analyse faite par François Dubet du métier et de l'expérience enseignants suite la réforme en France du « collège unique » (Dubet, 2002). L'histoire du système éducatif allemand marqué par la séparation entre classes sociales permet d'expliquer certaines perceptions qu'ont les acteurs du problème « décrochage ». Il résulterait du fait que ces enfants (issus des classes inférieures, voire de l'immigration) ne soient « pas à leur place », voire auraient souvent (ou plutôt, leurs parents) des aspirations éducatives qui ne correspondent pas à ce que l'institution peut véritablement « attendre d'eux ».

En France, ces représentations, qui mettent en avant la responsabilité des parents et des enfants quant à leur échec scolaire et participation négative (*blaming*, concept du handicap socio-culturel) font moins référence à une lecture sociale qu'ethnique. Elles mettent à jour une problématique de « racisme institutionnel ». Je me suis référée sur ce point aux travaux de van Dijk (2005, 1993), Lorcerie (2009, 2003) et Bentouhami-Molino (2015) pour éclaircir les relations entre *l'ethnicisation* des problèmes éducatifs et la notion de racisme institutionnel. Pour paraphraser le titre de l'ouvrage de Lorcerie (2003), l'exemple de la Balikan montre que l'école fait toujours face à un immense « défi ethnique ».

Les représentations des enseignants à l'égard du problème « décrochage scolaire » sont l'occasion de réactiver des stéréotypes sociaux et raciaux qui résultent d'une part du contexte local et des structures institutionnelles, mais également de politiques structurelles de régulations économiques et de l'emploi et/ou de l'absence d'un discours et de mesures politiques foncièrement antiracistes. Ainsi, les discours recueillis sur le terrain allemand révèlent préjugés et stéréotypes autour du parent et des enfants « *Hartz IV* » tandis que le terrain français révèle davantage des préjugés et stéréotypes de l'ordre du racisme différentialiste.

Les réflexions vis-à-vis du phénomène « décrochage »[14] sont très ambivalentes. D'une part, et souvent, les réflexions sur le « décrochage » des élèves sont à mettre en relation avec des attitudes de « décrochage » des professionnels ou de critiques envers l'institution. Ceci peut être interprété comme une réticence à s'investir « personnellement » dans un cas d'élève problématique montre une peur d'être « happé » par « quelque chose » (principalement, les

[14] Qui, dans les descriptions que les interviewés en font, correspond aux élèves qui refusent ou sont incapables de jouer des normes scolaires.

difficultés sociales, familiales, liées aux régulations administratives de l'immigration…). Cela ajoute du stress, des soucis, davantage de temps passé « à l'école » tandis que le métier vous suit déjà jusque dans l'intimité. C'est ce qui peut expliquer la difficulté du « changement » dans le cas allemand, où les enseignants se sentent surchargés tandis qu'ils perçoivent toute nécessité d'amélioration comme une demande supplémentaire d'investissement. D'autre part, le cas français met en lumière les réflexions et les idées des enseignants pour améliorer la prise en charge du « décrochage », tandis que ce potentiel réflexif, créatif et d'initiative n'est pas valorisé. Il se heurte également à la définition du service des enseignants, à des éléments liés à « l'histoire personnelle » de l'établissement, à des rapports de force négatifs entre la direction, voire les autorités locales et les enseignants, à une réforme « top-down » visant l'organisation et les pratiques pédagogiques, à des ressources qu'ils estiment insuffisantes pour réellement appliquer les notions « d'inclusion », de « différentiation » et « d'individualisation ».

L'attitude de « repli » d'enseignants sur la « défensive » entre les murs de l'école et, plus particulièrement, de la « salle des professeurs » donne le sentiment de deux mondes en tension, qui se fréquentent mais risquent de continuer à ne pas (vouloir) se comprendre. A cette image on doit ajouter l'importance des exemples d'engagements personnels isolés: le métier est une expérience subjective et s'il est uni dans une sorte d'adversité générale, le corps enseignant, tant dans les établissements français et allemands observés, semble plutôt avancer « en ordre dispersé » ou en fonction d'affinités isolées. Cette question est complexe, comme le souligne un rapport sur la « violence scolaire » rédigé par un consortium de chercheurs pour la Direction Générale de L'enseignement scolaire (DGESCO). Se référant aux travaux de l'OCDE sur ce point, ils notent que « des enseignants fatigués, lassés et usés par leur tâche, ayant perdu la foi et la conviction qu'ils peuvent 'faire la différence', dont l'intérêt pour la jeunesse est réduite, ne peuvent qu'être mal ressentis par les élèves et avoir un impact négatif sur le climat scolaire. Il reste que cette question est complexe car les enseignants peuvent avoir un moral relativement peu élevé et malgré tout démontrer un fort engagement » (Debarbieux et al., 2012, p. 4).

Cette partie se termine par l'analyse des relations que les enseignants nouent avec le personnel éducatif, en lien avec cette question. Là encore, ces relations sont replacées dans la longue histoire des systèmes éducatifs centrés autour de la personne de l'enseignant, encore plus en Allemagne qu'en France, où la réforme du « collège unique » fut un accélérateur de la diversification du paysage éducatif au sein des établissements. Enfin, des thèmes comme le *turnover* et l'extrême hiérarchisation des statuts permettent de discuter l'effective réalisation

de l'injonction politique qui est de « travailler ensemble » pour soutenir l'individu « décrocheur » d'une part, l'amélioration du « climat scolaire » d'autre part. En effet, ils influent sur « la qualité des relations qu'entretiennent les acteurs de l'école entre eux dans l'établissement d'un système de normes partagées » (Debarbieux et al., 2012, p. 4).

Partie 4 Les "Autres"

Cette partie est introduite par des éléments de contextualisation historique relatifs à la diversification des personnels éducatifs au sein de l'enseignement secondaire en France et en Allemagne (Bade-Wurtemberg). La façon dont les personnels non-enseignants voient leurs rôles, notamment en lien avec la question du « décrochage » est analysée selon le modèle théorique goffmanien de la scène et des coulisses ; mais aussi selon l'image, connue dans la littérature sur la sociologie des professions, des « challengers » et des « établis ».

La réforme de la « *Gemeinschaftsschule* » et du modèle de « l'école à la journée » (*Ganztagschule*) qui se développe depuis 2012 dans le Bade-Wurtemberg y est davantage précisée que dans la partie 2, en lien avec la « structure d'opportunité » que cette réforme ouvre pour les professionnels non-enseignants et l'éducation non-formelle. Néanmoins, l'état de la recherche allemande insiste sur le fait que le modèle de « l'école à la journée » est développé différemment d'une école à l'autre. C'est pourquoi, les discours des personnels non-enseignants à la Geschwister Scholl *GMS* pourraient être très différents dans une autre école. Dans le cas précis de la Geschwister Scholl *GMS* la travailleuse sociale scolaire a le sentiment d'avoir un rôle à jouer –même si, pour elle, la réforme ne s'est pas donné les moyens matériels et financiers de ses idéaux-, ainsi que « l'assistante pédagogique de l'après-midi » (*Nachmittagsbetreuurin*). Le positionnement ambivalent de la travailleuse sociale scolaire à l'égard de la question du « décrochage » peut-être interprété comme illustrant la tension entre son rôle à la fois normalisateur en tant que professionnelle de l'école et de soutien aux enseignants ; et son rôle émancipateur selon les idéaux éducatifs véhiculés dans le domaine du travail social (*Sozialarbeit*). Il peut aussi illustrer le sentiment d'une limite de ses actions qui ont pour but d'améliorer le climat scolaire et de soutenir les élèves dans le rapport à l'école et à ses exigences. Pour l'assistante pédagogique, il y a clairement une « place à prendre » et son discours valorise la plus-value qu'elle-même et ses collègues peuvent apporter au projet de « l'école inclusive ». Le lien privilégié que ses professionnels tissent avec les parents est un argument fort pour convaincre d'un modèle qui, surtout dans les milieux ruraux conservateurs, soulève la défiance.

La partie concernant le cas français est plus longue. D'une part, parce que les professionnels non-enseignants y sont plus nombreux ; d'autre part parce que les conditions d'observation y furent très différentes et ont généré plus de données. Les questions de statuts, de hiérarchie, d'intégration ou non dans le dispositif officiel de lutte contre le « décrochage » ; plus généralement, de « reconnaissance » ou « d'invisibilité » institutionnelles jouent un rôle important dans la façon dont ces professionnels se positionnent notamment à l'égard de la question du « décrochage scolaire ». Les données permettent de pointer une attitude critique générale vis-à-vis du repérage et du traitement individualisé des « décrocheurs », dont l'aspect technique marginalise ce qui leur semble être des problèmes de fond (cf. Bernard, dans Zaffran et Berthet (dir.), 2014). Cette critique est plus acerbe chez les assistants d'éducation où le confinement de leurs activités dans le domaine de la discipline et du traitement administratif des absences les irrite, tandis qu'ils se verraient plus utiles autrement ; notamment dans l'organisation d'activités pédagogiques et participatives. Ils légitiment leurs aspirations par la proximité qu'ils entretiennent avec les enfants, et la connaissance qu'ils ont de leurs problématiques. D'autre part, ils vivent assez mal leur subordination institutionnelle, qui ne peut plus s'expliquer par les diplômes: tous sont aussi diplômés, voire plus, que les enseignants. Ainsi, ils participent de par leur exemple, à l'effritement d'un discours (instrumental) de l'éducation, qui veut que le positionnement social soit mesuré à la hauteur des conquêtes de titres scolaires. D'autre part, leurs aspirations éducatives sont légitimées par une rhétorique, certes ancienne, mais réactualisée, de l'importance accordée aux compétences, savoir-faire et savoir-être.

La reconstruction du cas de Madame Zaoui, assistante « prévention et sécurité » à la Balikan, vise à illustrer la manière dont le « ciment idéologique » censé faire tenir les murs de l'école s'effrite de l'intérieur. Son cas montre comment l'expérience microscopique des humiliations, la colère et l'amertume à l'égard de « l'éducation » (qui s'adresse plus largement aux responsables politiques, « le Ministère ») est susceptible d'influer sur l'expérience que les élèves font de l'école. D'origine marocaine, titulaire de nombreux diplômes qualifiants et d'un doctorat, elle est employée temporairement au revenu minimum-horaire à la Balikan pour monter des projets de « prévention de la violence ». Je me suis référée aux travaux de Charlot, Emin, De Peretti (2002, 1999) qui interrogent les recrutements d'assistants d'éducation ou autres personnels éducatifs non-enseignants principalement dans les établissements prioritaires périurbains sur la base de leurs origines (supposées ou réelles) socio-ethniques. D'après ces auteurs, la « privatisation » de l'autorité institutionnelle remet en question les valeurs que les établissements scolaires sont censés représenter, telle que celle de

l'Etat titulaire de la violence légitime, de l'intérêt général et de l'universalisme contre les appartenances singulières des individus. De cette perspective, questionner l'appréhension du « décrochage » par ces personnels conduit à repenser le lien entre école en tant qu'appareil d'Etat traversé par des forces sociales contradictoires et centrifuges dont « il prétend assurer l'ajustement ; [à travers lequel l'Etat] contribue à modeler la société civile dont le politique a la tâche d'assurer la cohérence » (Jobert, 1985).

Dans cette partie, j'ai cité des exemples d'entretiens avec des élèves qui montrent qu'ils entretiennent avec cette professionnelle des affinités particulières. Ils l'apprécient parce qu'elle les « comprend ». Madame Zaoui est selon ses mots recrutée pour son « profil » et non pour ses diplômes. Elle est isolée dans l'institution, elle sait / pense « qu'on ne l'aime pas ». Son attitude rappelle celle « diagnostiquée » par la principale dans le document sur la base duquel elle a construit son projet d'établissement, à propos d'élèves qui pratiqueraient « l'auto-exclusion ». L'absence de reconnaissance institutionnelle et matérielle de son rôle et de ses compétences engendre, comme beaucoup parmi ce personnel non-enseignant employé de façon précaire, un décrochage amer et une colère sourde. Cet extrait d'entretien effectué en 2016 résonne avec l'actualité de la fin 2018 / 2019 :

> *"Moi je pense qu'à un moment ça va exploser. La France va exploser de toute façon. Moi je vois comme ça, mai 68... Ça va exploser parce qu'à un moment les gens vont en avoir ras-le-bol du coup. Donc voilà moi je pense que ça va exploser parce que des gens comme ici, multipliés à l'échelle nationale où en fin de compte bah voilà à un moment la France ne pourra pas, y a des choses qui vont s'enlever, les subventions... et les enfants qui n'auront pas été diplômés. Quand on voit des choses aussi, bon, qui peuvent être voilà… est-ce que voilà est-ce que l'école n'a pas joué un rôle? Quand on voit des gens qui vont vers des extrêmes, vers des conduites, voilà, est ce que finalement l'éducation aussi, la société [..] et indirectement est-ce que l'éducation et l'école n'y est pas pour quelque chose de ces phénomènes-là ? Je pense que oui sauf que personne ne veut regarder la vérité en face c'est tout. C'est juste qu'à un moment je vais pas dire le mot 'haine' parce que madame C.* [une enseignante, NDLR] *m'a dit que c'était trop fort, mais voilà ils ont un sentiment de colère important, et la colère c'est pas bon. Quand on a la frustration et la colère c'est pas bon. Ça ne fait que des générations... des enfants…. Très énervés du système" (Fatima Zaoui, 14/01/2016).*

Le cas de madame Zaoui illustre la façon dont sa trajectoire, ses expériences de la « méritocratie » française, ses appartenances, ses origines et plus généralement l'histoire de la colonisation et de la domination européenne s'unissent pour influencer son positionnement à l'interne, ainsi que ses relations avec les autres professionnels et les élèves. Son cas symbolise

la distance, perceptible dans de nombreuses interactions et représentations, entre l'école et le « quartier » et ses habitants. Il illustre aussi les relations intimes qui unissent société, école et pouvoir étatique à travers le prisme du sentiment d'accès aux mêmes droits et considérations ; ou comment les désillusions en termes méritocratiques et de justice sociale participent du ressentiment à l'égard des plus hauts représentants de la décision politique.

Approche comparée des résultats

L'exemple français montre que la cheffe d'établissement a aussi une influence sur la nature des partenariats qui vont être noués, et qu'il y a eu peut-être un « rendez-vous manqué » avec les travailleurs de rue du quartier pour construire un pont avec ses habitants et participer à la compréhension mutuelle de ces deux mondes ainsi qu'à l'exploitation de leurs ressources réciproques (alors que le « quartier » est majoritairement évoqué en termes de déficits). L'exemple français montre également l'effet néfaste des hiérarchies statutaires internes amplifiées par l'aspect précaire de certains postes. L'envie de s'engager de ces professionnels et la perception de leur utilité institutionnellement sous- ou mal exploitée invite à réflexion. Ces attentes non satisfaites ou reconnues engendrent du « décrochage professionnel et institutionnel » dont l'appréhension possible par les élèves (et ses effets sur leur expérience de l'école) pourraient faire l'objet de futures recherches. La division du travail sur laquelle repose la lutte contre le « décrochage scolaire » telle qu'elle est officiellent affichée dans cette école renforce les cloissements professionnels et statutaires. Enfin, elle n'intègre pas systématiquement la voix des enseignants et des assistants d'éducation, qui passent pourtant le plus de temps avec les élèves. Si la politique interne de repérage de l'absentéisme et de « tolérance zéro » peut présenter, pour ces professionnels, des avantages notamment pour réaffirmer leur autorité institutionnelle auprès des élèves, les tenir à distance ou éviter une trop forte immersion dans leur vie privée, elle évacue le potentiel réflexif et de transformation que ces professionnels représentent à l'égard de l'amélioraton de la prise en charge de cette question. Elle évacue également les retours positifs que pourrait avoir une réflexion collective autour de cette question. Enfin, les effets de l'instabilité des paysages professionnels peuvent être interrogés eu égart à l'instablité de nombreuses situations sociales et familiales que vivent les enfants (migration, ruptures conjugales, chômage, déménagements….).

L'exemple allemand montre que la question du « décrochage » est absente de l'agenda de l'école, bien qu'elle soit sur les agendas fédéraux et nationaux. Elle est estompée par la réforme structrelle de l'école intégrée et « à la journée », qui transforment les conditions de travail de ses acteurs, comme elles visent à transformer leurs pratiques pour une école orientée

sur la performance et l'individualisation du soutien. Le « décrochage » ou plus généralement, les attitudes de « déviance » sont perçues comme « normales » -inhérentes à la construction identitaire de l'adolescent.e. Cependant, j'ai montré la façon de ce discours est souvent lié à des arguments suggérant l'inadéquation entre l'orientation et le type d'école choisis (qui ne sont plus complètement maitrisés par les enseignants du primaire) et le « potentiel » de l'individu. Dans les faits, ce discours renvoie à une vision socialement cloisonnée de l'éducation. J'ai souligné à plusieurs reprises comment le discours sur « l'intelligence » ou les « capacités » reflète la structuration historique élitiste du système scolaire en classes sociales. Certains positionnements peuvent aussi s'expliquer culturellement en lien avec un des dogmes centraux de tous les courants protestants relativement à la conception du « métier » qui veut qu'il n'y ait qu'un moyen de vivre qui agré à Dieu, […] simplement par l'accomplissement des devoirs intramondains qui découlent pour chaque individu de la position qui est la sienne et constituent par là-même son *Beruf* » (Weber, 2017, pp. 134-135). Les aspirations des milieux sociaux dominaux à accéder au *Gymnasium* (ou à d'autres formes plus valorisées que la *Hauptschule* qui délivre le diplôme minimal) et espérer décrocher le diplôme le plus valorisé socialement et perçu comme le moyen d'augmenter ses chances futures relativement au choix de son orientation ou dans l'obtention d'un stage dans le cadre des études duales, sont mal perçues. Le discours du principal à cet égard est éclairant, lorsqu'il met en relation cette évolution avec –à son regret, mais aussi au désavantage de la société- le déclin de l'attraction de l'apprentissage. Un « système de transition » pour ceux et celles qui, notamment, ont échoué à se qualifier dans le secondaire, ont rompu un contrat d'apprentissage ou souhaitent se réorienter s'est développé, avec en son sein des classes de « décrocheurs ».

La surchage de travail qui semblent peser sur le principal et les enseignants ainsi que la détresse émotionnelle que certains peinent à cacher, en lien avec la réforme, le changement des publics et les manques de ressources matérielles et humaines semblent expliquer comment tout à chacun cherche à « économiser son énergie ». La démission d'un enseignant sur trois interviewés à une période où l'école peine à recruter, le refus d'assumer un temps-plein ou une charge de « professeur.e principal.e » par les deux autres enseignants interviewés, l'arrêt maladie et retrait du métier de direction du principal avant l'achèvement de l'année sont autant de signes d'épuisement de l'institution dont la réforme cherche à améliorer le projet éducatif. Pourtant, les discours d'une majorité des acteurs évoquent un manque de vision et de moyens tandis que les nouveaux professionnels tentent, par leur présence, de réaliser les

idéaux de la réforme (qui relèvent de positionnements plus ou moins sceptiques). Sont-ils les agents d'une transformation silencieuse ?

Dans les deux cas, enquêter sur la réception et les usages de termes construits en lien avec la priorité donnée à la réduction « des sorties précoces » a montré que ceux-ci ne sont pas débattus entre les murs de l'école et par ses acteurs qui la font au quotidien. Une telle situation est propice aux interprétations individuelles et solutions négotiées de façon isolée. Elle ne permet pas d'expliciter le rôle des contextes, structures et contraintes institutionnelles dans la relation des acteurs à l'école, qui favoriseraient peut-être un nouveau regard sur le phénomène des « participations négatives ». La question qui se pose aussi au regard des données récoltés dans les deux terrains, relativement au cloisonnement des rôles, des surcharges de travail, des fragilités psychologiques, des concurrences de statuts, de la pression exercée par les parents soucieux de la sécurité de leurs enfants et donc de leur assurer un bagage scolaire solide est : comment l'organisation d'une telle réflexion est possible ? Et pourtant, cette réflexion pourraient être à l'origine d'un nouveau récit pour l'école.

Conclusion

Le cas de Madame Zaoui à la Balikan montre comment les humiliations vécues au niveau microscopique de la vie sociale peuvent, par ricochet, délégitimer tout un discours politique au niveau de ceux et celles qu'il est censé convaincre pour qu'ils puissent agir ensemble d'une façon cohérente. Cela rappelle les mots de Victor Hugo disant que « tout ce qui souffre accuse, tout ce qui pleure dans l'individu saigne dans la société, personne n'est tout seul, toutes les fibres vivantes tressaillent ensemble et se confondent, les petits doivent être sacrés aux grands et c'est du droit de tous les faibles que se compose le devoir de tous les forts »[15]. Cela illustre aussi une vision éliasienne de la société comprise comme la résultante d'individus en interrelation et interdépendance avec les autres individus, trainant avec eux leur histoire et leur culture, celles de leurs parents et de leurs ancêtres, exerçant leur rôle social dans le cadre restreint de leur fonction définie socialement, qui elle-même s'inscrit dans des ordres normatifs et de domination mouvants mais puissants, : « et c'est précisément cela, le fait que les hommes se modifient mutuellement dans et par la relation aux autres, qu'ils se forment et se transforment perpétuellement dans cette relation, qui caractérise le phénomène d'interpénétration en général » (Elias, 1991, p. 62) .

[15] Victor Hugo, Paris, juin 1875, *Le droit et la loi*, extraits.

Cette thèse sera soutenue au seuil de l'année 2020, qui était l'horizon défini par la stratégie « Europe 2020 », dans le prolongement des actions et plan de développement élaborés dans le cadre de la « stratégie de Lisbonne » (2000-2010). Les changements provoqués à l'échelle des pays participants devaient, selon le discours dominant, contribuer au renforcement d'une « économie de la connaissance » puissante, fondée sur une croissance « intelligente, durable et inclusive », une meilleure coordination des politiques nationales et européennes, particulièrement en éducation. Ces dernières années furent aussi le théâtre de la montée sur la scène politique et médiatique des mouvements eurosceptiques et anti-européens, depuis l'extrême droite jusque dans l'extrême gauche du spectre politique, de la sortie de la Grande Bretagne de l'UE, de politiques de repli et anti-migratoires. Ces évènements contredisent le récit selon lequel une « économie de la connaissance » où « plus d'éducation » signifie automatiquement plus de « cohésion sociale », « de croissance économique » et de « bien-être individuel », vingt ans après son inauguration.

"L'égalité des chances" se heurte toujours au fait que l'institution scolaire est toujours le véhicule de la reproduction des inégalités sociales, éducatives ou mêmes raciales qui la précède (Bpb/Destatis/WZB/SOEP, 2018; CNESCO, 2016). Dans les faits, certaines décisions politiques n'ont pas permis de réaliser cet objectif mais ont au contraire augmenté la concurrence et le prix pour une éducation « meilleure » et les meilleurs titres. En France, l'introduction récente d'un programme informatique (2018) permettant aux élèves et aux familles de formuler plusieurs choix d'orientation post-secondaire a révélé que certaines institutions et universités demandaient des frais de candidature –indépendamment des frais d'inscription si le dossier était retenu. En Allemagne, le soutien fédéral et du *Land* pour l'éducation secondaire et tertiaire (BAföG) engage ceux et celles qui en bénéficient, depuis les années 1980, à rembourser (de moitié) ce qui leur a été prêté, même si ce fut récemment limité à 10 000€. Depuis, le nombre de bourses attribué a baissé, même si il n'y a pas de preuve que les deux phénomènes soient liés (BpB, 2016). La massification scolaire n'a pas été suivie d'une plus grande démocratisation des chances et mobilité sociale, comme il fut escompté ; et si on ne peut pas parler d'un « déterminisme social total », les structures scolaires et les agencements et pratiques institutionnelles pèsent d'un poids aussi lourd que les origines des élèves (Duru-Bellat & van Zanten, 2010, Becker & Lauterbach (dir.), 2007). En Allemagne, l'ampleur des inégalités à l'école semble s'atténuer par la suite grâce à une mobilité professionnelle interne plus perméable et moins déterminée par le diplôme (Dubet, Duru-Bellat, Vérétout, 2010, p. 133); ce que cette thèse ne peut discuter, infirmer ou

confirmer. En revanche, elle montre que cela n'empêche pas les acteurs de concourrirent pour les meilleurs « titres », y compris dans le système dual.

Aussi, si les responsables politiques placent leurs espoirs dans l'éducation, définie comme l'achèvement d'un certain niveau de qualification et conditionnant une société « plus juste et cohésive » et une « économie de la connaissance » compétitive, objectifs auquel le phénomène des « sorties précoces » fait obstacle, cette recherche montre que ce discours ne semble pas habiter les acteurs sur le terrain. D'abord, deux conceptions de l'éducation s'y opposent et s'y concurrencent, relatif à sa version instrumentale ou absolue (l'éducation comme une fin en soi). Puis, nombre de discours sur le « décrochage scolaire » révèlent la réactivation de préjugés, stéréotypes et attributions individuelles (comme celle, ancienne, du « handicap socioculturel »). D'après ces derniers, « l'égalité des chances » n'est pas susceptible, dès le début, de représenter un horizon plausiblement réalisable, même si, je l'ai montré, il habite certains principaux qui en font leur cheval de bataille.

Or, ces stéréotypes sont à combattre non seulement à l'école mais à tous les niveaux de la décision politique puisque j'ai montré dans mon travail qu'ils résultent de positionnements et décisions politiques dans le domaine de l'emploi, de l'immigration, de la représentation, de la solidarité, de l'organisation urbaine ou encore de la distribution scolaire. Aujourd'hui nombreuses sont les études qui ont montré que les politiques de libéralisation de l'orientation et de privatisation de l'offre scolaire boostent les phénomènes de ségrégations sociales et ethniques des établissements, qui sapent les fondements du sentiment de justice sociale. A ce propos, les auteurs de « *gouvernance des trajectoires éducatives en Europe* » mentionnent certains travaux annonçant des mouvements de « recentralisation des systèmes européens de gouvernance locale » (Amos, Loncle, et al., 2016, pp. 78 et s.), dont la « lutte contre les sorties précoces » peut être vue comme une tentative puisqu'elle vise à coordonner les pratiques locales en vue d'objectifs nationaux globaux (diffusion de bonnes pratiques, indicateurs d'évaluation…). Pour autant, j'ai montré que les établissements scolaires, notamment à travers la figure du ou de la chef.fe d'établissement, réinterprètent et font un usage différents de ce discours, dans le cadre de contextes locaux et institutionnels spécifiques.

Dans une conférence donnée (en Espagne) en 2012[16], mais aussi par ses travaux sur les espaces de « relégation » (2007), Robert Castel liait le processus de désintégration de l'Etat

[16] (Castel, La crise de la cohésion sociale: l'école et le travail dans un temps d'incertitude, 2012) Visionnable en ligne: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WiglZGVYUVM] 04/04/2019

providence et du système de sécurité sociale collectif avec l'idée du déclin du projet institutionnel de l'école française qui était historiquement celui de construire l'unité nationale sur une conception universelle de la citoyenneté. Il semble que ma recherche a apporté des éléments qui permettent de conforter cette hypothèse en montrant que, même en son sein, ce projet de cohésion est percuté par des formes de disociations sociales : sélection, hiérarchies, concurrence, inégalités des chances et des situations. D'une part, l'Allemagne et de plus en plus la France mènent des politiques salariales et d'emploi qui impose le salariat précaire et par le rétrécissement de la protection sociale tandis que dans les deux pays, les chiffres montrent que l'éducation demeure fortement reproductrice d'inégalités sociales (et ethniques) (Bpb/Destatis/WZB/SOEP, 2018); CNESCO, 2016) et que les positions dominantes se recrutent surtout entre elles (Observatoire des Inégalités, Observatoire des sociétés, 2019; Bpb/Destatis/WZB/SOEP, 2018, pp. 262 et s.). Si L. Wacquant défend l'idée d'une transformation « de l'Etat social vers l'Etat pénal […] pour juguler les effets de l'insécurité sociale » engendrée par le démantèlement de l'Etat social (et les récents évènements en France pourraient conforter cette thèse) (Wacquant, 2004, 1988), on soulignera que les programmes politiques et projets soutenus par des autorités publiques visent en priorités ces publics et notamment par l'extension de temps passé à l'école (« l'école à la journée » en Allemagne, « l'école ouverte » en France –particulièrement dans « réseau d'éducation prioritaire ».

Cependant, on peut se demander si, d'une part, le « plus d'école » est forcément une réponse aux attitudes de « décrochage » compris comme déficit de légitimité si on ne s'attaque pas en même temps à la question sociale. D'autre part, on n'interroge pas assez, me semble-t-il, et ce pourrait être l'objet d'une étude en soi, l'écart entre l'importance de la médiatisation du « décrochage » dans les milieux sociaux dominés tandis qu'il est vraiment peu évoqué pour les milieux favorisés. Pourtant, je pense qu'on pourrait trouver des liens qui permettraient peut-être de reformuler la question du « décrochage » au-delà des origines sociales et migratoires et davantage adresser la question du sens et de l'utilité du savoir. Car aujourd'hui, la formulation du problème public « décrochage scolaire » pose comme fin en soi la qualification. A l'heure où la question du « sens » se pose également dans le monde du travail et notamment quand ces qualifications sont élevées[17], peut-être que la question du « décrochage scolaire » peut être aussi appréhendée comme la nécessité de reconsidérer les

[17] Abordés notamment à travers le (récemment médiatisé) concept de « bullshit jobs » dans son ouvrage par David Graeber (2018), anthropologue, économiste et anarchiste ; ou révélé par l'étude de Françoise Decreau dans son étude sur « L'élégance de la clé de douze : enquête sur ces intellectuels devenus artisans ».

critères de l'utile et de l'inutile, de la hiérarchisation des matières manuelles et cognitives et de leur rémunération *a posteriori* dans la société en fonction de cette utilité. Mais aussi, d'aider encore davantage les élèves à formuler leurs attentes et leurs peurs. Les mobilisations des écoliers et étudiantes pour le climat montrent que cette question de l'utilité se pose quand le futur envisagé apparait si sombre et incertain. En cela, les "vendredis pour l'avenir" méritent leur propre recherche.

Bibliographie

Danic, Isabelle et Loncle, Patricia (dir.). (2017). *Les labyrinthes de verre. Les trajectoires éducatives en France dans un contexte européen.* Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes.

Amos, K., Loncle, P., Martelli, A., Barberis, E., Becquet, V., Theobald, U. (2016). Translation of policy instruments and negotiation of actors in local school spaces. Dans W. a. al., *Governance of educational trajectories in Europe* (pp. 75-93). London: Bloomsburry.

Barrère, A. (2006). *Sociologie des chefs d'établissement : les managers de la République.* Paris: PUF.

Becker, Rolf & Lauterbach, Wolfgang (Hrsg.). (2007. 2., aktualisierte Auflage.). *Bildung als Privileg. Erklärungen und Befunde zu den Ursachen der Bildungsungleichheit.* Wiesbaden: VS.

Bentouhami-Molino, H. (2015). *Race, cutures, identités: une approche féministe et post-coloniale.* Paris: PUF.

Bernard, P.-Y. (2013). *Le décrochage scolaire.* Paris: PUF.

Berthet, Thierry & Zaffran, Joël (dir.). (2014). *Le décrochage scolaire. Enjeux, acteurs et politiques de lutte contre la déscolarisation.* Rennes: PUR.

Bildungsberichterstattung, A. (2018). *Bildung in Deutschland 2018.* wbv.

Bohl, Thorsten; Budde, Jürgen; Rieger-Ladich, Markus (Hrsg.). (2017). *Umgang mit Heterogenität im Unterricht : Forschungsbefunde und didaktische Implikationen.* Bad Heilbrunn: Verlag Julius Klinkhardt.

Bouveresse, J. (2003, 12). La connaissance de soi et la science. Regards croisés sur l'anthropologie de Pierre Bourdieu. *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, pp. 59-64.

BpB. (2016, 08 23). *45 Jahre BAföG.* Récupéré sur BpB: http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/253440/45-jahre-bafoeg

Bpb/Destatis/WZB/SOEP. (2018). *Datenreport 2018.* Bonn.

Brucy, G. (2003, 02). “Désertion scolaire” et absentéisme dans l’école de Jules Ferry. *Cahiers de la recherche sur l’éducation et les savoirs [En ligne]*, pp. 145-168. Consulté le 03 04, 2019, sur http://journals.openedition.org/cres/1495

Buisson-Fenet H. & Pons X. (2012, 02). L'européanisation de l'École française en débat : le cas contrasté de l'évaluation des établissements scolaires. *Politix*, pp. 129-146.

Castel, R. (2007). *La discrimination négative. Citoyens ou indigènes ?* Paris: Seuil.

Castel, R. (2012, 07). La crise de la cohésion sociale: l'école et le travail dans un temps d'incertitude. *Conference* . Barcelona, Espagne.

Charlot B., Émin L. & De Peretti O. (2002). *Les aides-éducateurs.* Paris: Anthropos.

Charlot B., Emin, L. & De Peretti, O. (1999). Les aides-éducateurs: le lien social contre la citoyenneté. *Ville-Ecole-Integration Diversité, 118*, pp. 161-175. Récupéré sur http://www.revues-plurielles.org/_uploads/pdf/82/118/charlot118.pdf

Clarke, A. E. (2012). *Situationsanalyse. Grounded Theory nach dem Postmodern Turn.* Wiesbaden: Springer.

Culture, F. (2019, 01 26). D'où vient le long dédain de l'école pour les matières techniques? *La Conversation scientifique par Etienne Klein (broadcast), with Laurence Decreau (2019) and Pr. Thierry Weil*. Paris.

Dale, R.; Kazepov, Y; Rinne, R.; Robertson, S. (2016). Scales, Discourses and Institutions in the Governance of Educational Trajectories in Europe. Dans W. (. al.), *Governance of Educational Trajectories in Europe* (pp. 55-74). London: Bloomsbury.

Debarbieux, E., Anton, N., Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R., Bisson-Vaivre, C., Cohen, J.,Giordan, A.,Hugonnier, B., Neulat, N.,Ortega Ruiz, R., Saltet, J., Veltcheff, C., Vrand, R. (2012). *Le "climat scolaire": définitions, effets et conditions d'amélioration* . Paris: Rapport au Comité scientifique de la Direction de l’enseignement scolaire, Ministère de l’éducation nationale. MEN-DGESCO/Observatoire International de la Violence à l'Ecole.

Decreau, L. (2019). *Tempête sur les représentations du travail.* Paris: Presses des mines.

Delaye, J.-P. (2015). *Grande pauvreté et réussite scolaire, le choix de la solidarité pour la réussite de tous.* Paris.

Dijk, T. A. (1993). Analyzing Racism Through Discourse Analysis: Some Methodological Reflections. Dans J. H. (Eds.), *Race and ethnicity in research methods* (pp. 92-134). Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications, Inc.

Dijk, T. A. (1993). *Elite discourse and racism.* USA: SAGE.

Dijk, T. A. (2005, 04). Le racisme dans le discours des élites. *Multitudes*, pp. 41-52.

Dubet, F. (2002). *Le déclin de l'institution.* Paris : Seuil.

Dubet, F. (2008). *Faits d'école.* Paris: EHESS.

Dubet, François; Duru-Bellat, Marie; Vérétout, Antoire. (2010). *Les Sociétés et leur école. Emprise du diplôme et cohésion sociale.* Paris: La Découverte.

Dubois, V. (2009). *La vie au guichet. Administrer la misère.* Paris: Points.

Dubois, V. (2012, 01). Ethnographier l'action publique. Les transformations de l'État social au prisme de l'enquête de terrain. *Gouvernement et action publique*, pp. 83-101.

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

Foucault, M. (2004). *Naissance de la biopolitique (1978-1979).* Paris: EHESS Gallimard Seuil.

Glasman, Dominique; Œuvrard, Françoise (dir.). (2004). *La déscolarisation.* Paris: La Dispute.

Herz, Birgit; Puhr, Kirsten; Ricking, Heinrich (Hrsg.) . (2006). *Problem Schulabsentismus. Wege zurück in die Schule.* Julius Kinkhardt.

Jobert, B. (1985). L'État en action. L'apport des politiques publiques. *Revue française de science politique*, pp. 654-682.

King, Vera & Müller, Burkhard (Hrsg). (2013). *Lebensgeschichten junger Frauen und Männer mit Migrationshintergrund in Deutschland und Frankreich.* Münster: Waxmann.

Languth, M. (2016). Schulleiterinnen und Schulleiter im Spannungsverhältnis zwischen programmatischen Zielvorgaben und alltäglicher Praxis. Eine empirische Studie zur Berufsauffassung von Schulleiterinnen und Schulleitern. *Dissertation*. Universität Göttingen.

Laval, C. (2018). *Foucault, Bourdieu et la question néolibérale.* Paris: La Découverte.

Le Conseil National d'évaluation du système scolaire. (2016). *Comment l'école amplifie-t-elle les inégalités sociales et migratoires?* Paris: CNESCO.

Lipsky, M. (1980). *Street-level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services.* Russell Sage Foundation.

Lorcerie, F. (2003). *L'école et le défi ethnique. Éducation et intégration.* Paris: INRP-ESF.

Lorcerie, F. (2009, 05). L'école, son territoire et l'ethnicité. *C.E.R.A.S | « Revue Projet »*, pp. 64-71.

Maillard, Dominique; Merlin, Fanette ; Rouaud, Pascale ; Olaria, Manon (collab.). (2016, 04). "Tous" mobilisés contre le décrochage scolaire - Variations autour d'un mot d'ordre national. *Céreq Bref*, 4p.p.

Noiriel, G. (1990). Journal de terrain, journal de recherche et auto-analyse. Entretien avec Florence Weber. *Genèses. Sciences sociales et histoire* , pp. 138-147.

Observatoire des Inégalités, Observatoire des sociétés. (2019, 01 24). *Tel père, tel fils ? L'inégalité des chances reste élevée.* Récupéré sur Observatoire des Inégalités: https://www.inegalites.fr/Tel-pere-tel-fils-L-inegalite-des-chances-reste-elevee

Parreira do Amaral, M.; Dale, R. & Loncle, P. (eds). (2015). *Shaping the Futures of Young Europeans - Education governance in eight European countries.* Oxford: Symposium Books#.

Premier Ministre; Ministère De L'éducation Nationale, De L'enseignement Supérieur Et De La Recherche; Ministère Du Travail, De L'emploi,De La Formation Professionnelle Et Du Dialogue Social. (2014). *Tous mobilisés pour vaincre le décrochage scolaire.* Paris: educ.gouv.

Prengel, A. (2013, 09 09). *Herausforderung: Heterogenität.* Consulté le 10 10, 2018, sur BpB: http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/145242/heterogenitaet?p=0

Rey, O. (2016, 01). Le Changement, c'est comment? *Dossier de veille de l'IfE*, pp. 1-28.

Sälzer, C. (2010). *Schule und Absentismus. Individuelle und schulische Faktoren für jugentliches Schwänzverhalten.* Baden-Baden: VS.

Stauber, Barbara; Parreira do Amaral, Marcelo; Danic, Isabel. (2016). Understanding the interactive emergence fo educational inequalities trhough access and accessibility of education. Dans W. a. al., *Governance of educational trajectories in Europe* (pp. 97-115). London: Blomsbury.

Stavo-Debauge, J.; Roca i Escoda, M. & Hummel, C. (2017, 05). Enquêter. Rater. Enquêter encore. Rater encore. Rater mieux. Presentation du dossier "penser les ratés de terrain". *SociologieS [en ligne]*. Récupéré sur http://journals.openedition.org/sociologies/6084

Wacquant, L. (1988, 09). La tentation pénale en Europe. *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, pp. 3-6.

Wacquant, L. (2004). *Punir les pauvres. Le nouveau gouvernement de l'insécurité sociale.* Paris: Agone.

Wagner, Michael (Hrsg.). (2007). *Schulabsentismus. Soziologische Analysen zum Einfluss von Familie, Schule und Freundenkreis.* Weinheim und München: Juventa.

Walther, Andreas ; Parreira do Amaral, Marcelo; Cuconato, Morena and Dale, Roger . (2016). *Governance of educational trajectories in Europe.* London: Bloomsbury.

"*Children understood the stakes […] we found them eager to belong, hungry for participation in a significant social effort*".

Martin Luther King (edited by C. Clayrson, 2000, p. 206)

Introduction: understanding the interactive nature of educational policy through the object "early school leaving"

Memo Germany #1 Meeting with Mrs. Hummel[18], school principal of a *GMS*/*Werkrealschule*, Balenstadt, 27th, September 2016, 12-02 pm

> *Field protocol #1 Meeting with Mrs. Hummel, school principal of a GMS/Werkrealschule, Balenstadt, 27th, September 2016, 12-02 pm*
>
> *On the 27th September 2016, I met with Mrs. Hummel, the director of a German lower secondary school, a recently created comprehensive school ("Gemeinschaftsschule"). In her mail, she had apologized for not having answered my first mail despite the fact that she was very interested in my research project and particularly in the thematic "Schulverweigerung".*
>
> *The school was located just on the outskirts of the city, about three kilometres away from the centre. It was a large construction and the main building was designed with a panoptic form. I was struck by the absence of fences around the school, which seems to be quite common in Germany. It always stood out in my mind in stark contrast with French schools, which are often hidden behind high walls or heavy-duty fencing.*
>
> *I was warmly received by Mrs. Hummel in her ground floor office. She told me that she was used to working with researchers. She, or more precisely her school, had been part of a recent study and evaluation conducted by the local university about the implementation of the Geimeinschaftsschulen in Baden-Württemberg. [….]*
>
> *She invited me to present my research project. I was quite nervous because I had only arrived in Germany a couple of weeks previously and didn't yet feel comfortable with the German language. I explained that it was comparing the way two schools in Brittany and Baden-Württemberg coped with the phenomenon of "early school leaving"[19], which was a European benchmark in the implementation of the Lisbon strategy. I told her that I was particularly interested in how the school professionals and the students considered the thematic. […]*
>
> *She then mentioned her interest in using my research (the final product), to convince the public authorities of the need to finance a project for dropouts ("Schulverweigererprojekt") in her school. She was familiar with this project*

[18] Names (cities, actors) have been changed for the sake of confidentiality.

[19] For the sake of clarity, I will use the European concept of "early school leaving", "early leavers" or "early leaving from education" in quotation marks –because of their ideological and normative content (I will clarify this later). In a more neutral way, I will use Margit's term of "negative participation" (Stamm and al., 2012).

when she had been working as a school principal in the neighbouring city. This project was set up and run by a local organization [since 2003, editor's note]. […] The project was financed via a matched funding agreement with 50% from the European Social Funds and the other half from public authorities.

I asked her whether she considered "Schulverweigerung" as being a prominent issue here. She confirmed and told me that, "indeed" it was very problematic for "about 1% of the school", i.e. about five or seven students. I had not expected such a low number. There seemed to be a strong discrepancy between her interest for the thematic, the time she took to meet me although she was very busy, and the actual proportion of students concerned with it. She said that she already tried to submit an application to the local authorities in charge, but this had been unsuccessful, partly due, according to her, to the lack of understanding of this issue by the city's local youth welfare office.

She mentioned that in this school, "one third of the students apply for the Hauptschulabschluss, about two other thirds were preparing the Realschulabschluss". She commented: "there is potential, but everybody has a handicap" [for the Gymnasium]. […]

Regarding issues of school "negative participation" she noted a shift from acts of violence in the classroom, nuisance, and insolence to the act of not attending. "Today", she said, they "don't come anymore"; for her the question became "how do we get them back?". Punitive measures, such as monetary fines and other penalties, calling the police to looks for missing students are useless. She mentions the child and youth clinic ("Kinder- und Jugendklinik") where some of students are taken in charge for a certain time by psychologists and paediatricians.

She describes the phenomenon "Schulverweigerung" as a complex one, diverse, individually shaped and which frequently involved family issues.

[...] I asked her why she thinks the project for dropouts is succeeding. She answered, that it was because the program was "neutral towards the person", very individualized and only focused on the thematic [...]

At the end of our meeting, she asked me to send her a detailed research design. Then we would meet again, and this time include the educational support professionals. Meanwhile, she would inform the school staff about my project and try to get their cooperation. […]"

This extract of a research protocol of a meeting that happened in the middle of the research process[20], can be considered as a grounded fundament of the reflections that guided the study of the apprehension of the issue "early school leaving" in France and Germany, as well as the

[20] I just closed the ethnographic research stay in France.

outline of this dissertation. It aims to illustrate the methodology used in pursuing the questions, based on the grounded approach to social life and phenomena and the systematic collection and analysis of data, which serves in the development of an inductively generated theory.

This extract informs us about the process of qualitative research, which also consists in finding and negotiating fields of ethnographic participation (in my case lower secondary schools in Brittany and Baden-Württemberg). Mrs.Hummel's invitation (school principal mentioned above) to meet resulting from her interest in the issue (and potential use of the research for resource findings) led to questioning this interest. Particularly so as I had written to other schools, who did not reply. What might explain why some principals take on "early school leaving" as a personal fight while other do not?

The meeting also helped clarify the role of the European Union (EU) in educational governance as well as "governmental technologies" or instruments in a Foucauldian sense, such as this "dropout project" partly funded by the European Social Fund. This project, as I would later observe, conveys specific definitions and categorizations of the issues and priority clientele; whereby it leads to question the role of the normative influence of the EU in framing domestic agendas in education through problem shaping and their legitimation.

Hummel's discourse also informs about the role of educational structures, which in Germany influences the composition of the school population and thereby the apprehension of educational issues. Even if it is not particularly highlighted in this extract, which has been shortened in places, Hummel frequently refers to the recent implementation of a comprehensive form of secondary schooling in Baden-Württemberg (her school is an example of it), which was assumed, among other things, to make it more democratic (*Gemeinschaftsschule*).

Furthermore, her discourse also leads to considering the range of diverse actors involved in dealing with the issue of "early leaving", such as school professionals, local educational authorities, youth and social welfare institutions and organisations mentioned by Hummel, with whom she has to relatively speaking "make do" regarding the implementation of her own school's policy and vision of the problem. In addition to that, Hummel refers to an existing repertory of measures, which aim to cope with students' negative participation. The experience of how inefficient they actually were accounts for the origin of her apprehension of the issue, and more generally how much room for manoeuvre educational actors have in implementing their school policy, official guidelines and measures.

Many research works have now provided evidence of the interactive approach of educational policies between supra- and infra national levels, between societal structures of inequalities, policies, institutions, discourses and individual positioning, as well as the weight of path dependence (e.g. Walther and al., (eds.), 2016; Parreira Do Amaral, Dale & Loncle (eds.) 2015; Buisson-Fenet & Pons, 2012, Dale & Robertson, 2012; Leibfried and al. (eds.), 2007; Buisson-Fenet, 2007). The preceding extract informs us about the interactive nature of educational action, linked to the (re)production of inequalities and processing of exclusion and inclusion (as is the problem of "early school leaving", Stamm and al., 2012), through school (Stauber and al., 2016, pp. 97-115). Indeed, through the thematic "school dropout", the actor made mention of the structure of the educational system through the new school form "*Gemeinschaftsschule*", of a European project that dessiminates certain prescriptions and representations of the problem, of her limited room for manoeuvre through the existence of other institutions and professional groups she has to play with, of her own engagement for the issue as a crucial one even if concerning a minority only.

The dissertation clarifies the politico-discursive framework as regards the issue "early-school-leaving", i.e. "the moral and intellectual justifications" it is embedded in; indeed, throughout their history, "values and ideas are the fundaments of the finalities of educational systems and in which they operate (Durkheim, 1938; Isambert-Jamati, 1970 quoted by Duru-Bellat & van Zanten, 2007, 2010, p. 13) Then I investigate the way these concepts are interpreted and implemented in two French and German lower secondary schools from different professional positioning highlighting interactions between structures and agencies. Indeed, national policy-making in a globalized and decentralized context cannot be understood in terms of direct transfers and transpositions of top-down policy guidelines, "the decisions of the summit are only worth what the actors at the establishment level do" (Derouet, 2000, p. 24). I will show how these elements come into play and interact with each other by investigating the ways schools, or rather school professionals (principals, teachers and educational staff of support) in their organizational and institutional settings, from "within their walls"[21], consider school dropout as a problem (or not) involving their responsibility or the one of the institution

[21] I will develop this metaphor, which refers to the novel published in 2006 and written by François Bégaudeau "Entre les murs", adapted for a film in 2008 by Laurent Cantet.

besides external issues, address or "ignore" it, in two different regions (Brittany and Baden Württemberg) whose national governments have a driving role in the integration of the European Union. In this way, the policy concepts referring to the problem "early leaving from education" as they appear in European, French and German programmatic ("early school leaving", "*décrochage scolaire"*, "*Schulverweigerung/Schulschwänzen"*) are approached as open concepts and not in the narrower terms posed by texts and indicators, which lead to specific categorizations. While policy programmatic focus on the role of school actors in preventing students from dropping out of school "too early", it is of interest to investigate the way the concerned actors consider their responsibility regarding this thematic Indeed, if only they thought about it, they might be able to work on changing school settings, but only if they felt sufficiently equipped and positioned to do so.

The French and German educational systems are regularly criticised for turning social differences into structural social inequalities. When the discourse about "equal opportunities" dominates and "knowledge" is presented as an essential component of social integration, of the well-being of societies an individuals, this characteristic of educational institutions is all the more critical. Therefore, schools in France and Germany are invited within the framework of the "Lisbon Startegy" (2000) and "Horizon 2020" to address the problem of "early school leaving". Both countries are, in parallel, implementing structural reforms in the name of "equal opportunities". For this reason it is interesting to investigate to what extent the fight against "early exits" from education leads to changes in institutional arrangements and professional practices. It is also interesting to question whether the problem is similarly or differently formulated and addressed in France and Germany when they are supposed to have adopted similar orientations.

The research's usefulness is to highlight the "filters" through which the message demanding that schools "reduce the number of early leavers" is understood at the school level. Perhaps these elements will provoke some interrogation or even "rethinking" the way the problems are formulated at the political level. The Franco-German comparison aims to provide with critical and reflective elements regarding the question of benchmarking thinking and comparisons of educational systems embedded in different national histories and schools situated in specific local contexts. It also aims to provide the reader with some elements helping to think educational problems in relation with broader changing settings in Western societies, such as the meaning and regulation of work (in relation with the integrative and economic role of education), the instability of familial settings, the role of migration which confronts school

professionals with challenging issues. What can this tell us about the role of school in two comparable post-industrial societies whose political elites have committed to the establishment and realization of the European motto that makes of "knowledge" the condition of "economic growth" and "social cohesion"?

Firstly, I explain the research framework, from its birth context through the literature review, methodology and the theoretical rationale. Then, in the first part, I clarify the current discourse on "early school leaving" that comprises discursive and representational aspects, resulting from and influencing power relations: from the role of the European Union to the ways the problem and solutions are shaped and legitimated at national and regional levels. I will particularly underline how schools are made responsible for realising "equal opportunities" as a main ideological issue (Part 1). This being said, I present the school structures entered into via the groundwork research and explain how the different professional groups actually position themselves towards this issue: Part 2 addresses the perspective of principals, Part 3 that of the teachers, Part 4 that of the "others".

A "situated" approach to a policy concept in two French and German secondary schools

This doctorate project began in France in 2014 and will end in Germany. It is characterized by a significant amount of mobility between two countries, three languages, different fields and traditions of academic research. From October 2014 to September 2015, it was marked by visits every six to eight months as part of the preparatory research and a familiarisation phase to get used to German academic culture. From September 2015 there were extended stays of 10-11 months as part of carrying out extensive ethnographic surveys in two lower secondary schools in Sollenstadt (Baden-Württemberg) and Bretonville (Brittany)[22].

This section presents the context of how the thesis was born, its disciplinary roots which influenced the problematization of the subject. It also addresses the context of an agenda which facilitated the existence of the thesis and clearly illustrates the politico-media notoriety of the concept; as well as governance shifts in education including the role of the European Union and the emergence of French regions on the scene of educational policy-making.

[22] Names (cities, actors….) have been changed.

Birth context of the thesis: disciplinary anchoring, scheduling and distancing

The exercise of reflexivity in the production of knowledge based on a qualitative approach in the social sciences is a primordial ritual: it involves for instance being able to reflect one's convictions and positions, the chosen methodological tools and approaches, as well as their conditions of use (Paugam and al., 2010, p. 17). While self-reflection should highlight the "incompressible part of subjectivity or arbitrariness of the choices of analysis" (*ibid.*), it is difficult to find the balance between "saying too much" or "not enough" (Florence Weber, in an interview with Gérard Noiriel, 1990). The researcher must be aware that he or she "engages in their anthropological practice – not only their milieu of origin, their position and their trajectory in the social space, their belonging and their social and religious affiliations, their age, their sex, nationality, etc. but also and especially their particular position in the microcosm of [their disciplinary field]" (Bourdieu quoted by Bouveresse, 2003, p. 60). The objectification of my position vis-à-vis the thematic, the current political agenda and the disciplinary anchoring should satisfy the requisites of "lucidity" and "analytical ability" (Paugam *op. cit.*).

Personal relation to the subject, self-reflection

"I think that, if one does not make the study of oneself, one cannot say a lot of things about the social universe" (F. Weber, interviewed by G. Noiriel, *op. cit.*, p. 138). Françoise Weber is co-author of a regularly republished handbook aiming to guide students and apprentice researchers in elaborating their qualitative research (Weber & Beaud, 2010). She shares the opinion that the "scientificness" of a sociological work involves showing, "at least partially" how one came to design it like it was, despite the risk of auto-contemplation such an exercise always runs. Indeed, she was much criticized at the time of the publication of her thesis about the working class (1989) that also mentioned intimate details of her childhood. These details were given to make explicit the "distance" and "closeness" with the object of her research, her access to the field, the particular attention she gave to certain formulations and terms in the interviews. In return, the efforts of reflexivity inform the researcher of their "social person". Against this backdrop, the following development tries to give some subjective elements with regard to the research for the purpose of objectivity. I will take this opportunity to refer to the latest knowledge about the dropout thematic.

My familial environment (stability, parents' educational backgrounds and status), my status as a native or even my sex were rather predictable factors for school achievement, and much less for "early-leaving" from education as established in the German and French dropout research (see below) and the diverse indicators produced to better grasp such a phenomenon statistically – here based on individual factors (See e.g. Eurostat, category "early leavers"; Wagner and al., 2007; Galand & Hospel, 2015)[23].

My parents, both from working-class origins[24] were, as male and particularly, female scholarship students products of the myth of the "Republican school" that claims the emancipation of individuals from their social milieus and upward social mobility based purely on merit materialized by their school value (Bernard, 2011); the "French equivalent of the American self-made man" (Duru-Bellat, 2002, p. 3). Their successful asencion from working background to the positions of respectively a doctor and an engeener made them commit to the promises of (the best) education. As deserving students, they insist on the importance of diligence and work though. They often reminded my sisters and I of their own efforts.

We grew up in the countryside and went to the local state schools. There were books at home. Certain novels and authors particularly marked me and perhaps contributed to develop my critical interest for education, class relations and domination, such as Victor Hugo, Hector Malot…[25].

At school, I used to have friends who belonged to the so-called "working classes" or "lower middle classes". Little by little, the distances between them and I got deeper through education. While part of our "juvenile life" and local "belonging" brought us closer together (first loves, fashion, subversive rap singers, rural living), our educational trajectories differentiated over time and education contributed to widening a gap that was originally characterized by our social milieus. Each of us got new friends, develop different discourses and attitudes towards school and orientation. Mostly, we stopped seeing each other. I could

---

[23] However, the fact that young girls would skip school more often than young boys is quite debated in the German dropout research, see Wagner and al., p. 241).

[24] My grandparents from the mother side rose to the middle classes as my grandmother "updated" her education and my grandfather climbed up the career ladder in industry.

[25] Which participate in the construction of a positive figure of the street children – feared by the Bourgeois and, like Chateaubriand said in 1831, "all the more dangerous because the police did not dare to shout at them" (Prodhomme, 2007). The famous personages "Gavroche" and "Rémi" symbolize freedom, even though this means being materially and emotionally deprived. They learn about the adults and the world in the streets and/or through initiatory trip; develop a critical approach to their rules, norms and 'moral' principles, "are able to use their physical force, their intelligence to overcome the ordeals 'destiny' has put in their way; nevertheless, they are never reducible to this destiny, and each novel written by H. Malot presents willing children who are able to give meaning to their life" (Pincet, 2002). As a result, they are subversive forces likely to contest and threaten the way things are and work. Indeed, for Gavroche, "it is acceptable to be poor if this is for the sake of freedom … and for this freedom, one is ready to die on the barricades!" (Prodhomme, *op. cit*.).

never really believe that school judgments really reward "intelligence" because I had in my opinion very intelligent friends who despite of that "did not make it"; I got to know many of them who worked hard but remains weak at school. I witnessed friends of mine who wanted to go to the *lycée général* (general upper secondary school) but finally "ended up" in a vocational upper secondary school or lower-ranked tracks in the *lycée général*; I "had to" choose the scientific option for the baccalaureate which had a "better reputation" than the option "literature" although I hated maths and physics but loved reading; I witnessed students desperately persisting in a high-ranked track (resorting to repeating class years)[26] while their marks kept invalidating them in front of the whole class.

So, this work is the result of a personal questioning to better understand how formal education works and its impact on trajectories. Also, while the importance of education has increased in "knowledge" societies (Walther and al., 2016, p. 29), my interest for individuals who have "given up", running the risk of being socially and economically disqualified, increased with time and experience of the pressure to perform and achieve the most valued academic qualifications. Questioning the phenomenon "school dropout" was indirectly related to the questioning of a "normative order" (Bernard, 2013, p. 46) that places school performance in the centre of a variety of normative judgements and discourses regarding evaluation criteria of different measures and programs, economic and work integration (Glasman, 2007; Hegeler & Rademaker, 2005). Is dropping out, are dropouts, as negative as it is ordinarily depicted? This question might sound provocative with regards to the higher risks of social and economic "disintegration" young people with fewer or without qualifications run, as it is constantly reminded of in the dropout research.

I specialised in the study of "youth" (work-study master program) and did my apprenticeship in a youth work organisation. My role in it was to provide the structure with reflective elements about a government measure recently created targeting dropouts still under compulsory schooling. This measure should enable them to engage in part-time "voluntary service"; so that the young person would still attend school twice a week. My research consisted of analysing biographical discourses of young people who had dropped out of school and later engaged in voluntary service (but who were over 16, so not in compulsory education anymore). This study highlighted the positive role of such an engagement which, in

[26] Such a phenomenon results from the integration of the hierarchy of school tracks by families and students. It is also a risk for drop out since it really challenges self-esteem (Cayouette-Remblière & de Saint Pol, 2013).

the majority of the biographies analysed, helped young people to reflect on their experiences, including negative school experiences and (re) take control of their environment (Barrez, 2014)[27]. Some of them succeeded to "reverse the stigma" and turn their "failure" into a personal strength. Indeed, dropping out of school before its final term can be seen as both a deviant behaviour as well as a quest for identity (Stamm and al., 2012, p. 20): for certain dropouts, "leaving the school system is also living" (Berthet & Zaffran (eds.), 2013, p. 58).

Favourable political context for the research to exist

Since the Lisbon strategy, the role of the European Union in member states' educational affairs has increased, which is particularly true as regards the construction of the issue "early leavers". This had a direct positive effect on the emergence of the thesis. Such a context has also a positive impact on the dropout research, which is in both countries very profuse.

Political agendas and the normative weight of the comparison

In 2003, the European benchmark for early school leaving was created by the European Council of Ministers of Education, whose aim was to encourage comparison and emulation by promoting "good practices" of educational governance. This indicator allows for the "performance" and "quality" of Member States' education systems in the realization of a "knowledge society" (see Part 1). In public action terms, this benchmark sets a definition based on certification: an "early school leaver" is considered as anyone who has not obtained the minimum diploma set in upper secondary education or equivalent vocational degree (Rouzeau 2015, Bernard, 2013, p. 5, Stamm and al., 2012, p. 8).

The fact that this thesis exists probably owes a lot to the agenda's context: in 2014, the French government published a national program to combat school dropout (MEN, 2014). Furthermore, via a decentralization law (2014), French regions had been invited to build and organize a "lifelong guidance service" (SPRO) in their territory. The Breton Region chose to integrate the fight against "early school leaving" in this context, in partnership with the rectorate, the devolved education authority. The PhD was granted funding for three years by the Region.

In addition, two scholarships were awarded to the project in order to support the comparative perspective. The choice of Germany as a data source is linked both to my personal history and interests. I have close links with this country from childhood thanks to great familiarity with

[27] See similar outcomes in the German evaluation of the German voluntary service (FSJ) conducted in Baden-Württemberg (Riedlinger, Isabelle; Pohl, Axel, 2017).

its culture and language due to a Germanophile father. This close relationship with our neighbouring country has developed over years through many regular stays, in the private setting, as well as for studies in the frameowrk of the Erasmus exchange programme, and work. I was also very active in the Franco-German Youth Office (OFAJ). This status proved useful during field research as it opened many doors. Finally, these regular exchanges since adolescence have helped to make Germany the country and the language with which I am most familiar after France and French. There is no doubt that, given to the normative weight of international comparisons (Raveaud, 2007) as well as the fact that Germany is in many respects often seen as an example in Europe according to current norms and thematic (employment, balance in the budget, wealth, migration), a comparative study with Germany was seen positively.

Curiously, the interest for the German educational system is older, as this author suggests by referring to the French "Guizot's law" (1833) which should ensure that each municipality has its "school home"; V. Cousin, future minister of public Instruction under Thiers's government argued in this direction by referring to the fact that the Prussian state would have organised them already (*ibid*., p. 378). More recently, the German "dual system" regularly raises French interest (e.g. Sénat, 2015), probably because it is implicitly related to lower German rates of (youth) unemployment. Indeed, and although this unemployment rate highly varies across the different German regions (*Länder*), it is of around 7% and 8% between 2014 and 2016 (with a decrease to 7% in 2016) while it fluctuates between 24% and 25% in France (increasing over the period)[28]. This is all the more interesting for policy makers in a context where the public action is developed according to the norm of "employability", how stigmatising it can be for the young people with fewer or no qualification(s). The European indicator NEET (*not in employment, education or training*) illustrates this. It illustrates as well as a deficit-oriented approach of young people "lacking" qualifications, skills, … that make them unfit for the work market (Danic, Loncle (eds.), 2017, p. 66).

On the contrary, if we consider the rate of "early leavers" as reported by Eurostat[29] and remain careful with regards to their reliability, there are fewer differences between France and (West) Germany, particularly Brittany and Baden-Württemberg than compared with unemployment:

---

[28] Eurostat, 2017 [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Youth_unemployment_rate_and_ratio,_2014-2016_ (%25).png], 12/02/2019.

[29] Early leavers from education and training are defined as the proportion of individuals aged 18-24 who have at most a lower secondary level of educational attainment (ISCED levels 0-2), and who were not engaged in any further education and training (during the four weeks preceding the labour force survey (LFS)).

Table 3 Early leavers from education and training by sex and NUTS 2 regions (%) [edat_lfse_16] (Last update: 31.01.2019)

Year / Country/regions	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Germany (former FRG)[30]	9.8	9.5 (b)	10.1	10.3	10.1
Baden-Württemberg	7.5	7.8	8.5	9.3	8.7
[redacted]					
France	9.7 (b)	8.8 (b)	9.2	8.8	8.9
Brittany	5.7 (b)	4.1 (b, u)	6.0	3.7 (u)	6.0

(b): breaking in time series
(u): low reliability

This discrepancy illustrates different capacities of the labour market to integrate young people with fewer qualifications. It informs more generally about social systems which have more efficient processes of lifelong learning and qualifying within firms or corporations that can compensate a weaker initial education (Dubet, Duru-Bellat & Vérétout, 2010, p. 110). It can also inform about different institutional configurations. In Germany, the development of compensatory (pre-) vocational training measures for those excluded from school-based vocational education or company-based training with education provided in vocational schools ("dual training system") aims to keep these people under an institutional supervision (and another status than the one of "early leavers"). Furthermore, if the "close connection" between labour market actors and schools can have beneficial aspects especially for those who did not do well at school and/or prefer the concrete learning of a job to the learning of

[30] There are high discrepancy between the former West and East Germany as regards youth unemployment and early school leaving; furthermore, German statistics used to consider early leavers as the young people without a school-leaving certificate of the lower secondary education (ISCED 2), which explains why statistics present a lower rate of early leavers. The following graph shows the high disparity between former West and Ost *Länder*. It considers the subgroup of graduate students of the year 2013 (2012 for Hessen and NRW) without a leaving certificate: [http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/216421/schulabbrecher-wie-hoch-ist-der-anteil-der-schulabgaenger-ohne-abschluss-je-bundesland-2013] 12/02/2019.

more theoretical subjects at school, it has reverse effects. Indeed, "it may impact greatly on students' decisions and career choices, and companies may use the cooperation with schools as a means to select the best or most suitable students" (Tikkanen, Biggart, Pohl, 2016, p. 44). Indeed, I will show in this dissertation that this system does not, in Germany, release the pressure to attain the most socially valuable certifications, i.e. the *Abitur* at the end of the general upper secondary education. Young people having this certificate are more likely to win the competition "for ever-fewer apprenticeships": in fact, "school degrees are increasingly important for later career opportunities. As a result, the educational system is increasingly stratified, contributing to social inequality in Germany (Kupfer, 2010).

So beyond similar transition regimes (see tab below), but different ways to organize guidance and selection, France and Germany face the challenge of the selectivity of their educational systems[31] and increasing pressure on certifications, which is systematically correlated with higher competition and social inequalities; this runs the risk of increasing the feeling of injustice, itself correlated with lower social cohesion (Dubet and al., *op. cit*.). So, my research might provide, with critical elements concerning the European ideological motto aiming to create a Europe of knowledge, synonyms of economic growth and social cohesion.

Table 4Transition regime, source: Parreira do Amaral et al., 2014 in Walther and al., op. cit. p. 49

Dimension / regime	School	Training	Employment regime	Concept of youth	Concept of disadvantage	Focus of transition policies
Employment-centred	Selective	Standardized (dual)	Closed Risks at the margins	Adaptation to social positions	Individualized	employability

Finally, the political agenda on "early school leaving", in France as well as in Germany, was visible through the intensive production of research in sociology, (social) pedagogy,

[31] See Walther and al. drawing on Allmendinger's educational typology: "In high-level standardized and differentiated systems there is a substantial organisational differentiation, a medium to high degree of selectivity and transitions exist which represent a medium to high threshold from one education level to the next. The systems have inherent highly selective 'bottlenecks' and early decision-making points that have the potential to reinforce social and educational inequalities and disadvantage, thus offering less potential for providing effective access and mitigating inequalities. Support mechanisms are available not as a universal offer but addressing students classified as disadvantaged in a compensatory way" (op. cit., p. 148).

educational sciences from the middle of the 2000s. Doing a search engine keyword search using *early school leaving*, *Schulverweigerung*/*Schulabbruch*, *décrochage scolaire* produces a large number of suggestions from fields as diverse as pedagogy, politics, media, health, etc. This proved that these concepts are attached to a variety of terms, discourses and interpretations.

A profuse research

German-speaking and French dropout research is abundant and has been increasing from the beginning of the 2000s, which correlates with the establishment of a European agenda of education. French and German studies have attempted a state of the art of theoretical, quantitative and qualitative approaches to this phenomenon while integrating a reflection on the terminology of what is now a concept of public action (Ricking and al., 2016; Berthet and al. 2014; Bernard, 2013, Stamm and al., 2012). These works mention in particular the role of the European Union, and particularly of the European Commission, in the process of putting the problem of "early leaving from education" on the national agenda in the early 2000s; as well as the difficult quantification of the phenomenon, which refers to interpretations and practices intimately related to situational interactions.

French and German authors underline the multiplicity of the terms employed to talk about discontinuity and ruptures, which often illustrate the ones *in vogue* in the policy-making spheres. So the German literature talks about "*abbrechen*" (break up, drop out) (Stamm (eds.), 2012), "*verweigern" (refuse)/ Schulmüdigkeit* (be tired of school) (Gentner & Mertens (eds.), 2006; Thimm, 2000), *"schwänzen*" (play truant), "*Schulabsentismus*" (school absenteeism) (Sälzer, 2010; Wagner (eds.), 2007; Ricking, 2006; Herz (eds.), 2006); and often the authors use several terms, distinguishing or not between them (Ricking, Hagen, Scheithauer (eds.)., 2016; Oehme, 2007; Kittl-Satran (eds.), 2006). Each term refers to different perspectives to look at the phenomenon of children and young people who in different degrees and in different ways withdraw from class and/or school (Ricking and *al. op. cit.*). As for M. Stamm (*op. cit.*), the multiplication of German terms parallel to the Anglo-Saxon term "dropout"[32] results in a "misleading coexistence" (Stamm and al., 2012, p. 29). She mentions the official federal educational report (by order of the Länder and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research) published in 2008, which distinguished between early leaver/dropout/drop out of an apprenticeship; if this distinction is not consensual, it refers to different moments of

[32] Which refers to a longer tradition of research in North America that started in the 1960s (Stamm and al., 2012; Bernard, 2013).

premature leaving of a training course or general education, before or after the completion of obligatory schooling (*ibid*.). School dropout (*Schulabbrechen*) refers to early leaving before having completed obligatory schooling (*Schulpflicht*)[33]. In general, these terms refer to the "unauthorized absence from school" (Wagner and al., 2007, p. 23). As for the term "*Schulverweigerung"* (school refusal), which has "already been leading to a series of studies (see Gentner & Martens (eds.), 2006, p. 179 for some references), it stresses on the "internal" state of mind – as a result of the origin of this concept in the medical-therapeutical domain (Wagner, *ibid*.). For Riepl (2004, p. 7 quoted by Stamm *ibid*.), "*Schulverweigerer*" are the students who are absent but cannot leave school because of the school obligation. However, here again there does not seem to be any consensus in the research and "more often than not, terms are confused and the words become all-encompassing labels rather than usable definitions" (Coventry and al., 1984, p. 2 quoted by Wagner *op. cit*., p. 24). From a sociological perspective, it is a phenomenon that interrogates "deviance" to certain societal norms (*ibid*.), juridically and/or socially grounded. These different studies about motives and factors for drop out, the forms the phenomenon takes (physical/mental absences, length…), the different views (students, professionals, parents) have in common the fact that they stress the role of school structures, pedagogy and teaching arrangements in mitigating, triggering or even amplifying such a phenomenon. Investigating students' perspective in her dissertation, Anja Ohlm argues that:

"The research participants were eager to learn. Their aversion was not against learning in itself, but it was much more the (institutional) circumstances of the learning that they refused" (Ohlm, op. cit. :359).

This leads to consider the function of the relation to knowledge, which is institutionally framed and regulated, and excludes certain populations from belonging (Foucault, 1975).

Also, the German-speaking dropout research is characterised by its "practical" function: it often suggests solutions to implement in the school context, particularly with regards to the cooperation with the social pedagogy (Ricking, 2006; Gentner & Mertens (eds.), 2006; Thimm, 2000).

French dropout research is also characterised by its polysemy that emphasises different interpretations: "*descolarisation*" (Glasman & Œuvrard (eds.), 2004) focus on the role of

[33] In Germany, generally, children have a right and an obligation to go to school, legally from 6 years old until 18 years old. The obligation to attend school full-time refers to the 9th or 10th grade. After that, there is an obligation to learn a profession (*Berufsausbildung*), in case young people do not attend a general school (for ex. Gymnasium). Please see schema in annexe.

school arrangements and on professionals' practices, school "*ruptures*" emphasize the role of school and social structures in biographies (Millet & Thin, 2005), "*décrochage scolaire*" (Berthet & Zaffran (eds.), 2014; Bernard (2013), Boudesseul, (2013) (eds.)) consider the political and social whys and wherefores of this phenomenon, which is a problem of the political agenda that interrogates the non-compliance to school norms and have a diversity of implications as regards local and school policy-making and experiments. More generally, "the non-conformity with school norms interrogates the evolution of the appreciation of the role, the value, the perceived utility of knowledge" (*ibid*., p. 8). Favier and Moussay in "*Répondre au décrochage*" (2014) investigate this phenomenon from the actors' views in their work situation and aim to provide the professionals with intelligibility and tools in order to support the improvement of principals, teachers and trainers. Similar to German-speaking dropout research, French researchers, without denying the role of individual factors in dropout processes, emphasise social and school structural ones. They provide critical material to reflect individual ascriptions and socio-psychological profiling that tend to divert blame outside the school and the political sphere thus making students responsible for their failure. For example, Glasman & Œuvrard (*op. cit*.) as well as Millet & Thin (*op. cit*.) provide elements that help in putting the prejudice of "irresponsible parents" into perspective, which is embedded in the broader social question.

M. Esterle-Hédibel concludes her study about "transparent" students by arguing that the ambivalent recourse to arguments exonerating the collective responsibility of the adults, the school institution and the society:

"during interviews, principals, teachers, express feelings of disappointment or even remorse when they hear about a student that has dropped out; while they felt that their 'absenteeism' had serious causes, that insolence or violence hid deep suffering. But they could not, or did not know how to change their ways of looking at it, intervene […] to suggest another vision, because they feared the reaction of their colleagues, the complications that might result from them as regards their own professional comfort, of the engagement that it would demand towards a difficult student, free engagement, maybe at a loss and that would be followed by no specific recognition, whether from their peers nor from the school institution" (Esterle-Hédibel, 2007: 298).

In other words, references to this type of discourse (blaming the school, individuals…) always has a function for the actors, it serves certain strategies that the research needs to uncover because they contribute to reproducing, contesting, mitigating social orders.

Disciplinary anchorage and relevance

This PhD started in France in the Chair for Youth Studies hosted by the School of Public Health which promotes an interdisciplinary approach to the social world. My personal academic background, as was the one of my first supervisor in political sciences, certainly influenced the way such a thematic has been defined and approached through a first focus on public policy and the issues it raises: ideological framing, power configurations, implementation and resistance.

More specifically, this thesis is a work of comparative political sociology of education (Barrault-Stella, Goastellec, 2015, Sawicki, 2012). It takes place under the supervision of PhD supervisors enrolled in French and German different academic fields, respectively political science and social pedagogy (*Sozialpädagogik*). However, both share the common point of focus on empirical approaches to phenomena especially those affecting youth. In addition, the two thesis directors worked together in European projects, such as the one already mentioned about the governance of educational trajectories in Europe (GOETE). The English language was chosen in order to facilitate the supervision of this thesis by both supervisors, as well as participation in different working seminars in France and Germany.

The multiplicity of the studies in different research fields might make another such study run the risk of repetition. What new aspects can be provided by an umpteenth study about this phenomenon, while the pressure to "innovate" is part of the research design? One could argue that each scholar is unique, has a certain background and baggage that makes them look at things through a different lens. Another argument is that each period is historically unique and submitted to singular contingences: the social is something in perpetual movement. Scientific research is affected by the "post-modern" turn, characterised by "particularism, positionality, complications, lack of substance, instability, irregularity, contradictions, heterogeneity, situation-related and fragmentation – in short: complexity (Clarke, *op. cit*., p. 26). So is the phenomenon "school dropout" according to the elements provided by the recent and numerous research: individually related and heterogenous since each situation is unique in the combination of individual, social and school factors and reasons; unstable since the relation to school might change over time, for example through the configurations and availability of

resources to support at specific moments, situation-related because of the singularity of the interactions involved in specific places; lack of substance because all efforts to put this phenomenon into numbers or typification fail to grasp its complexity since dropping out is processed through structural, institutional, discursive and individual levels. For these reasons, all authors in France and Germany distance themselves from a (unreliable) statistical and categorising approach of this phenomenon by the public authorities (Berthet & Zaffran (eds.), 2013; Stamm (eds.), 2012; Hegeler & Rademaker, 2005). This leads Margit Stamm to conclude that "the diversity [of approaches, terms] informs about the fact that 'the' dropout does not exist obviously" (Stamm, 2012, p. 42). However, the discourse about "early leavers" does exist and it is an obligation of the research to reflect on this.

So my research can be considered as a contribution to the dropout research from a comparative perspective. More specifically, it aims to investigate the way a current concept of public action is constructed and apprehended 1) in the European, German and French political programmatic 2) by the professionals in the situation in lower secondary schools. Since "there is an ongoing process of homogenisation of national education and education policies in the European Union" (see Tikkanen, Biggart and Pohl, 2016, p. 37) although education remains theoretically and juridically the responsibility of Member States (see Maastricht 1992, Art 149/150), the comparison of German and French context aims to provide with elements helping to discuss this "homogenisation".

Before I enter the subject, I would like to comment on the choice of the scientific approach used to look at my subject, as well as the different fields.

Theoretical rationale and methodological implications: for a "critical political ethnography" of "early school leaving"

The choice of the methodology and theoretical rationale was the result of an "inconscious" start based on a grounded approach of my subject and primary reflections that ensued from it, which leads to approach it from a bottom-up or rather interpenetrated way . I will clarify some theoretical framework that will be helpful for the analysis of my data.

Preliminary considerations resulting from a grounded approach of the subject

The thesis contract had barely begun (October 2014) when I had the opportunity to carry out participant observation within an action research addressing the regional, "monitoring and support platforms for dropouts". These had been created by the French Government in 2011. The interest of the Region was to get a picture of these platforms (17 in Brittany) and how they functioned. The final report suggested some concrete actions to develop a regional policy against "early school leaving" (Askoria, 2015).

From the beginning I adopted an ethnographic perspective, which was a case of "to follow the thing" (Schatz (eds.), 2009, pp. 89-99) – in this instance, "décrochage scolaire" as a French concept of public action that was operating in the Brittany regional policy. As I already mentioned, via a decentralisation law (2014), French regions had been invited to build and organise a "lifelong guidance service" (SPRO) on their territory and to organize the fight against early exits. In the context of the research action, constant reference to the European Union was made. One might have wondered, to paraphrase an article on Europeanisation and reform of social policies within the European Union (Palier, 2001), why "does Europe matter"?

An approach of educational policy resulting from governance shifts

So, I started to inform myself about notions of "convergence", "transfers" and "Europeanisation" (Delpeuch, 2008). In my case, it would have meant starting a questioning aimed at exploring the impact of the European discourse on national and regional domestic regulations. However, the state of the research on that matter necessitates taking some distance from this kind of top-down questioning and from the fact that "globalisation [in which international organisations participate], national states and educational systems are embedded in fundamentally hierarchical relationships" (Dale & Robertson 2012: 9). As regards higher education, for example, Balzer and Rusconi note how the Member States actively contributed to the agenda that resulted from the Bologna process (in Leibfried and al., 2007, pp. 57-75). Such a process runs against the idea that all-powerful international institutions should discharge their responsibility when state political representatives, of whom many participate in European activities, display their helplessness in the face of a domestic issue.

From an article debating "the Europeanisation of the French school" (Buisson-Fenet & Pons, 2012), the authors emphasise that distancing from such theories lends itself even more to education. They argue "that the long history of its institutionalisation makes the existence of

'pathways of dependence' more likely, and because the organized groups that constitute it have shown their effectiveness in asserting contrasting interests." (op.cit., p.5).
Also, the GOETE research project, whose study focused on the governance of educational trajectories in eight European countries in the first decade of the 2000s, retains the idea of a "context of contexts" (Parreira Do Amaral, Dale & Loncle, 2015, p. 24). This means that one should consider the specific discourse of "early school leaving" as an object of study embedded in institutional and discursive frameworks, which takes different national forms. This, in turn, is subject to the influence of macro-social developments such as globalization or Europeanisation. The governance of educational trajectories, specifically on that matter, must therefore be conceptualised in the form of multi-level, multi-stakeholder and multi-perspective regulations (ibid.), as well as take into account professional mediations.

In terms of comparison taking education as public action, I bear in mind the idea of "fragmentation [...] less and less regulated by a single centre, crossed by multiple logics, [which] challenges the classic comparative posture between endogenous national education systems" (Buisson-Fenet, 2007, p. 386). This is exemplified by the German lower secondary school Hummel mentioned in the introduction which wanted to set up a dropout project partly financed by the European Social Fund but met with resistance from the local authorities. It illustrates, on the one hand, certain autonomy of principals in the way they design their school policy and interpret the problem of "early school leaving", while, on the other hand, they have to make do with local constraints, in particular in terms of power configurations and positioning of institutional actors in the children and youth aid (I develop this aspect in Part 2).

Public action can be defined "as resulting from the interactions between public institutions and diverse public and private actors which contribute to the making of policies. [..] Until the 1990s, one stressed the power of decision-making of an administrative and political authority and how these decisions were implemented. From the 1990s there has been a shift in the understanding of policies resulting from the action of diverse actors (central/local public agencies, lobbies, social movements, experts, etc.), which contribute to defining public problems and solutions" (Alpe, Beitonne, Dollo, Lambert & Parayre, 2013, p. 4). In addition, "discourses" as already mentioned, play a crucial role in framing "opportunity structures", which are the collective and individual responses to situations confronting us" (Dale and

Parreira do Amaral in Pareira do Amaral et al., 2013, pp. 30 ff.). In turn, "definitional struggles" reveal unequal power relations within local policy-making education (Gilbert & Henry, 2012). The down-top approach of policy-making in educational research is contemporary to the evolution of shifting educational governance characterized by "(a) post-bureaucratic forms of regulation (Maroy, 2004) […] (i.e. a shift) from unilateral steering to coordination of action; b) a view of education systems as complex systems which require a multi-level approach; (c) a decentralization of operative governance (school-based management); as well as (d) a turn towards evidence-based policy and evaluation (Walther and al. op. cit., p. 63).

Indeed, in response to the growing influence of international organisations and regionalisation since the 1980s, research work focusing on educational policy in France is increasingly focused on the subnational level. Under the effects of reconfigurations of educational governance (decentralisation) and increasing "autonomy" of schools (although this 'discourse' can be tempered as regards the concrete implementation of this autonomy, see later), it is at the subnational level that the public educational action seems "to happen" (Buisson-Fenet, op.cit, pp. 387-389).

It is from this perspective that Claire Dupuy's comparative work studies regional education policies in France - a decentralised state – and in Germany – a federal state - (1969-2004) through the concepts of inequalities and territorial integration (Dupuy, 2010). She questions the capacity of regional actors to autonomously design their public action in this domain. One can discuss the bias of not taking into account the European influence on regional education policies by invoking the principle of subsidiarity (ibid., p. 49)34, although the author cites the role played by the use of statistics produced by the OECD (knowledge production) by the German regions (ibid., p. 275). It can be retained from this work the theoretical approach focused more on the roles of regional actors and reconfigurations of power than on the different institutional settings to explain "the degree of territorial inequalities and the development of territorial integration schemes" (ibid., p. 171). In other words, the focus is on the interaction, mobilisation and positioning of actors – in this case, the region and state - grappling with education rather than the form adopted by the institutions (centralised state and federal); the work defends that this regionalisation does not increase territorial inequalities through the adoption of diversified measures of public action resulting

[34] Original quotation: "La question des effets de l'Europe, ou la participation des institutions européennes, d'une manière ou d'une autre, à l'élaboration des politiques régionales d'éducation en France et en Allemagne ne se pose donc pas dans le cas de notre objet d'étude empirique".

in different regional outputs nor does the competition triggered by international rankings threaten regional integration in these two countries. Dupuy notes that she cannot really explain the process of abolition of the tripartite segmentation of educational systems, particularly in the regions ruled by a majority of conservative-democratic parties, since this question is politically divisive (ibid., p. 57). Yet, my opinion is that the normative role of international comparisons is important, since they provide evidence of the positive effects of the comprehensive system[35] in secondary education (Dubet and al., op. cit.) with regards to the norm of "equal opportunity". However, I will show how the abolition of the tripartite system in Baden-Württemberg is subject to debate since the educational landscape remains highly differentiated and free choice has increased competition in this respect. Last but not least, it is important to note that, in Germany, educational opportunities and outcomes of young people remain highly different according to the regions in which they live and go to school. This results from the social selectivity of school systems, different formulae used in calculating the final mark (Abitur) and is illustrated by the different proportions of young people achieving certain educational outcomes or confronted with failure such as repeating a year or school form downgrading (Helbig & Nikolai, 2015)[36].

The actor-centred and interactionist perspective

So, the functional concept of education of Western educational system, related to the principles and norms of social differentiation and identification, can be summarized as such:

> *"Education serves to prepare individuals to fulfil a role in the labour force outside the family economy, to produce citizens identifying themselves with the nation state and to introduce the principle of meritocracy mitigating the contradiction between equal opportunity and inequality. More recently, this function of education is being rearticulated in terms of 'employability' while the widespread use of the concept of 'competence' reflects that in the context of Post-Fordism it is no longer possible to define employability in terms of concrete knowledge and skills" (Walther and al., 2016, p. 29)*

[35] Characterized by a low degree of differentiation and selection and the absence of transition in compulsory education.

[36] The authors mention that the comparison between *Länder* had been neglected so it necessitates more research to better analyse the reasons of these differences. Possible answers regard the different composition of students, structures and resources of educational supply, demography, economic structural conditions (training and work market), parents' conceptions of education, itself submitted to the influence of traditional roles but also the mark left by the former socialist education system (Helbig & Nikolai, 2015).

However, particularly the educational institutions account for certain autonomy towards central authorities especially in the context of decentralization and deregulation, so that Jobert (1985) generally speaks in terms of "centrifugal forces". The administrations are "no subordinate to the state action but made of actors fully accredited to be involved in its making" (Jobert, op. cit., p. 668). The fact that organisations are constraining structures at the same time as they are being transformed by the actors of which they consist, has been conceptualised in different ways by Crozier & Friedberg (1977) through the concept of "strategic analysis" or by Lipsky (1980) in "street level bureaucracy". Both approaches emphasize a certain room for manoeuvre (agency) held by the actors of organizations in the way they elaborate their action in their constraining milieus as well as how their actions are likely to change or shift certain organisational frameworks. The perspective of street-level-bureaucracy which pays attention to the way actors in public administration have been selected, the conditions in which they learned their social roles or adopted their costumes (Jobert, *ibid*., p. 672) should be particularly fruitful in investigating the relations between, on the one side, state action in education, on the other, the way concepts of public actions are actually apprehended and implemented. More generally, this approach is complementary to the above-mentioned concept of "opportunity structures" (OSs), which includes "different levels and different moments":

1) discourses (such as programmatic) frame perceptions and lived experiences

2) institutional and organisational OSs provide the processual blueprints for work in educational institutions

3) interactions on the ground (school-level) are embedded and evolve in institutional and organizational contexts that set the limits of what can be done and said, are impacted by discourses, and are also crucially oriented by what professionals think is 'approprate', 'fair', 'legitimate' and 'feasible' (*op. cit*., pp. 30-31).

The model of analysis of social signification developed by Helsper and al. (2010) as resulting from different levels in interaction with each other helps to have a clearer picture of it (see Pohl, 2015, p.71 applied to the study of "transitional systems" in Germany, England and France)[37].

[37] These levels distinguish between 1) the level of the individual (professional) (individual pattern of action, habitus, biography); 2) level of the interation (structures of negotiation processes, interactions, practices); 3) institutional level (actors' configurations, professional orientation); regional and local level (configuration and supply of (secondary) schools, regulation of students' distribution, local policy, local environment); 4) level of the society/ educational system (national global) educational structures and VET, work market, structures of inequality, discourses and *normalcy*, history.

Horizontal and evaluative comparisons provoked by the existence of a European benchmark seem to make us forget that “multiple logics of decisions are developed [at the school-level], because of the various negotiations between teachers, students, parents, local authorities” (Derouet, 2000). This is suggested by a study produced by the Centre for Studies and Research on Qualifications (CEREQ) in France, which the title of their study, paraphrasing the national programmatic, speaks for itself: “‘All’ mobilized against school dropout : variety of approaches of a political motto” (Maillard, Merlin, Rouaud, Olaria, 2016).

This implies for the present study that “the phenomenon ‘school dropout’ (1) "[...] constitutes a social fact by its regularity in a given community, beyond the contingent explanations for each individual situation [...] [it] cannot be identified only with its institutional identification” which results from a socio-political construction”. (2) “(Which) cannot be reflected upon outside the perceptions, attitudes, behaviours of social actors in situ” (Bernard, op. cit., pp. 10-11).

To what extent does the study of how this “problem” is understood within the institution, by its members, with their different roles, status and personal experiences, inform us about the ability of institutions to “digest” the political recommendations in their own way and logic?

In a Franco-German comparative perspective, what links can be made between localized observations of two secondary schools subject to similar European, national and regional political injunctions in terms of the fight against “early school leaving”? We know that, historically, the national education systems “have been vehicles of social reproduction and state formation” (Green, 2011, p. 228) and that this socio-history of the formation of the Nation and citizenship is based on two different conceptions when considering France and Germany (Boubeker & Ottersbach, 2015, pp. 27 et seq.). One wonders whether, like the questions relating to “immigration, integration or equal opportunities” (*ibid.*) this different socio-history involves national differences in the perception and treatment of school dropout.

This allows us to define a methodological approach based in critical political ethnography (Dubois, 2012), which in addition involves the study of the (macro) political narratives. The second part, situated at the school level, focuses on “the actors, their practices and their relationships through which political action takes shape and life” (*ibid.*, p. 84).

The ways the professionals apprehend their roles, their personal backgrounds, the scope of interpretation and discretion they have of institutional rules, norms and of the situation (Barberis; Buchowicz; De Luigi, 2016) participate in the construction and actualization of the “dropout” issue as a rather individual or institutional/societal problem. Thus, it influences the

way they define support in this matter, to which extent, in which terms; for example, how this engages their institutional role or social person and the tensions and issues this might raise. The way representations and practices aggregate (as regards 'labelling for example), the ways certain actors struggle to impose different interpretations of problems and solutions; the way the internal balance of power and legitimacy tip the scale in favour of certain professionals/certain solutions, the type of external actors included, those who are not; all these elements participate in changing educational settings in favour of a better access to education.

The ethnographic part of this study is located in two lower public secondary schools (5th to 10th grade in Baden-Württemberg; 6th to 3rd grade in France)[38].

I assume in line with classical theories regarding the sociology of institutions that:

1) "an institution exists only through the uses made of it; no institution exists in itself; all institutions are defined by practices that define the institution as much as practices are defined by it"

(2) "no institution, however cumbersome, may require that the institutionally prescribed uses be actually carried out nor prevent non-intended uses from being deployed." (Dubois, 2010, pp. 37-38.)

With regard to the concept "early school leaving": how do school professionals define and invest their role within the institution, particularly with regard to this thematic, comply with the rules, bypass or revisit them, and what about the conditions that shape the interactions between professionals with each other and with students and shape professionals' perceptions of this phenomenon? How do representations structure practices in their institutional framework? To what extent do these representations, which involve a "common sense", personal, professional and institutional repositories, combine, reveal and reproduce socially structured elements such as class-based inequality or racism? Given the hierarchized nature of the organization of educational systems, the question to ask is also: "who is talking? To say what?" What tensions can be observed? What definitions and/or interpretations of the problem become more weight and/or legitimacy than others? In turn, which discourses are silent? Finally, what place should be given to the local context, the influence of elements

[38] See appendix.

external to the school, such as local actors, partners, parents, etc. or the national and international discursive framework?

To what extent can this study inform us about the conditions that lead to the analysis of the "school dropout" problem in collective rather than individual terms (or vice versa)? That is to say, to put the cursor on the responsibility of "school" arrangements and professional practices in dropout production rather than individual/environmental factors (or vice versa)? But also, how does the institution identify and define the limits of this responsibility and what does it mean for the reformulation of the problem which goes beyond the role of school?

The critical policy ethnography: definition and methodological implications

Critical ethnography as a research methodology and epistemological program belongs in the category of critical sociology. De Munk (2001) wonders "what critical sociology actually means?" He reviews the varied definitions available in comparison with other concepts in sociology (Boudon 2002, Burawoy, 2005a in De Munk, 2001, p. 2); but notes the problematic tendency to associate definitions of critical sociology with a particular title or name, which differs from one country to another.

For example, critical sociology is represented in Germany by the Frankfurt School and in the figure of Jürgen Habermas, in France by Pierre Bourdieu and those who follow his path (Munk, op.cit, p. 3). Earlier in this presentation it was argued that sociology is, on the one hand, critical as it takes as its object and project the deconstruction of prejudices, fetishes and social myths. At the same time, it has a second role, manifesting this via "a meta-research on its own principles, [...] possibilities and limits of one's own work" (*ibid*., pp. 5-6) -including the researcher reflecting upon his own stance and values.

On the other hand, sociology adopts a critical stance (in a non-tautological sense) "if it claims, for various reasons, to cross the supposedly absolute limit between being and what should be. [...] The universe of critical sociology comprises possible worlds whose reality is only a segment of the whole, not facts" (pp. 6-8); it is precisely this that guides the analysis of data collected in the field: "How could this be different?" (Clarke 2012, p. 31.) This positioning of the researcher, whilst analysing the data, aims to shed light on the elements that structure the balance of power and "negotiations" (*Aushandlungen*) in a given situation. In this particular work, the question of analysing what constitutes the problem is considered in one way rather than another, while highlighting the tensions and the struggles related to "definition" that it produces (Gilbert and Henry, 2012). Particularly at the school level, it is interesting to

consider it as an arena where different actors with different status and roles might contribute to a more or less extent to the (re)definition of the problem "early school leaving", for example as a problem resulting from organizational or institutional arrangements and professional practices, or as a problem resulting from out-of-school reasons. Also, these actors might struggle to impose another vision of dropouts, as the one which is conveyed through official guidelines or common prejudice (delinquency…). At this point we can apply a sociological critique regarding ideological concepts, as regards domination or power.

This PhD dissertation clearly fits with what Cicchelli identifies as the "objects of research which are today more than ever built by public opinion, social debate, political decisions [...]" (Cicchelli, 2006). As defined by Dubois, policy ethnography approaches provide useful qualitative data that offers a nuanced and realistic ground-level view of policies. Like him who suggests humanizing recipients of social welfare benefits by deconstructing, contextualizing and highlighting the complexity of debates saturated with ideology around welfare (Dubois, 2012, p. 85), my wish is to do likewise for "early-school-leavers" who are reduced to being performance indicators in a discursive context saturated with ideology around the "knowledge economy". The same wishes are shared by Stamm *et al*. (2012) as well, through her long-term research on dropouts, which aims for a "de-ideologization" (*Entideologisierung*) of the current educational policy discussion (*op. cit*. p. 19).

Dubet, French sociologist of education says, "that there is no research that is not based on a normative background, on a more or less clear idea of what would be a perfect school, at least a better school insofar as the sociology of education is a "practical political sociology" (Dubet, 2008, p. 26). This research is critical in the sense of De Munk (2011) because it recognises the normative bases on which it is centred that of a fair school that would be perceived as such by those who make it and live it on a daily basis. In the same way, Clarke whose methodological approach of Grounded Theory is applied in this work, "personally [sees] no space outside of politics of some kind" when it pertains to engagement and qualitative research (FQS, 2014). She further adds, "most qualitative research is committed to representing the voices of those with whom we speak or engage 'fairly' in ways with which they themselves would agree. By representing range of variation well, qualitative research also often gives voice to the silenced and amplifies the voices of those with less power or authority in situations."

My approach to the terrain pays great attention to the diversity of points of view, especially if these come from people or spaces that are *a priori* obscured or that are likely to shed light on the subject from a different angle than the most current and explicit viewpoints.
In the following and last section, I want to clarify the methodology specifically in relation with the establishment of the comparison.

Construction of the methodological frame

The schools that agreed to host the field studies are distinguished not only by the conditions that preceded gaining access, but also by their national and local roots, and also the specificity of their "clientele". This led to questioning the relevance of a comparative ethnographic study of lower secondary schools whose difference on the ground presents an asymmetry which at first sight seemed difficult to overcome in the analysis (1.3.1). Finally, after the first analyses were carried out on the French research terrain (1.3.2), and in conjunction with the first exploratory data from Germany (Baden-Württemberg), this apparent asymmetry could be transformed into an analytic tool based on the analysis of the conditions that enabled a categorization that considered whether public action resonated or not within schools (1.3.3).

Local schools and conditions of investigation: a surmountable asymmetry?

The French Research Centre (CEREQ) produced a series of study on the issue "early leaving" from education ("*décrochage scolaire"*) that showed how public action needed to be adapted to each territory because a series of indicators indicated there were local specificities regarding the characteristics of the issue; indeed, there are "areas of school performance" and "areas of failure", which mirror certain life conditions, such as precarity of work and income, solid or unstable familial and marital structures, parents' educational standards (Boudesseul, Grelet, & Vivent, 2012). In other words, relations to school and to the norm of qualification is, beyond social habitus and institutional environments, partly shaped by life contexts. According to the *CEREQ* experts working on this issue who aim to advise policy makers, regional and local public intervention involve policies "outside the school walls" in the social, cultural, familial, transportation domains. This perspective accords with policy programmes, which discursively stress on organised political action at a local level with schools in the centre of a network of cross-sectorial cooperation (see Part 1). In Germany as well, the

indicator "early leavers" distinguish territories which perform well from other which do not. Such cartography further stigmatises former socialist regions from West Germany (BpB, 2015).

If we understand the problem of "early exits" as being a regionally, more specifically located situated problem, then it is necessary to provide evidence showing to what extent the regions of Brittany and *Land* Baden-Württemberg are likely to outline it. However, as mentioned earlier, both regions can be distinguished as performing well, according to this cartography, as well as by Eurostat censuses (Eurostat 2019). However, neither region is homogeneous and contains places which are more or less affected by a high number of "early leavers" compared to the national average.

This might influence policy makers' representations of the seriousness of the problem. The thoughts of the project manager of the above-mentioned "dropouts project" ("*Schulverweigererprojekt*") in Hallstadt in Baden-Württemberg illustrated this quite well. To my question as to why, despite the best efforts of the above-mentioned secondary school director Hummel in Balenstadt (a university and economically dynamic city), it was still impossible to implement their project in her school, she replied: "because, officially, there is no need. Officially, there is no dropout in the county of Balenstadt. And for the cases that exist, the youth welfare office can take care of it very well (2016, p. 11)[39].

Despite the fact that both regions "perform well", they have placed – although at different times: 2007 for Baden-Württemberg, 2014 for Brittany - this theme on their agenda. This observation reveals the shift mentioned by Bernard (2013, p. 23) between the overall decreasing number of "school dropouts" and the political and media importance attributed to the subject since the 2000s. For Stamm, however, "taking participation and inclusion seriously also means taking the rule of law seriously" (Stamm and *al*., 2012, p. 12). Does this mean that Brittany and Baden-Württemberg are showing more particular attention to issues of social justice and equal opportunities than in other regions?

As a consequence, a series of elements conflate at the local level, which highlights whether schools integrate this issue in their portfolio or not. It can be assumed that they will when they

[39] Interview with the director of the youth organisation and the project manager 8th November 2016.

are located in an area characterised by factors speaking for the distance towards school norms and the norm of qualification.

The challenge of a French-German comparison focused on the school level is, in such a complex context impacted by movements of globalisation and localisation of public action, to "go beyond the juxtaposition of monographs without attempting a thorough synthesis" (Vigour, 2005, p. 5). If constructing a comparison raises questions in methodological terms, it is also subject to the influence of the opportunities and constraints of fieldwork and doctoral terms in a temporal context of time and funding.

In addition, I had to re-think what I had long considered as a "field failure" (Stavo-Debauge, Roca i Escoda and Hummel, 2017) concerning the comparison of two French and German schools that were not completely comparable vis-à-vis their local contexts and the public they welcomed. In addition, different modes of access to the field seemed to constitute a theoretically and methodologically insurmountable asymmetry. Reading Pauline Delage's text based on her own fieldwork experience in a French-American comparative setting helped in reflecting on how these obstacles could enrich our thinking on the data analysis and turn the "methodological obstacle [into an] analytical lever" (Delage, 2017).

La Balikan *Collège* and the Geschwister Scholl *Gemeinschaftsschule* (GMS) are two state-lower secondary schools, both of which welcome a population of young people from very modest, modest, average, or even upper-middle class in greater proportion in the German case. The proportion of students with a migrant background was higher in La Balikan, although that given the knowledge about *GMS*, it is possible that the population of this institution, which is less attractive to the upper middle classes, evolved in terms of less social mix and greater recruitment among the lower classes where families with migrant backgrounds are overrepresented (Böhl, Wacker (eds.), 2016, p. 43).
Finally, from a geographical point of view, and although again the comparison is not perfect given the different meanings of the terms urban and rural in Europe, the two schools nevertheless evolved in geographical and socio-economic contexts both similar and different. Different because the French one is located in a Priority Neighbourhoods, which gather low-

income population[40] (in German, "*sozialer Brennpunkt*") while the German school is situated in a medium-sized settlement, corresponding to a "peripheral urban concentration", surrounded by both dynamic industries and rural areas. Similar because they are located in the two French and German regions known as having the best school success rates and lowest dropout and unemployment rates.

In Germany, preliminary exploratory research (March to August 2015, autumn 2016) consisted of informal interviews with teachers met "by chance" as well as with representatives of the above-mentioned dropout project. Subsequently and as part of a framework of mutual accord between the parties involved, there were regular immersions in a lower secondary school (*Gemeinschaftsschule*, formerly *Realschule*) in Sollenstadt, a medium-sized town belonging to the Balenstadt County, a dynamic university town located in Baden-Württemberg.

In both the French and German university environment, it is regarded as a given that gaining access to a school for a multi-month ethnographic study is difficult. This, coupled with the temporal limits of the thesis and the fact that in Baden-Württemberg there were fewer resources (network, language, etc.) than in Brittany, made it important not to ignore any opportunity, even if it did not fit, exactly and a priori, with the idea that one could make an ideal "controlled comparison" (Vigour, 2005, pp. 91-92).

Also, faced with the feeling of "asymmetry" with regard to the comparability of schools located in rather different local contexts, the posture of the researcher and *a fortiori*, the access to the data and the modalities of their collection, there were two options available, both of them not satisfying. Option One was to abandon the relevance of comparability, and the 2.5 years invested in this research lost, i.e. more than 2/3 of the time and public money spent on this thesis. Option Two was a study that aimed at representativeness in the sense that all the sociological variables that might have influenced the apprehension of this question within the school but which would have been difficult to achieve within three years and would, as well, have necessitated the use of "mixed methods". The third way led to identifying some lessons from this asymmetry, and to use it as a "lever for analysis" (Delage, 2017): what was

[40] See Insee definition in English: "The Priority Neighbourhoods are a new priority geography of urban policy, established by the planning law for urban affairs and urban cohesion of 21 February 2014…" [https://www.insee.fr/en/metadonnees/definition/c2114], 26/03/2019.

revealed, for example, by the fact that some school principals were more receptive than others and were ready to open their doors? What do the quantitative and qualitative differences in the collection of data in both schools mean? Is this really an obstacle to the systematisation of actors' positioning towards the issue "early exists", and the societal, institutional and organisational contexts they are embedded in? It is not, and this is what this dissertation wants to show.

An ethnographic immersion

Among several establishments solicited, a lower secondary school classified "Priority Education Network" in one of the outlying areas of Bretonville, proved favourable to the idea of hosting an ethnographic research in the long-term. I was introduced to the school principal through Paul Jardin, a French teacher who participated in another former research conducted by the research chair on youth. I was personally welcomed by the principal, her deputy and Mr. Jardin, where I had the opportunity to talk about my research. The school principal opened the doors of her school to me and left me a very large margin of manoeuvre without expressing any concrete expectation in terms of result, apart from the wish to attend the final defence of the thesis. I was allowed to come and go however I wanted to, I was offered the chance to take part in school board meetings and Discipline Councils (whose audience used to be restricted), and the principal always agreed to let me participate in this or that meeting, when I asked for it. She seemed quite willing to promote transparency.
Mr. Jardin took me "under his wing" from the outset of the research, which consisted in organising initial meetings and presentations of the project to the teaching staff and attending some of his classes. He was very supportive in enabling me to obtain interviews with a few students.

From January until July 2016 I visited this establishment several days each week. It seemed important to be seen regularly so people would get used to my presence. At first, the observations were limited to identification of the various actors and their roles. As we will see, the division of intern educational work includes a larger number of professionals in France than in Germany. Gradually, I began to ask for interviews.

During the third month of the field work, I felt the "ordinariness" of the researcher who feels there is nothing left to discover (Beaud & Weber, 2003), while the back-and-forth analysis of

the generated data led to concentrate on the tensions between the different departments and professionals (direction, teaching staff, school life department, auxiliaries, employee for security and prevention), which did not immediately have to do with the issue “early-school-leaving”. So, until the link was found, I continued doing interviews, maybe I felt “useful” doing it. Indeed, it was rewarding to discover that many professionals were happy to talk to me about how they lived their jobs, sharing their views on school politics or national (education) policy in general. Often, I was “thanked”, and if it seemed there was more to talk about , we would fix another appointment.

The field work immersion was quite intensive during the first three months (January to March 2016), up to three, four or five days a week, from morning until late afternoon. I recognized how exhausting it was living the schedule imposed by the school on students and the non-teaching staff (9 am-5pm, except part-time workers). In student interviews, this question of time taken by school in their everyday lives, the fatigue, the lack of time to eat lunch, returned regularly.

The greatest flow of interview material came from the sessions held with the least well-placed professionals in the school’s organisational structure, which in general corresponded to a precarious socio-economic situation and professional status, despite the possession and accumulation of a number of degrees and qualifications. It is interesting to reflect on students' reactions when they observe (as is the French case), that possession of qualifications and diplomas do not reflect the common discourse that links them with economic and professional security, and social upward mobility.

It was these precarious professionals who led me to explore the possibility of a systematisation of school negative participation, which did not only affect the students. As I will show in Part 4 through a case reconstruction, individual positioning of certain professionals vis-à-vis education might affect negatively students’ experience of it, which however, refers to broader institutional and societal domination structures.

Guided by the sole ambition of understanding how the concept of “early leaving” was understood in La Balikan, my tactics initially consisted of being led by the actors themselves. Meaning that when they questioned me about my presence, the theme and the progress of the study, they frequently offered their thoughts on the subject: “Ah, have you been talking to ‘so-

and-so', she's the person in charge of dropouts here? "Ah, you have to see 'so-and-so', she's dealing with 'included-excluded' students"; "Ah, you'd have to attend the commission for students' follow-up; they are dealing with absences", and so on.

On the first day, Mr. Jardin, the French teacher who had first introduced me to the staff room, quickly mentioned some of his absentee students. Absenteeism quickly became a way in to addressing this subject because it related to a reality, whether in speech or in the organizational treatment of "dropouts". Managing the absences being taken care by the educational assistants, their office became a place frequently visited. Besides the fact that I already knew one of them, the generational proximity (age, career, daily life) favoured developing close links with these professionals.

On the other hand, some things were dropped quite quickly, such as participating in Discipline Councils after attending one of them. On one level, I felt very uncomfortable being one more (White) adult around a table that was judging a 14-year-old student, whose Kurdish parents who barely mastered French and kept their heads down. Another instance was that of a student who said: "please, don't throw me out". I return to this event again in Part 3 and Part 4, to say that his behaviour was differently interpreted by the school staff, whose status once again referred to their personal background, as well as to their place in the institutional and organizational hierarchy of the establishment. These "trials" could be considered as a means to reinstate the "symbolic order of the institution" and the pedagogic authority (of teachers) (Geay, Oria & Fromard, 2009); as well as interpreted as a moment that accelerates or completes a "drop out" situation. In fact, studies on this subject show that negative school experiences, ruptures and changes of school favour this process (e.g. Millet & Thin, 2005, p. 236). The institution seems to integrate this fact to the extent that it has an arsenal of tools leading up to the exclusion that allows the student to gain a little distance while still keeping the student in an educational relationship. But excluding a stutent can also be interpreted, in the light of my observations, as the price to pay to keep the peace between the direction and teachers.

I was invited by some teachers (but very few) to their classes. I went there with the notion in mind of discovering what teachers wanted to show me. I also asked to participate in a class

given by one of the “most popular” teachers, according to students. Who was he? What was special about him?

If the teacher and his teaching practice were not at the centre of my questions in the French school - even if pedagogical questions emerged - it became the case in Germany. On one hand, the division of labour being less in the German establishments (the German teachers having to take on most of the tasks which members of the “school life” department look after in France), teachers’ roles are wider. On the other hand, entering the German school meant taking on a teaching role in the form of a French language assistant. Twice a week, I intervened in half-group classes composed of *Realschüler* of the 9th and 10th grade (13-16 years old). I shared these classes with Birgit Rist, teacher of French, English and Religion[41].

From asymmetry to analytic leverage

The back-and-forth analyses of data collected in the French field suggested questions that would have been interesting to ask in a Franco-German perspective. For example, some analysis referred to the "socio-ethnic" problematic, i.e. interactions in terms of socio-ethnic oppositions involving hybrid categories combining belonging to the lower classes and ethnic or racial identification (Lorcerie, 2009, 2003).

It would have been interesting to observe to what extent and how the ethnic question emerged (or not) at the level of the German school, in the manner in which Axel Pohl had been able to study it in the case of the French, German and British “transition regimes” (Pohl, 2015). Also, an attempt was initially made to make contact with sociologically comparable German schools in the outskirts of Balenstadt or in Stuttgart. This, by the way, informs about a similarity between French and German schools to concentrate certain clientele in specific establishments.

This quest was unsuccessful, however, with the failure of a participant observation in Balenstadt (Hummel’s school, see previously). This was a lower secondary school formerly known as *Haupt-* and *Realschule*, now known as *Werkreal-* and *Gemeinschaftsschule*, which

[41] Indeed, another different between French and German teachers consists of the number of subjects they have to teach, at least two of them for German teachers. See part 3.

was known to welcome more people from working-class backgrounds and / or immigrants than *Realschule* or *Gymnasien* (Böhl & Wacker (eds.), 2016, pp. 30-38).

One can only wonder how and why the "ethnic" problematic manifests itself at La Balikan. Is it just a product of the local context? Or asymmetric representativness of the professional body, on the one hand, their clientele on the other? Actually, the utilization of the ethnic argument in both contexts in negative and positive meaning but in different proportions cannot be separated from 1) individual properties and status 2) the ways that working conditions are apprehended 3) stereotypes and prejudice.

We need to note here that the "socio-ethnic" issue, or rather its institutional construction and effects in youths' trajectories in education and in transition from education and training has already been investigated in different French-German comparative works already (e.g. Boubeker & Ottersbach, 2015; Pohl, 2015; King, Müller, 2013; Groh-Samberg, Jossin, Keller, Tucci, 2012).

The conditions of inquiry at Geschwister Scholl *GMS* were very different from those at La Balikan. As already mentioned, my perspective there was more through the classroom. I intervened twice a week teaching two hours in a row (45 minutes). I spent some time in the teachers' room as well. I quickly asked Friedrich Markel, the school principal, whether he would allow me to carry out my research field in his school. After asking some questions about the subject and the conditions of this investigation, he g*ave* his consent and also put himself at my disposal if necessary. Unlike in La Balikan, however, there was no group mail to inform other professionals of my presence and role. They discovered in due course the second reason for my presence (after teaching). Many found the subject of the research interesting but always seemed to be surprised that I "chose" this school: it might be a problem at *Haupt-*, *Werkreal-* or *Berufschule*, but it was not really a problem "here". Nevertheless, it was still interesting to question why in some schools it is perceived as a problem and why in others it is not. I did not feel the same freedom as in La Balikan, and my observations were limited to my official "integration". If the subject "*décrochage scolaire*" seemed to speak to everyone in La Balikan, in the Geschwister Scholl *GMS* it was absolutely not the case. Instead, the changing setting from *Realschule* to *Gemeinschaftsschule* was topical. So the data collected in this German lower secondary school is mainly based on observations in the

classroom and teachers' room, my interactions with teachers and on interviews with some of them, as well as with the principal, one of the school social workers and one of the "afternoon supervisor" ("*Nachmittagsbetreuung"*), as well as with some students.

This posture allowed us to be clear which issues are directly related to teaching as an activity. Beyond the asymmetry linked to the different survey conditions across institutions, this teaching experience made it possible to fully appreciate the difficulties and daily tasks faced by teachers in institutions subject to structural reforms, with large classes of heterogeneous levels and singular individuals, which need to be managed in a "differentiated" yet "collective" way.

How an approach could be handled in the Geschwister Scholl *GMS* where this subject was not "displayed" as in the school La Balikan and the conditions of access to the internal functioning so different? In reality, these reflections were produced in parallel to the process of theorizing and confirmed the approach of the street-level-bureaucracy where top-down pre-constructed problems are reinterpreted on the ground (and not automatically integrated / reflected). That is to say, I had to find out why it was not perceived as a problem: were there other issues that take centre stage?

From a comparative point of view, what elements found in the two schools will enable us to go beyond the contextual singularities of the individual schools and the constructed nature of the concept of "early school leaving"? What can be learned from an empirical research, which is not focused on the question: who perform best? How does it allow to identify the origins of common problems across these two institutions, which face multiple and demanding expectations such as producing social justice, cohesion in plural and multicultural societies, economic integration in changing production settings ("knowledge economy") (Dubet and al. 2010, p. 181) and where education and training are to be seen lifelong. A school which ought to produce "enlightened, responsible and reflective" individuals (Heymann, 2013, p. 32 in Böhl & Wacker (eds.) 2016, p. 193), whose reflections might conduct to put into perspective the current educational settings based on concurrence and performance-oriented: "change the system, not the climate" says one of the famous leading banderols of students' demonstration for the climate in France and Germany. Investigating the issue "early leaving" could be seen as a way to inform about students' and professionals' scepticism that could lead to rethink the role of school in the current time where the urgent climate issues sign the end of a production and societal system based on mass consumption.

Harvesting and analysing the data

The data collected from the different terrains consist of semi-structured interviews based on a diagram proposed by Cornelia Helfferisch (2011). The questions formulated fairly openly and generally, were intended to include in the exchange any professional body and students involved in the educational activity. The interview guide was refined and stabilised as it was put to the test during the exploratory phases, back and forth between the production of the data and analysis, as well as feedback received during seminars between peer reviews or monitoring by the committee and / or the thesis supervisor. The questions asked in the interviews were intended to give an idea of the following topics: professional role and experience, institutional constraints / opportunities, institutional and institutional functioning of the institution, working conditions and teamwork in order to grasp the structural, institutional, discursive and individual-related elements shaping their perceptions of the problem "early-school-leaving".

The same basic guide was used for German and French terrains. From a practical point of view, the techniques employed were based upon, both in the collection and in the analysis of the data, on various handbooks particularly the one of Beaud and Weber (2003), Clarke (2012, see box 1) as well as methodological guiding text (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The interview guide for professionals is based on three points: their background and role within the institution, their vision of the problem of "early school leaving" and how the institution, in their opinion, deals with that question. The last part questions, in the conditional, what it would be necessary to change in order to improve things and / or to solve the problems that they encounter daily in their practice - in connection or not with the principal thematic. Progressively, it became routine to end the interview with an invitation to add or clarify something that was not addressed in the conversation. Frequently the interviewee willingly continued the discussion - once we left the formal framework of the interview and that perhaps because the recorder was switched off - by bringing interesting elements to the topic.

Another separate interview guide was designed later to try to capture the different positions students fulfilled in the establishment with regard to the following themes: pleasure with being or not in the school and the reasons, absenteeism/ playing truant, their experience with

different professionals, their knowledge/practice of accompanying and support measures, their relationship to the future (guidance), and their daily life outside school. Some of the results will be integrated in the dissertation, as they help to put professionals' perceptions into perspective.

The observations were re-transcribed in a field journal and some developed in the form of field protocols and memos and coded in parallel with the interviews.

In order to take into account all the complexity of public education that was reported, including the presence of supranational discourses and the role of non-human objects such as the use of new technologies and tools computer science, the methodological tools of situational analysis developed by the American Adele E. Clarke (2012) in the framework of Grounded Theory (see Box 1) were used.

BOX 1

"Building on and extending Strauss's work, situational analyses offer three main cartographic approaches:

1. Situational maps that lay out the major human, nonhuman, discursive, and other elements in the research situation of concern and provoke analyses of relations among them;
2. Social worlds/arenas maps that lay out the collective actors, key nonhuman elements, and the arena(s) of commitment within which they are engaged in ongoing negotiations, or meso-level interpretations of the situation; and
3. Positional maps that lay out the major positions taken, and not taken, in the data vis-à-vis particular discursive axes of variation and difference, concern, and controversy surrounding complicated issues in the situation".

In Clarke E. Adele, 2003, "Situational Analyses: Grounded Theory Mapping After the Postmodern Turn" in Symbolic Interaction, Volume 26, Nr. 4, p. 554

As pointed out by Corbin and Strauss, "analysts have to follow their instincts about what seems to be important in [...] Analysis is, for a large part, intuitive [...]" (Corbin & Anselm, 2008, p. 71). Also, these are the emotionally significant interviews that, intuitively, seemed to us the most "significant" in terms of the incidents that were first recorded and carefully analysed (Beaud and Weber, 2003, p. 238). On the other hand, access to the field having been

more restricted in the German establishment and the differentiation of the professionals working there being less, one proceeded to more targeted and less numerous interviews on the German territory.

Not all the French interviews, which are numerous in comparison with the German terrain, have been transcribed or analysed. During field research, there was sometimes a tendency to give in to the “stacking” of the data. Several reasons can be invoked here, starting with those that draw on those mentioned by Beaud and Weber (2003) on the fear of lack of completeness; that very completeness that tends to be associated with a guarantee of scientific rigour. There is also the fact that this doctorate is my first rigorous study employing an appropriation of grounded methodology and the ethnographic approach. While the University of Bretonville is known for its block of representatives of eminent researchers in this field, it was not until quite late in the process that I was able to participate in some of the various training opportunities available.

In addition to the different disciplinary traditions, it was necessary to acclimatize to very different academic and supervisory cultures of doctoral work. This, coupled with the demanding mastery of the German language in a scientific context, helped to make the appropriation of the Grounded Theory a slow process in which it was necessary to learn to "Investigate. Fail. Investigate again. Fail again. Fail better "(Stavo-Debauge, Roca i Escoda & Hummel, 2017).

This being said, I would like to clarify in the first part the narrative in which the political priority given to fighting against “early school leaving” is embedded, its justification and the solutions advocated. In part 2, part 3 and part 4, I will investigate how the school actors (respectively principals, teachers and “others”) position themselves towards this discourse and political watchword.

Part 1
“Early-school-leaving” as a discursive opportunity structure

1 The discourse “early school leaving”

When one considers the role of the state in ensuring social cohesion, implying limiting the effects of social dissociation resulting from social contradictions inherent to integrative processes[42], the concept “early school leaving” is to be understood as a concept aiming to trigger some type of political action (Bernard, 2013), which presumes a work of intellectual invention (Jobert, 1985). This section aims to clarify the whys and wherefores of the concept of discourse and particularly in relation to “early school leaving”. It is essential to understand some governance shifts of education, as well as the focus on the school level in this research, since school is considered as the core institution from which the fight against early school leaving in relation with societal issues is to be organised.

1.1 Definition

Turning a social phenomenon into a social issue presumes embedding this issue in a narrative that aims to orientate political action. It creates opportunities, as it informs about certain order and power relations.

1.1.1 The discourse “early school leaving” as a “discursive opportunity structure”

A “discourse” is “a set of meanings, rules and practices manifested in language use, that orientates the social construction of our political and social relations and institutions […] which has practical consequences for the social world” (Dale & Pareira do Amaral, in Pareira do Amaral, Dale & Loncle, 2015, p. 68). A discursive opportunity structure “set the boundaries of the political, cultural or symbolic opportunities that determine what kind of ideas become visible for the public, resonate with public opinion and are held to be legitimate by the audience (Kriesi, 2008, p. 72, quoted by *ibid*. p. 32). In this respect, the discourse about

[42] School is a very good example of it, especially when its structures are selective: it role is in the same time inclusive and exclusive (Stauber and al., op. cit.). So, education policy can be read in the same time as a labour policy and as a policy of socialisation (Jobert and al., 1985, p. 662).

“early school leaving” in the field of policy making is a result of a contructive process, which is shaped by a global “cognitive matrix” (Muller, 2000, p. 206)[43] that entails a global conception of society, a vision of the world and ‘narratives’ that promoters of political action refer to in order to make their actions necessary and build their reformative projects (Bernard *in* Berthet & Zaffran (eds.), 2014, p. 67). Such discourses empower certain actors and make others less visible or even invisible, it supports certain but unstable power relations. The fact that “early school leaving” is a problem is part of a larger narrative called the “knowledge society”. In the framework of the European project, this is submitted to a “critical revision of entire education and training systems” (EC, 2013, p. 25).

Esterle-Hedibel, an expert on the thematic of negative school participation, underlines that there are “today few authors that stand up for the idea of a ‘voluntary descolarisation’, such as Ivan Illitch in his essay on a ‘society without school’” (1971) (Esterle-Hedibel, 2006, p. 43). Indeed, the literature agrees on the fact that early-school-leaving is a problem for societies entering a new stage of development characterised by the importance of “knowledge” in all aspects of social and economic life. The study of (policy-framing) discourse is particularly crucial as regards the following of this dissertation because they do not only support the “normalization and institutionalization of particular views, values and norms […] [But] impact on the definition of a ‘normal’ life course and educational trajectory, on the relevance and usefulness of education and on the criteria for identifying individuals who are considered as in need of support. Discourses affect the social representations of particular groups [such as the school actors], thus influencing how individuals position themselves subjectively” (Stauber and al., p. 107). While the major part of this work consists in questioning the subjective positioning of professionals in school, it is interesting to observe or identify how far such a discourse is referred to (in its normative fundaments) or if their positioning provide elements to criticize it.

The following quotation is interesting regarding this, as it concretely illustrate the definition of what a “discursive opportunity structure” is :

> *“Nowadays, it is called 'décrochage scolaire’. It has become a case study, and you can tell that by the fact you’re here today; it’s a business, an economic matter, it has become a political issue … It concerns … everyone. It creates jobs. I am fully aware that a pile of 'flies' – if I may say – is gravitating behind that.” (An*

[43] I am referring to the publication of the “*Revue française de science politique*” (2000) entitled “Les approches cognitives des politiques publiques”, to which Muller, Surel, Sabatier, Schlager, Radaelli, Fouilleux, Bezes, Simoulin have contributed.

interview with a French education civil servant employed as an orientation advisor; 17/09/2015)[44]

"*Décrochage scolaire*"[45] gives consistency to many social activities, not only educational ones, as the actor points out when emphasising the economic aspects the term refers to for him. The term of "flies" informs about his scepticism. In fact, the voice and interests of young "dropouts" may disappear behind the interests of institutions, professionals… who need them in order to exist.

1.1.2 The enforcement of the political rationality

According to Peter Miller's and Nikolas Rose's theorisation of the Foucauldian concept of governmentally, "in advanced liberal democracies, dealing with the social world proceeds, on the one hand, from specific *ways of thinking* like 'rationality' or 'political rationality' that reduce the social world to calculations and programmes. On the other hand, dealing with the social world also refers to specific *ways of doing* that is, 'technologies' that translate that rationality in action programmes, which aim to govern populations" (2008, pp. 14-16, quoted in Caron & Soulière, 2013, p. 433).

The discourse about "early school leaving" is embedded in a narrative that "thinks the world" (in which "early leavers" are a problem), but also that disseminates ways of dealing with this world that involves governing issues and principles.. "Dropouts" could be seen as Foucauldian "figures of transaction" (like "madness"), that is, as figures that are "interfacing between those who govern and those who are governed" and who are the product resulting "from power relations and their constant escape from these relations" (Foucault, 2004, p. 300).

I mentioned in the introduction how the norm concerning school attendance and the achievement of a certain level of qualification in France and Germany has regularly been the object of political mobilisation. The establishment of compulsory schooling has faced many challenges in the past and in the time of child labour was a familial economic security. The norms of compulsory schooling and achievement also interrogate the capacity of public authorities to provide families and individuals with actual and equal possibilities of access to education. It thus interrogates more broadly social policies and local infrastructure. As recalls

[44] Original quotation: "[…] Maintenant on nomme ça décrochage. C'est devenu un objet d'étude, la preuve vous êtes là, c'est un business, c'est un objet économique, c'est devenu un enjeu politique… C'est... tout le monde. Ça génère de l'emploi. Et j'ai bien conscience que derrière ce mot-là gravite un tas de " mouches" entre guillemets" (Directeur d'un Centre d'Information et d'Orientation, Bretagne, 17.09.15)

[45] The French translation of the European concept "early school leaving" aiming at reducing "early exits" from education, see after.

Ricking for Germany, "the duty and obligation of the state to reach all students and provide them with the appropriate, sufficient and reachable network of schools could be fufilled at the end of the 19th century only […] on the other hand, until the beginning of the 20th century, parents were generally free to decide about sending their children to school or not but make sure that they could read, write and count, as well as acquire the principles of a Christian education (Ricking, 2006, p. 16).

The research of the French historian G. Brucy shows how the construction of the "problem absenteeism" in France at the beginning of the 20th century followed an argumentation in accordance with the objectives of the party in power at that time (establishing the re-born republican regime, winning against conservative forces). It focused on the fight against illiteracy, which could not be "quantified" with "convincing results" though (Brucy, 2003). There is an interesting parallel to do with the current programmation of the problem "early school leaving" on the political agenda. Today in Western societies, the level of qualification has increased for all social categories and in particular has played an emancipating role for girls who have outdistanced men in graduating in tertiary (non-vocational) education (OECD, 2016); and despite the rates of early leavers having decreased or remained stable (see introduction), the political importance given to "early-school-leaving" has increased (Stamm and al. 2012, Bernard, 2013). Another parallel that drawn with Brucy's study (*op. cit.*) and the historical issue of "irregular school attendance" is the stigmatisation of certain categories of the population, which are recalcitrant to obligatory schooling and, more generally, to the dominant social norms and economic model of integration based on a "stable, settled, and regular (industrial) work": so, local descriptions focus on children of nomads and foreigners who "challenge the efforts of public authorities to reduce the mobility of individuals in order to better control and integrate them in the industrial order". In the current discourse on "early school leaving", which categories are particularly targeted, and which order does it challenge? Accordingly, "early school leaving" can be considered as an "opportunity structure" for policy makers to orientate representations and actions of the actors concerned according to a norm of "universality" associated with democratic regimes (political participation, emancipation), that also entails a function of control of those who challenge the socio-economic organizational fundamends current modern democracies are based on.

As I will show through the policy texts analysis, the European, French and German agendas consecrate the legitimacy of everyone's right to benefit from a complete secondary education

(Bernard, 2013, p. 123). As for Germany, the "PISA Shock" (2000)[46] showing in international comparison the dramatic relations between social origins and school performance has "not only" put the "democratic quality" of the German educational system into question, but also made necessary a rethinking on the intervention of public (educational) authorities as regards public education in relation to the "modernisation of the social state" (Hegeler & Rademaker, 2005, p. 85).

The "modernisation" in question is to be thought in relation to the "complex shifts from a 'Keynesian national welfare state' to a 'Schumpeterian post-national regime', in which knowledge is a distinct and necessary factor of production (Parreira do Amaral, Dale, Loncle, (eds), 2015, p. 73). In this respect, the "knowledge-based economy" (KBE) discourse plays an important role in homogenising rhetorically the social and economic function of school. With regard to important societal transformations under the effects of new technologies, globalisation, migration, technical and social evolution (e.g. educational expansion, individualisation, women's emancipation, the development of a longer juvenile life phase, changing family configurations...), such a policy narrative aims to 'certify' and 'stabilize' hypotheses necessary to policy-making in relation to what is uncertain and complex (Roe, 1994, p. 51 *quoted by* Radaelli, 2000, p. 257).

Also, the issue and European indicator "early-school-leaving" is at the same time discursively framed by the macro-discourse on the KBE as it is a dissemination canal of this discourse. In this respect, the discourse about "early school leaving" helps to understand the normative influence of the European level on the shaping of domestic problems and solutions.

1.2 A subject to understand the influence of the EU on (national, regional, local) educational agendas

In the introduction, I mentioned Mrs. Hummel, a German principal of a newly created *Gemeinschaftsschule* (comprehensive secondary school) who would like to implement the "school dropout project"[47], which can be given a 50% grant from the European Social Fund. Such projects partly financed by the EU become part of a larger "tool box" that principals can draw from in order to "customise" their school policies. It confirms the idea that "formal

[46] With this expression, one refers to the first PISA-publication, which revealed that German students performed below average compared to that of other tested countries. In particular, it pointed to a deep correlation between social origins and educational opportunities. In Germany this publication triggered a general reflection about the "quality" of the educational system and led to many reforms, which, among others, aimed to unify educational standards between the different *Länder*.

[47] "*Schulverweigererprojekt* ", implemented by the youth social work organization A, in Hallstadt.

education is not an exclusive national prerogative any more" but is being reshaped in a "soft and multi-level European governance" in which European indicators and guidelines at the service of the establishment of a "knowledge economy and society" play a crucial role (Buisson-Fenet & Pons, 2012)[48]. The terms in which the project is written, the categories it creates, the types of schools which have priority concerning the application inform about framing representations according to which a "dropout" is defined and the "solutions" designed. It disseminates *ways of thinking* and *ways of doing*, which inform about "strong structural orders" and, "to a large extent work implicitly and throughout the agency of all actors involved" (Stauber and al. 2016, p. 99). This subsection attempts to clarify both of these aspects.

1.2.1 The indicator

The open method of coordination (OMC) is a recent mode of regulation, or instrument, belonging to the "new modes of governance" that aim at making national policies converge through regular reports about specific policies and performance indicators. These comparative instruments are supposed to make differences as well as good and bad practices "visible" and thus trigger the changes the European Commission hopes for without having to impose punitive measures (Halpern & Le Galès, 2011, p. 54). This method is particularly used in domains in which the European Union has no formal competence, like social policies or education. In "Political analysis of public statistics" (2014), Alain Desrosières shows how the OMC serves the standardisation of European social policies through "indirect steering through indicators" (Desrosières, 2014, p. 48). In this respect, Palier speaks about a "cognitive and normative harmonization" (Palier, 2000). Indeed, the quantification of human and social phenomena is an activity which has "socially and cognitively creative dimensions" : indicators and statistics reflect the world at the same time as they transform it (Desrosières, 2014, p. 39). Furthermore, this kind of governance - based on accountability - illustrates a

---

[48] Referred authors: (Ozga (J.) *et al.*, *Fabricating Quality in Education: Data and Governance in Europe*, Londres, Routledge, 2011; Normand (R.), " L'Europe de l'éducation : quel management au service de quelle(s) conception(s) de l'intérêt général ? ", *in* Derouet (J.-L.), Normand (R.), dir., *L'Europe de l'éducation : entre management et politique*, Lyon, INRP, 2007 ; Lawn (M.), "Soft Governance and the Learning Spaces of Europe", *Comparative European Politics*, 4, 2005 ; Nóvoa (A.), Lawn (M.), *Fabricating Europe: The Formation of an Education Space*, Dordrecht, Kluwer, 2002. Pour certains chercheurs, l'idéologie néolibérale influencerait fortement les politiques des États membres. Cf. Bruno (I.), Clément (P.), Laval (C.), *La grande mutation. Néolibéralisme et éducation en Europe*, Paris, Syllepse, 2010). Other research documenting about the change in the educational governance in the context of internationalization of education, see for instance Parreira Do Amaral, Dale & Loncle, 2015; Dale & Robertson, 2012; Buisson-Fenet, 2007; Leibfried, Rusconi, Leuze, Martens, 2007.

neoliberal way of governing characterised by remote action, guidance of behaviours ("*conduite des conduites*"), and self-management (*ibid.*, p. 53). Reports, guidelines, indicators, statistics, but also EU-granted projects or programmes[49] are "policy instruments" that enforce a specific discourse about things (in this case "education") - and materialise power relations between the ones who govern and the ones who are governed (Lascoumes & Le Galles, 2007). However, one should keep in mind that the state-level remains essential to understand how international normative discourses emanating from international comparisons are differently appropriated and reinterpreted (Parreira do Amaral, Dale, Loncle (ed.), 2015), although they contribute to "the reconfiguration of national and regional imaginaries": this is what Carvalho and Costa mean by "seeing education with one's own eyes and through PISA lenses" about the worldwide and mostly referred Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) which has become an "obligatory passage point (Carvalho & Costa, 2015, p. 644). For Fernandez-Cano (2016) it reveals the dominant belief in the "simplistic but dominant myth" that "economic wealth correlates positively with students' mastery of knowledge and competences, and that scholastic performance predicted on the basis of certain scholastic variables depends on certain characteristics of the schools. [Which] as a consequence, if the schools in an academic system fulfil certain performance-boosting characteristics, the wealth of the country concerned will rise" (Fernandez-Cano, 2016, pp. 3-4). The myth is so strong that "methodological shortcomings" and "inconsistent rationality"of such a study are poorly addressed or debated (*ibid.*).

In the context of the Lisbon strategy, the OMC in education aims to stabilize the fundaments of a "knowledge economy" step-by-step : member states are bound to reduce the number of "early-school-leavers" progressively[50]. Early-school-leavers are young people aged from 18 to 24 who "had completed at most a lower secondary education and were not in further education or training during the four weeks preceding the survey" (Eurostat). In this context, "school dropout is reduced to a measurable phenomenon […] which implies multiple formatting operations" (Bernard, *in* Berthet *op.cit*. p. 67) for national authorities, such as the definition of a norm of school attainment[51], of a problematic population, of coordination

[49] There are numerous research projects that have been granted by the EU regarding the issue "early-school-leaving", such as RESL.eu comparing the issue in seven European countries (2013–2018); RESLEA Simon Heid & Thomas Fischer (NTL) for German country report (2012); NESS (GB) "EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING. Lessons from research for policy makers" (2010); RESLEA Simon Heid & Thomas Fischer (NTL) for German country report (2012) …

[50] The first objective was to bring the ESL rate under 10% of the 15-24 age group as part of national population by 2010.

[51] For example, the German authorities focus on the *Hauptschulabbluss (*ISCED 2) while French authorities focus on the certification IV-level (ISCED 3).

between different levels of interventions, institutions and actors. In this respect, the model of "educational conventions" wants to provide with a theoretical framework explaining why dominant educational cultures (linked to the specific socio-history of educational systems) will influence these formatting operations (Bernard, 2013, pp. 98 ff. ; in Berthet, 2014, pp. 64 ff.).

This model could explain why France emphasises a rhetoric on "equal opportunities" in education given the limit of the "academic convention" but a long history of the defence of such a rhetoric with regard to education ; such a rhetoric is, by the way, to be thought of in relation to dominant (elitist) representations of education (Decréau, 2019). It could also explain why Germany focuses on professional education (meaning schools that offer the achievement of the minimal certification students to be orientated in vocational education and training) but do not question (at least in the texts analysed, see appendix) the position of these students in this system.

The beginning of the 21st century brings to light a new field of political intervention in education "based on the tracking and categorization of young people who are on the fringe of the education system" (Bernard, 2013, pp. 18–19), with a focus on educational reforms conducted in the name of "equal opportunities" and "inclusion".

Independently of the instrumental use(s) of references to the European context by national and subnational policy makers to legitimate their educational policies[52], the study of French and German national and subnational policy programmatic shows that these effectively share similar approaches to education in particular with regards to the European discourse. This one can be described as being shaped by a mix of "market" and "universalist" conventions that focuses on the one hand on the integrative role of school ("equal opportunities") through the support of "at risk" individuals (I develop this aspect in the second section). In the same time, "early school leaving" follows a market rhetoric, which is seen as a waste of public money and "talents" that schools have to be attractive to not be neglected by calculating individuals.

"Early leavers", or "dropouts" challenge the neoliberal conception of society. Such a society is submitted to the "concurrence" principle as a factor of social regulation, which has to be internalised by individuals who have become their own enterprise (Foucault, 2004, pp. 153-154) According to this conception, each individual is considered as a "capital-competence"

[52] For example, in first analyses of empirical data, I suggested that the reference to the European context might also be used as a resource to legitimate the new competence in education policy-making of the French regional authority in the context of the decentralization (Célia Barrez, in Josef Schmid, Karin Amos, Josef Schrader, Ansgar Thiel (dir.), 2017)

(which increases with its educational value). The following extract of F. Dubet's analysis of the regulatory "equality of places" model and "equal opportunity" model allows us to better understand the relation between the "dropout agenda" and a systemic vision of society. It explains as well why policy guidelines remain extremely vague or silent about structural inequality.

> "With equality of opportunity, the definition of social inequality is significantly different from the equality of places model because those inequalities, rather than being of position, are of the range of obstacles opposing equitable competition, without the need to question, *a priori*, the structure of those positions. Here, the ideal is not that of a society in which inequalities of positions are limited but that of a society in which members of every generation should be distributed equally among all social positions as a function of the aspirations and merit of the individuals in question. In this model, justice demands that the children of workers should have the same opportunities as the children of managers and will become managers in their turn, while the differences between these two positions are not called into question. Similarly, the model of equality of opportunities implies that women should be found in parity with men at all levels of society without transforming the professional hierarchy or its associated incomes. This form of social justice also requires consideration of what is called ethnic and cultural "diversity" such that this diversity is represented at all levels of social life" (Dubet, 2011, IV).

This aspect is particularly emphasised by the European discourse on "early school leaving". The French programmatic links the fight against "early school leaving" with the broader project of the "reduction of social and economic inequalities on school achievement by strengthening the support in socially disadvantaged schools" (MEN, 2014, p. 9). This is repeated in the regional report with reference to projects supporting equal opportunities in disadvantaged areas (ASKORA, 2015, p. 24, p. 45). The German discourses focus on chances in professional integration, especially for "people with migration background" who should be particularly supported, but also women (BFSFJ, 2008, p. 22). As for the regional report, "school dropout or the failure to achieve a chosen educational track means for young people that their chances are reduced in the search for training and occupation, as well as a high risk of not finding anything appropriate […] alternatively, they often enter an "apathetic phase" ("*Null-Bock Spirale*") (MKJS, 2006, p. 27). The discourse on equal opportunities is linked to issues in terms of social and professional integration. In other words, they emphasise the instrumental role of education.

1.2.2 The whys and wherefores of the narrative "knowledge economy", national and regional repercussions

1.2.2.1 The European discourse

European guidelines about early-school-leaving (EC, 2013) are embedded in the narrative about the realisation of an economy of knowledge.

The Lisbon strategy was meant to ensure that Europe becomes over the next few years "the world's most competitive and dynamic knowledge economy, capable of sustaining economic growth while achieving qualitative and quantitative improvements in employment and fostering greater social cohesion"[53]. At this moment, education is seen as "a core issue for Europe" while education and training policy must play a leading role in order to ensure that human resources are up to the task" (Eurydice, 2000).

In this narrative, "early school leaving" is a phenomenon, which informs us about the "healthy" or "unhealthy" character of national economies ("growth"), communities ("cohesion") and individuals. Investing in *educational achievement* (which is not explicitly defined, if only in terms of levels of attainment) is regarded as essential for individuals' work perspectives, thus economic growth and social cohesion (EC, 2013, pp. 4, 6, 10, 11, 25). On the contrary, the European discourse, based on "research findings", argues that "early school leaving and low levels of educational attainment" increase "public and social costs" in terms of welfare (unemployment, health, social benefits) and criminal justice (because dropouts are more likely to be delinquent) *(*EC, p. 11*). Though admitting that "studies need to identify more precisely the causal effect of education on earnings, health and crime (Ibid.)*[54]*.* In accordance with research findings as well, it writes that "early school leaving" results from "interrelated personal, social, economic, educational and family-related reasons" (EC, p. 12), thereby focusing on the individuals' environment, "advantages" and "disadvantages".

Besides security considerations, the European narrative mobilises a framework of reference based on the right "for all" to a completed education. It encourages member states to implement the conditions of "equal opportunities", especially by paying attention to particular vulnerable categories of persons (EC, pp. 18 ff. ; I develop this point later).

---

[53] Conclusions of the presidency, Lisbon European Council, 23rd and 24th of March, 2000.

[54] In fact, if some studies show some relation between no or low educational attainment and criminality, these studies are often referred to as "normative" and "judging", and mostly supporting security policy interests. Not only the causal relations between the early leaving and delinquency are questionable, but also the complexity of dropout processes, their interactive and identity dimensions (e.g. Esterle-Hedibel, 2006; Stamm and *al*., 2012)

In short, high-quality education is considered to be beneficial for all kinds of economic, social and individual outcomes.

These arguments are particularly relevant for member states, which are surrounded by recurrent discourses on "budget discipline" and "competitive economies".

Probably the most critical point remains the measure of progress defined in terms of attainment (quantitatively), which sets school attainment/achievement as a norm and desirable objective, which has as a consequence the stigmatisation of people with lower levels of attainment. Effectively the European project is undermining itself with its own logic; indeed, "the more we think that school should provide the human capital which is needed for economic growth, the more we think that each of us should be scholastically qualified, the higher becomes the influence of school on individual trajectories" (Dubet *in* Berthet & Jaffran, 2014, p. 11). And the strong influence of diplomas on life trajectories is associated with high inequalities and lower social cohesion and, because it boosts concurrence between individuals with different means to achieve education (Dubet, Duru-Bellat, Vérétout, 2010) thus in contradiction with the European slogan. Especially so in the context of changing configurations of wealth distribution and remuneration between capital and work in favour of the first one in Western societies (Picketty, 2014), parallel to the liberalisation of school choice and supply. Furthermore, in addition to the effects of stigmatisation induced by labelling such as "early school leaver" or "low achievers"[55], this kind of definition in terms of level of attainment creates a vicious circle. Indeed, [...] if the school system is essentially based on cognitive performance, the one who is judged as weak can only, at some point, leave the system (Bernard, 2013, p. 19). Stauber et al. (*op. cit*.) further argue that the "overstressed relevance of competence", as well as "referring to individuals as 'learners' de-contextualises their situation: being a 'learner' represents only one facet of young people's lives, who even within the schoolyard have to perform many roles, not only that of the learner […] it is exactly in this multitude of transitions [roles and topics they find themselves in] that educational trajectories are framed" (see Walther and al., 2006; Stauber et al., 2007 in *ibid*.) [56].)[57]. One can also wonder about the normative implications of the emphasis on a specific level of school achievement for the actions of all diverse actors involved (Glasman, 2007).

---

[55] EC, PISA 2012: EU performance and first inferences regarding education and training policies in Europe, 2013

[56] In itself this neologism is interesting. While the terms "student" ("élève" or "Schüler") suggest their young age, and position as "children" in development, the term 'learner' ("*apprenant"*, "*Lernende"*) is mostly used relative to the fields of adult education ("lifelong learning") as well as for foreign adults learning the national language (French or German as second language). Adults are mostly designated with this term. Behind the concept of 'learner', there is the idea of an autonomous person, working at their self- and lifelong development

According to M. Duru-Bellat, referring to other research works, this notion of competence raises "ideological" and "pedagogic" issues, such as its utilitarian implication and the risk to formulate, in other words, the Bourdieusian "gift theory"; but also the difficulty to assess competences, which are useful in specific situations that cannot be reproduced in school. On the other hand, she argues that reflecting the "rise of competences" has to be thought in relation to the changing world of work and the weakening of the match between school qualifications/work/salaries. Finally, it interrogates the "project" of education, which is not only the transmission of knowledge but also the preparation of individuals for the world that "awaits them", which is "not only the world of work".

Also, one could criticises the definition in terms of attainment by pointing to the fact that the most educated people (as revealed by the level of attainment) are not automatically more tolerant, open-minded to diversity, as attitudes required for a "greater cohesion" especially in multicultural societies. In the German Parliament, the majority of PhD titles are possessed by the extreme right-wing (AfD). Finally, one could interrogate the perpetuation of a normative hierarchy and division the term "knowledge economy" induces between cognitive and manual human activities, between the activity of "thinking" and of "doing", between general and training and vocational education (Decréau, 2019). The expression "Europe of knowledge" or "knowledge economy" symbolically refers to the historic international division of work between the countries who "think", i.e. in charge of conceptualising/ the "conception" of products but also attract the "grey matter" from other countries thanks to selective immigration measures ; and countries, which make in their factories what has been elaborated in the West[58]. Therefore, such a formulation should be questioned regarding representations about work and education which it fosters and the stigmatising consequences it has for those who are excluding from it or "orientated" to lower-ranked school tracks (Danic & Loncle (eds.), 2017).

---

through the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences. There is little research that investigates the introduction of such a neologism. There is no definition in the German *Wörterbuch der Pädagogik* (Böhm and Seichter, 2018). Moreover the authors seem to use them as synonyms for 'Schüler' or 'Student'. In the French Larousse dictionary, a learner (apprenant) is "a person who learns whatever is being taught in a specific framework ("qui suit *un enseignement quelconque"*). One can wonder about the pedagogic and didactic implications of such a neologism focused on the learning activity, which is not of my competence. It is interesting to notice that this term is used in both regional texts but not in the national/federal ones.

[57] See (Nil Idil Çakmak, 2017).

[58] (Pr. Thierry Weil, in France Culture, 2019)

1.2.2.2 National and regional repercussions

German and French national programmes addressing "early leavers in education" refer explicitly or implicitly to their commitment to EU standards and guidelines. France refers explicitly to the EU-2020 Strategy according to which European countries have committed to reducing the number of 'early-school-leavers' to under 10% of the 15-24 year-old population (MEN, 2014, p. 6). It also refers to European recommendations on how to deal with young people who are "not in education, nor employment or training" (NEET) (*ibid*. p. 9) and mentions European funding for the development of measures against "*décrochage scolaire*" (*ibid*. p. 21).

The cover of the German handbook dealing with the programme "*Schulverweigerung* : *die 2. Chance*" (BFSFJ, 2008) clearly shows the logos of both the European Union and the European Social Fund (ESF). Explicit reference to the EU is made on page 22 while guidelines encourage local stakeholders "to include in their practice the concept of "gender – and cultural mainstreaming". Doing so, the stakeholders "will support the efforts of the EU regarding the application of the concept of equal treatment independently of race or ethnic origins".

The programme against "*Schulschwänzen*" (school truancy, cf. introduction) published by the Ministry of Education, Cultural Affairs and Sport of Baden-Württemberg (MKJS) together with the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs mentions European financial support regarding the implementation of projects and models against "*Schulverweigerung*" (MKJS, 2006, p. 67).

Likewise, the research programme regarding the implementation of a regional policy against "*décrochage scolaire*" make permanent references to the Open-Method of Coordination (Askoria, 2015 pp. 8, 13 ff.). During the workshops involving different professionals working on the regional administrative entities "for the follow-up and support of dropouts" (see introduction), references to the European framework were constantly present.

European, national and subnational programmes share similar rhetoric in order to legitimise lower educational attainment as a public problem. Notably, it is frequently presented as a threat to individuals as well as to society.

In the French national strategy, the chapter "Issues and diagnosis" is subtitled "School Dropout : a human issue, a social challenge and an economic burden for France" (MEN, 2014, p. 6). This indicates that the French Government is pointing in the same direction as the European discourse in singling out the alarming individual, social and economic consequences of what is considered a still too large proportion of "low-school-achievers". At

that time, and as mentioned in the official programme, former French President François Hollande committed himself to "by 2017 divide by half the number of young people who exit the educational system without any qualification" (*op. cit.*).

In similar fashion the German Ministry of Family, Seniors, Women and Youth (BFSFJ) justifies the programme "*Schulverweigerung : die 2. Chance*" (2008-2013). "*Schulverweigerung*" threatens "individuals' future social integration and participation". Furthermore, "a lot of these young people won't achieve any qualification, making them more likely to be unemployed and dependent on social benefits. Thus, surmounting it is of the utmost importance for the future of (German) society " (BFSFJ, p. 7). As mentioned earlier, the federal project should promote, thanks to European Social Fund financial support, implementation of "cross-sectoral coordinating places" able to provide young people with the appropriate support for them to achieve at least the lowest certification available (*Hauptschulabbschluss*)[59]. The efficiency of the work accomplished by these "coordinating places" is assessed on the basis of the number of students who did effectively graduate (BFSFJ, 2008 p. 8).

The regional report ensuing from a research programme on the local administrative entities for the "follow-up and support of dropouts" (PSAD) created in 2011 refers explicitly to the international and especially the European context, which justifies national agenda settings in this matter and the necessity for the Region to address this problem (Askoria, 2015, pp. 7–13). It notes that the "early school leaver" category of public action "[…] pertains explicitly to the issue of non-qualification perceived as a loss of resources for society and constitutes an aggregation of negative issues and causes (school inequality, poverty, school dropout due to mobbing and victimisation, young people's limited professional integration, inactivity and deviance, …)" (p. 7). The authors refer to different theoretical policy frameworks, such as capital theory promoting "socio-educational investments" and to the "approach by capabilities" developed at the end of the 1990s by A. Sen, Nobel Prizewinner in economics (*ibid*., pp. 10-12, with reference to Berthet and Zaffran, 2014, pp. 83 ff.). These aim to inspire regional policy makers and stakeholders. Furthermore, if approaches through Sen's concept of "capabilities" have inspired recent educational changes in Europe, any limitations are pointed out with regard to the conditions which ought to provide individuals with effective freedom of choice and self-realisation (such as school effect and the irreversibility of orientation (see Verhoeven, Orianne and Dupriez, 2007). In addition, improving these conditions depends

[59] See schema in annexe.

greatly on national authorities, assuming they will have to solve many conflicts of competence locally (Berthet & Zaffran, *op. cit*.).

The German regional approach to the phenomenon particularly emphasises the "threat" that early-school-leavers represent "for themselves" as well as "for the society". For instance, former Minister of Education in Baden-Württemberg, Helmut Rau (2006–2010) refers to "information provided by criminologists" when arguing that "school truancy" ("*Schulschwänzen*")[60] increases the likelihood of youth committing acts of violence and delinquency. Doing so, they threaten the successful completion of their secondary education qualification and violate the obligation of schooling (MKJS Baden-Württemberg, 2006, pp. 8-9); they also undermine "current social values" ("*Werterahmen*") according to which "young people are able to learn how to think and act consciously and responsibly" (*ibid*. p. 8). The most alarming arguments use a security and moral-conservative tone and present the school as being charged with "defining a clear position" towards parents and students and of maintaining "strong values" :

"the augmentation of constant dropout cases, insofar as they are recognisable in regulatory measures of the municipality, but also according to criminologists, who see absenteeism as dangerous for the development of a complete and distinct way of living and maintenance of value systems up to the point where developing violence and attacks on private property, demand that schools and further social instances cope intensively with this issue" (p. 8).

For the former minister of education, the dropout phenomenon endangers the dominant social "system of values" namely based on "property" (*Eigentum*), which is the foundation of liberal society within which a new system of control and punishment developed (Foucault, 1974, p. 103). The position of the German former minister reminds of former Interior Minister (2005) and then President (2006) Nicolas Sarkozy's (rejected) initiative to detect potential delinquents as early as possible – even at preschool level – through early identification of "behavioural disorders" (a draft law, which also provided stricter control of school absenteeism at the local level)[61]. S. Giampino and C. Vidal, respectively a psychoanalyst and a neurobiologist, however, point to the development of a "controlling culture" in pre- and

---

[60] The authors of the document chose (arbitrarily?) to unify different concepts under this term – among other "*Schulverweigerung"* – qualifying the fact that young people getting out of school, although they admit that "there is no unique definition in the scientific press": "*Es gibt in der Fachpresse keine einheitliche Definition zum "Schulschwänzen". Unter dem Oberbegriff "Schulversäumnis" werden zahlreiche Begriffsdefinitionen diskutiert, die von Schulmüdigkeit, Schulvermeidung, Schuldistanzierung, Schulverdrossenheit, Schulflucht, Schulverweigerung, Schulaversion, Schulphobie bis hin zu Schulabsentismus reichen. Alle Begriffe haben eines gemeinsam: Kinder und Jugendliche entziehen sich der Schule (in unterschiedlichem Ausmaß). Wir verwenden in unserer Handreichung einheitlich den Begriff 'Schulschwänzen*" (MKJS Baden-Württemberg , 2006, p. 10)

[61] Law draft (21.11.2006 - *Projet de loi relatif à la prévention de la délinquance*).

primary school through the usage of diverse "personality" assessments, tracking-down measures, medicine… in relation to the "prevention of delinquency", which actually underlies adults' fears and institutionalises common beliefs (Giampino & Vidal, 2009). The orchestration of the rhetoric linking school absenteeism and delinquency leading to a tightening of security measures and control of absenteeism has been analysed by (Douat, 2007, 2010 ; Sälzer, 2010). On the German side, H.-P. Hegeler & H. Rademacker stress the different ways public authorities in different *Länder* acted around this issue from the late 1990s and early 2000s. Rhetorically, the justifications (and accompanying measures) emphasise the "violation of compulsory schooling" (as in Baden-Württemberg) or the thematic of "social exclusion". However, the common point of the positioning different regions adopted is to emphasise, although differently, the role of schools and school administration in coping with this phenomenon, in enforcing compulsory schooling, in clarifying the causes which lead families to neglect their duty to see that their children attend school. The authors argue that this can be seen as "paradigmatic example for the social responsibility of school in the knowledge society" (*op. cit*. pp. 87-88).

As a matter of fact, schools are in the centre of the struggle against "early school leaving" : they should boost their attractiveness in order to not "loose talents", empower students to "make sense" of their education and take care that "at-risk" students are under control. These "ways of thinking" are associated with "ways of doing" and normative prescriptions in terms of "governmentality".

1.3 The school in charge of promoting "equal opportunities" and supporting/controlling "at risk" students

The discourse on "early school leaving" enforces the principles of "equal opportunities" but does not put the principle of concurrence into perspective, which has already been analysed as a bias to meritocratic ideology. This discourse has also "technical" aspects, i.e. the dissemination of governance principles and techniques. The first aspect addresses the idea of school holding "responsibility" for the promotion of "equal opportunities" and "talents", as well as the control and support of "at risk" students. These discourses are associated with practical prescriptions aiming to frame measures, such as "decentralisation", ideas of "partnerships", and finally the idea of "empowerment" and "activation".

1.3.1 "Early school leaving" challenges the ideological principles of a meritocratic ideology based on "equal opportunities"

Importantly, "early school leavers" challenge the credibility of meritocratic ideology, which is a crucial narrative in democratic societies combining contradictory existential fundaments and principles: "equal rights", "social justice", "equal opportunities", "pure and perfect competition" are at variance with the unequal nature of individual properties and aptitudes, unequal environmental resources and the unequal structures of democratic societies (selective educational structures, social positions, incomes, local resources and infrastructure…). Guaranteeing the credibility of this principle is all the more crucial for national and international political elites of the West democracies, because it legitimates a structural social order and certain regulations. But this credibility is challenged by policies in the last decades, but also autonomous forces of capitalism, which have been contributing to turning "advanced economies" back towards "patrimonial capitalism", thereby undermining their existing legal fundaments, as shown by T. Picketty in the scientific best-seller "Capital in the 21st century" (2014, p. 571).

As stated by Duru-Bellat, who has been working for many years on this thematic, "In today's societies, and for the crucial purpose of economic efficiency, the principle of meritocracy appears, as never before, extremely necessary and as the only one able to conciliate efficiency and social justice as long as the most talented people, whatever their social origins, can reach the best places. With the economic development and the more complex division of work, the cultivation of more diversified talents is perceived as necessary. In order to detect and cultivate these talents, the self-evidence of education imposes itself and the spectacular expansion of formal education in the last decades is considered as the most efficient weapon in what some authors have called a 'war of talents'" (Duru-Bellat, 2009, p. 13).

Assuming that education and qualifications are key attributes for an individual's successful social and economic integration, the role of public authority is to ensure that everyone is able to enforce their right to complete a secondary education[62]. This in turn legitimates their position in the social order.

According to the meritocratic principle the individual's merit is assumed to drive ("successful") social integration and the allocation of social positions. However this ideology is only possible if individuals are not unfairly favoured or hindered because of characteristics

[62] The French Ministry of Education speaks about 'a right of return' to formal education for dropouts in order to complete their education (MEN, 2014, p. 9).

that have nothing to do with their merit but with their birth, the socio-economic status of their parents, stroke of bad luck, health, for example. Merit should replace birth as a legitimate quality regarding the distribution of social positions ; the concept of "achievement" supplants that of "prescription" (Duru-Bellat, 2009, p. 10)[63]. Therefore, the competition that ultimately reveals the individual's merit, acknowledged by certifications and diplomas, should be fair, that is, the rules of selection have to be fair (or recognised as such) in order to be accepted. In this context, the concept of *equal opportunities* becomes "consubstantial" to the concept of meritocracy while public action should focus on preserving conditions of fair competition for everyone. And yet, democratisation of education, especially in France and Germany, has not really affected the logic of reproduction and distinction described by P. Bourdieu and J.-C. Passeron in the 1960s and 1970s. National and international studies show (with a slight improvement in Germany) how socio-economic and migration backgrounds still determine to a large extent educational outcomes (CNESCO, 2016; Bildungsbericht, 2018). German and French sociologists agree on a qualifying the meritocracy as a "formula", a "necessary myth" (Schaar 1967; Goldthorpe 1996, *in* Becke & Hadjar, 2009, p. 55) or a "necessary fiction"[64] which is finally "a normative self-definition of modern societies to justify and legitimate social inequalities" (in *ibid*., quoting Solga, 2005, p. 23). In the French and German diploma market particularly, those who already own economic and cultural 'capital' have, of course, an advantage over those who do not. This is due to the fact that educational disadvantages start at a very early age (Stamm, 2012, p. 26; Bernard, 2013, pp. 16-17). Furthermore, there are still a series of elements, which are not (explicitly) measured by school and certification but facilitate people's social (and "successful") integration, notably family ties and professional networks, or make it more difficult, such as racism and discrimination[65].

Recent evolution in the educational landscape resulting from liberal policies (free choice, deregulation of the private sector…), combined with unequal territorial provision, social inequalities in and unequal access to education is likely to remain high (e.g. Krüger & Rabe-Kleberg (eds.), Merle, 2012). This, despite recent policies (Germany) supporting the development of "all-day" and comprehensive school forms, or the opening of French elite universities to social diversity through affirmative action measures.

---

[63] Referring to 'The Rise of the *Meritocracy*' (1958) by British sociologist and politician Michael Young.

[64] (Interview with François Dubet, a sociologist, Alternatives Economiques, n°228, 22/09/2004).

[65] Educational disadvantage and more difficult social and economic integration related to ethnic discrimination is a fact in France and Germany, although it takes different forms and might be differently explained through different available discourses, structural and institutional arrangements, themselves embedded in different socio-historical contexts (see Pohl, 2015).

The French sociologist Pierre Merle (*op. cit.*) sees the increasing development of comprehensive schools in Germany positively. My dissertation will help to give some perspective on his admiration because the German educational landscape, specifically in Baden-Württemberg, remains diversified (Tillman, 2015), not to mention the blossoming of private supply. In Germany, and particularly in Baden-Württemberg, educational paths are still very dependent on parents' educational level (BpB, 2014; Statistisches Bundesamt : Statistisches Jahrbuch 2013). The socio-economic distribution of profiles across the different school types is still pronounced (Edelstein & Grellmann, 2013). In 2017, a majority of students in the *Realschule* (59, 6%) have parents whose highest qualification is the *Hauptschulabschluss* (or *Volksschulabbschluss*) (20, 9%) or *Realschulabbschluss* (or equivalent, 38, 7%)[66]. The *Abitur* remains the most desirable goal, associated with better life chances.

The fact is that discourses on "early school leaving" rarely address social structures of inequality but focus on the school level from which these inequalities will be tackled.

1.3.2 Making schools responsible…

Schools have the mandate to realise the "equality of opportunities". All texts account for the long since highlighted role played by school in "dropout processes", such as unwanted orientation, long-term school failure, school "climate"...

The programme against "*Schulschwänzen*" is very clear : school truancy is also due to a "lack of quality teaching", "bad school climate", "fear of going to school", and "school phobia" (MKJS Baden-Württemberg, 2006, pp. 22–25). Schools are asked to offer "relevant and engaging curricula" (EC, 2013, p. 19), to "experiment with new teaching methods (MEN, 2014, p. 9) and encourage teachers to reflect upon their "routine practices" (BFSFJ, 2008, p. 7) in order to improve the "quality of school" and the "school climate" (MKJS Baden-Württemberg, 2007, pp. 22–23). The French government, however, recognises that "beyond the question of learning, the struggle against the phenomenon of school dropouts interrogates the students' relation with school as an institution" (MEN, p. 3) ; meaning that it transforms it into an extremely socio-political issue. This, by extension, cannot be circumscribed to individual schools and exceeds the power of their actors (not mentioned though).

[66] After the European classification (ISCED): level 2. Statistisches Bundesamt, official website: [https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/GesellschaftStaat/BildungForschungKultur/Bildungsstand/Tabellen/AllgemeinbildenderAbschluss.html], 10.12.18

In the European and national programmatic, individual schools and particularly their professionals, are asked to adapt their settings and practices by integrating reflection about "early-school-leaving" : why do students participate insufficiently or not at all in class ? Why are they skipping classes ? Why don't they get "involved" in school activities ? How can school be made more "attractive" ? More "inclusive" ? More "participative" ? "Reflecting internally" instead of "externalising" (BFSFJ, 2008, p. 7), is the motto of the German federal government to promote "equal opportunities" in reality. Schools have to support the most disadvantaged young people who are experiencing trouble at school: youth and students "at risk" (EC, 2013, p. 4; MEN, 2014, p. 3; BFSFJ, 2008, p. 8; MKJS Baden-Württemberg, 2006, pp. 10 ff.; Askoria, 2015, pp. 7 ff.) should benefit from specific and supplementary support in order to reach a desirable level of education, so that the narrative works. However, the different value of school tracks and certifications, which influence students' attitude to school (King, Müller, 2013, pp. 51–59) are not put into perspective. Furthermore, one can suggest that the same political elite promoting this discourse also creates the possibilities of "externalisation" (differentiated tracks, exemptions, second-chance schemes, 'inclusion' classes, etc.).

Schools are able to develop their own approach through the distribution of project grants mobilising them on specific criteria framing their action locally, for example in Germany aiming at the establishment of "cross-sectoral case-management places" (BFSFJ, 2008)[67] or in France projects regarding local experiments relating to "parents' empowerment and participation" (MEN, 2014, p. 23). The regional German policy programmatic advertises on regional "good practices" that should inspire individual school (MKJS Baden-Württemberg, 2006, 57 ff.). The dissemination of norms and ways of coping with this phenomenon is possible through specific technical support for individual schools and employees, for example in France through the establishment of "training programmes" for educational employees with the development of massive open online courses (MEN, p. 23). The regional "administrative entities for dropouts' follow-up and support" (PSAD) already involve the institution through the mobilisation of secondary school directors and educational civil servants.

Policy programmes stressing the role of schools in the fight against "early leaving" disseminate the idea that school *profiling*, decentralisation and local policy-making is the most appropriate level to cope with this issue.

[67] Education is the competence of the *Länder* thus this kind of indirect steering might be more appropriate to the division of power in this area proper to Germany.

In fact, the fight against "early leaving" is incorporated with the framework of a "state reform" (MEN, 2014, p. 7). In the future, scattered local initiatives ought to be systematised within a national, multi-level and inter-institutional policy (MEN, 2014, p. 7). Yet, the (national) action plan still encourages those local and diverse initiatives and experiments. Further, it says that "the autonomy regarding their implementation will be enhanced in order to enable territories to be flexible, in keeping with the trust given to them" (*ibid*., p. 9). Measure 3.9 will "secure and optimise" functioning of the local and administrative entities for the follow-up and support of dropouts (*ibid*. p. 20), the steering of which was attributed to the regional level in 2015. The French national programme also refers to the concepts of prevention, intervention, remediation as being the basis for public action (MEN, 2014, p. 8 ff.). The report from Brittany on regional policy makers also refers to those concepts, actively promoting extensive cooperation between actors from different fields. It also encourages cooperation along transnational and interregional levels (Askoria, p. 92). In practice this is coupled with the development of production and collection of data about youth. In the French programme (2014), there are two measures illustrating that the monitoring of students and their families has been strengthened. The programme clearly states that, "the measurement and follow-up of absences will be reinforced" (p. 16) and the "perimeter of inter-ministerial systems around the exchange of information (SIEI) will be extended" (p. 21). The SIEI software aims to collect all possible data about youth and their situation. The extension of its perimeter of application and its scope including out-of-school and institutional partners in the domain of social integration are seen as essential in order "to cover the dropout processes" (*ibid*.)[68] efficiently ('*optimiser*'). Professionals working in these regional administrative entities, through the collection and cross-check of "confidential lists" established by the SIEI with different institutions (schools, '*missions locales*'[69]), should be able to "re-establish" contact with those young people, and particularly with the so-called "long lost" (les "*perdus de vue*")[70] who slipped under the radar after they dropped out and

[68] Original quotation: "L'amélioration du SIEI est ainsi essentielle pour fiabiliser les données concernant le jeune (parcours, coordonnées…) et couvrir l'ensemble du champ du décrochage, en intégrant notamment les élèves en rupture de contrat d'apprentissage ou de professionnalisation".

[69] The "missions locales pour l'intégration professionnelle et sociale des jeunes" are local and public organisations in charge of supporting young people with professional and social issues and integration.

[70] The "perdus de vue" are a category that emerged during the meetings organized in the framework of the research action on the entities. The professionals also described those young people with whom they had trouble getting in touch after they "dropped out" as "unreachable", a category which has been integrated in the final report in order to measure the capacity of those entities to bring youth back to any kind of institutional relation (Askoria, 2015, p. 62)

who still lack minimal qualifications[71]. Participation in the above-mentioned research project, which resulted in the production of a report aiming to guide regional policy makers (Askoria, 2015) allowed us to put tracking of young people into perspective. Tracking activities seemed to retain the most attention of the regional decision makers, especially as indicators for assessing the activity and efficiency of the entities[72]. Instead, many professionals that share this part-time job with their main occupation regularly complained during meetings about how laborious and bureaucratic tracking dropouts was. In addition to IT issues resulting from the software, they also had to deal with many professionals and mentioned problems around lack of time, resources, and clear leadership.

The importance attributed to the "local", with schools as coordinator members of cross-sectoral cooperation can be interpreted in different ways. On one hand, by acknowledging the complexity of the phenomenon, policy makers acknowledge its "intersectoral" nature, which implies the contribution and cooperation of different institutions. "Early school leaving" as a (constructed) political issue opened an opportunity structure bringing different actors, institutions and policies together, which are traditionally distributed over different scales of governance. On the other hand, and according to New Public Management principles, the local level is seen as more flexible, enabling closer contacts with users and their environments. In this context, schools ought to be better equipped to adapt to local issues and specificities, in which their public is embedded. However, it does not address the issue of hierarchies and competence partitioning between the different fields and actors.

1.3.2.1 … for "wasted talents"

Rhetorically, the discourse addressing "wasted talents" contributes to focussing on individual schools and their responsibility in dropout processes, as well as on policies, which are not

[71] During the meetings, professionals said they employed a diversity of strategies in order to reach this objective. For instance, in addition to the traditional and conventional letters that many people considered as "outdated", some of them resort to SMS or social networks. Those strategies accounted for a more or less developed "system of action" according to the authors of the report that resulted from the research (Askoria, 2015, p. 80ff).

[72] Meetings at the regional government level included the authors of the report (Askoria), regional policy-makers, members of community aid projects for young people (*missions locales*) and representatives of National Education (local authority). The Region had invited professionals in charge of producing public statistics about dropouts (NB: GREF). These explained the procedure of counting (samples, measurement in terms of stocks or flows…). The organisation mentioned numerous limits and imperfections encountered within the creation of those statistics aiming for making the quantitative and qualitative inventory of dropouts at the regional level, as well as enabling their 'tracking' ('*traçabilité'*). I noted someone who said, "we will do it but we will have to match things which are not really…" ; from which the regional authority demanded a focus on 'non-graduation' and planned to create two committees: a political and a technical one (Fieldwork diary, 18/03/2016).

sufficiently "participative". According to a "market educational convention" (see above), dropouts are not only seen in terms of costs for society and waste of public money, but also as wasted economic resources in a knowledge economy /society. An "early leaver" is also someone who, according to a rational reflection in terms of "costs" and "benefits", considers the return of education as poor for their own interests (Bernard, *op. cit.*). Enhancing the participative nature of the educational system can be interpreted as driven by such a reflection, while individuals discover their own interest in participating in education as soon as they are made an active and legitimate part of it; but it also questions the technologies through which these interests can be influenced, since research has been showing since the end of the 1980s that "students must assemble themselves systems of motivations and significations, through which their studies are likely to make sense […] but they also engage in strategic calculation while they continuously assess the usefulness of 'sacrifices' their studies make necessary" (Dubet, 2008).

Illustratively, the French national programme against "*décrochage scolaire*" argues that "youths who drop out had suffered at school because they feel that their talents are not enhanced" (MEN, p. 6). For this reason, policy makers should "ensure [that] children and young people are at the centre of all policies aimed at reducing early school leaving […] as well as their voices being taken into account when developing and implementing such policies" (EC, p. 4). Through the development of more democratic participation processes, measures seek to increase students' adhesion to school. It remains silent about how settings could be more democratic. However, the fight against "early school leaving" is associated with a discourse and measures that claim to better bridge the gaps between private and public spheres, while particularly focusing on "at risk" populations.

1.3.2.2 …For caring, controlling, targeting

Drawing on Foucault's analyses, "school is the place where people acquire certain knowledge but also a place of corporal socialisation". In this respect, students who challenge institutional authority, which through the principle of "diligence" and obligatory presence exerts a constraint on students' bodies, "call out public authorities since the truant adolescents, who resist to a certain subjection, raise the doubt of their uselessness and dangerousness" (Douat, 2007, pp. 162-163). The role of discipline according to Foucault is to train a docile workforce,

produce obedient and useful bodies[73] (Laval, 2018, p. 41). It is also the place where "the Nation reproduces (or possibly redefines) the sense of itself" (Parreira do Amaral, Dale & Loncle (eds), 2015, p. 29), and where symbolic deviance (for ex. students speaking another language than the national one at school) raises suspicion and repression.

To explain the successful "youth at risk" category in the today vocabulary, C. Caron and M. Soulière refer to the German sociologist Ulich Beck and his famous publication *Risk society. Towards a new modernity* (2001). In this essay, the author describes such a society, in which the perception of dangers and threats guides social representations and practices, namely those of policy-makers with regard to an unpredictable and complex future but also vis-à-vis young people (who are not only delinquents) who are "likely to deviate from a desirable trajectory and future" (*op.cit*. pp. 434-436). In accordance with other research (e.g. Wacquant, 2004 ; Bourdieu, 1993), Caron and Soulière show how such categories support state regulations and punishing measures directed to the underclass facing increasing social insecurity.

As analysed by A.K. Gschwind, whose master thesis dealt with the concept of "education landscapes" (*Bildungslandschaft*), concepts related to "holism" (*Ganzheitlichkeit*) and "comprehensive education" (*umfassender Bildung*) actually disguise that the Power (*Macht*) of data knowledge, coupled with technologies of the self and promises of individual and institutional autonomy are following the governmental objective of the population's optimisation. Achieving such an objective implies the goal is not to generate personalities but to encourage self-compliance (Gschwind, 2015, p. 57). The concept of 'comprehensive policies', in the context of the fight against early leaving, makes us consider the way that power is carried out through technologies aiming to increase individuals' compliance to and internalisation of specific norms and demands.

In fact, all programmes promote measures aiming to reinforce the activation[74] of students in class as well as controlling students' and families' diligence towards education. Measures aiming to support the student in their learning trajectory should be coupled with a careful data and information collection about students' global situation and follow-up (see below, EC, 2013, p. 13; MEN, 2014, pp. 16 and 21; BFSFJ, 2008, pp. 12 ff.; MKJS, 2007, pp. 30 ff.; Askoria, 2015).

---

[73] This is particularly obvious with the current discourse about the enhancement of "soft-skills" and other kinds of competences that are supposedly helping young people to design their school career and improve their future employability (see Maire, 2018).

[74] With this term I mean activities aiming at triggering students' active participation in school setting and learning process.

1.3.2.2.1 Focus on precariousness and migration

The fight against "early school leaving" should be encompassing and address all forms of "dropout". In fact, "early school leaving" is not to be limited to physical absenteeism. There are "active" and "passive" dropouts (BFSFJ, 2008, pp. 4-5 and 10), that is, "potential dropouts" and "internal dropouts" (Askoria, 2015, p. 7). The phenomenon is wide-ranging ("*vielschichtig"*, BFSFJ, 2008, p. 6); it "concerns all territories, all social categories and all school tracks" (MEN, p. 3). Yet measures should focus on disadvantaged families. The shift in meaning is particularly visible in the German federal text, which promotes projects focusing on *Haupt-*, *Real-* and *Gesamtschulen*, which are more likely to contain "disadvantages" in all forms (socio-economic, educational, "migration") than *Gymnasien,* which are more often populated by members of the higher middle and upper classes. However, this is only a question of focus and representation: *Gymnasien* also produce dropouts (Stamm and al., 2012, p. 17).

Actually, this discourse particularly points at the necessity of handling specific categories of the population, with reference to "at-risk" youth, which mostly refers to socially and economically fragile young people, but also particularly to migrants (the "discursive equation", Parreira do Amaral, Dale, & Loncle, (eds), 2015, p. 34).

Thus discourses addressing "early leaving" contribute to the construction of "ethnicity" as difference and "disadvantage" (Pohl, 2015). Although such a discourse emphasising "migration" aims to promote a universal understanding of the right to a successful schooling, which ought to benefit everyone independently of race, sex, religion and social milieu[75], it might instead support the creation of measures which may cause stigmatisation, such as the creation of special tracks, classes, and programmes.

European discourse promotes a positive and inclusive way of dealing with young people from migration backgrounds or newly arrived migrants, implicitly recognising that this aspect plays a crucial role in dropout issues (EC, 2013, pp. 15, 19).

While Baden-Württemberg's guidelines recommend tracking down potential dropouts through their non-compliant "behaviours" at school (MKJS, pp. 11–14)[76] by looking for "typical" signs and factors, which might concern all social categories[77], particular attention

[75] France mentions the experiment of a "right to be back to education" ("*droit de retour en formation initiale*") opposable to education and training authorities (MEN, pp. 19–20).

[76] For example, through the 'abuse of notifications of absences' (Missbrauch von Entschuldigungen) or 'faked illnesses' ('Vorgetäuschte Krankheit Fehlen'), 'disruption in class', 'no participation'.

[77] Such as the over-consumption of media products, the preference for paid activities in order to be able to acquire expensive clothes and other products, 'bad relations' or typical teenage provocations (pp. 18–20),

should be given to young people coming from poorer social and economic backgrounds, especially those with migration backgrounds (p. 21).

Those at-risk factors are disadvantaged socio-economic and familial conditions, psychological and health problems, and a migration background. While this last aspect is modestly mentioned by the French government through the expression 'different national origins' (MEN, 2014, p. 4) ; the German guidelines emphasis this aspect. Measures against '*Schulverweigerung*' should even integrate it in the way professionals deal with this issue at the school level. This special method is called "cultural mainstreaming", in the continuation of "gender mainstreaming"[78] *(BFSFJ, 2008, p. 22).*

Policy guidelines contained in the programme "*Aktiv gegen Schulschwänzen*" underline this aspect as well, particularly mentioning factors of vulnerability through unstable family circumstances ("loss of a job, divorce, illnesses or death in the family, migration, displacement".) This induces "existential fears" in the children, which are intensified through "poverty, physical and psychical negligence as well as violence. [Children] also frequently experience an uprooting from their cultural belonging and traditional systems of values". Also related to migration are "language problems", especially through parents "lacking language competence". The lack of language skills is seen "as a reason to stay away from school" (MKJS Baden-Württemberg, 2006, p. 21). In order to overcome those language issues, the government of Baden-Württemberg provides principals with forms (*Elternanschreiben*) translated in nine languages[79].

The European and the German policy programmes are distinguished from the French ones by putting particular emphasis on "migration".

Yet, the charity organization "Caritas", which publishes regular studies about early leavers from school ("*Schulabbgänger ohne Schulabbschluss*"), states that the proportion of foreign students is not relevant in explaining the high proportion of dropouts at the national level[80]. Likewise, Wagner et al. summarise the latest German dropout research findings and note that the causal argument of "migration" loses its explicative power when social and cultural capitals are considered equally. Along similar lines, a French study aiming to consider the

---

[78] In *ibid.*. : "The application of the gender mainstreaming principle must lead to checking whether contents, social contexts and forms of services actually reduce unequal opportunities between both sexes or cement them (Richter, 2004)"

[79] Albanese, Turkish, Greek, Italian, Croatian, Russian, Serbian, Spanish and German.

[80] Caritas Studie 2015. The results are summarized in the following online article: [https://www.caritas.de/fuerprofis/fachthemen/kinderundjugendliche/bildungschancen/was-die-abgaengerquote-beeinflusst-und-w], last visit 29/05/2018.

explicative weight of diverse (individual and environmental) factors (independently of their causal relations) demonstrated no correlation between the risk of premature school dropout and the language spoken at home (Galand & Hospel, 2015, p. 10).

1.3.2.2.2 Encompassing policies and data collection

Those institutional measures which interfere with parental education on a normative level in the name of "participation" and "democracy" might be seen as a pure instrument of control aiming to make school judgements and settings more acceptable and legitimate. From a Foucauldian perspective, these policies can be interpreted as an instrument "of what Deleuze called societies of permanent control, a technology which aims to better watch and lock down social interactions while they demand more flexibility and availability from the dominated" (Sarfati, 2013).

Beside injunctions promoting "changing structures and curricula" (EC, 2013) as well as encouraging teachers to question their teaching (see above), there are the nodal places of "cross-sectoral and institutional cooperation" that cover all aspects of the individual's social and school life and trajectories, from "birth to work" (cf. Askoria, p. 101), according to the concepts of "prevention", "integration", "remediation" :

> *"-Prevention seeks to avoid the conditions from arising where processes leading to early school leaving can start.*
>
> *—Intervention addresses emerging difficulties at an early stage and seeks to prevent them from leading to early school leaving.*
>
> *—Compensation measures offer opportunities for education and training for those who have dropped out" (EC, p. 6)*

The EC insists on the concept of "comprehensive" policies "that focus on the root causes of early school leaving and that are able to reduce early school leaving in a sustained way" (EC, 2013, p. 12). The term "comprehensive" implies *totality* and *systematising* through the concepts of "prevention", "intervention" and "remediation" (see above). It is about tackling "early school leaving "before its first symptoms are visible" (p. 18). Thus, measures should address early education (in order to detect youth 'at risk') through to 'second-chance' opportunities for young people and adults who do not posses minimal required qualifications (EC, p. 12 ff.). Local cooperation between different institutions and professionals is particularly encouraged in order to promote a "comprehensive approach" to the issue.

Locating education and the fight against "early school leaving", for "equal opportunities" in school is associated with a discourse on partnerships aiming to bridge the institutional and private spheres. Such a discourse insists on cooperation with parents as "co-educational" actors. Students compliance to school settings and demands implies gaining, first of all, parents' adhesion, particularly those who are "less educated" or "disadvantaged" ("*Bildungsferne" Familien*, *familles "défavorisées"*), assuming that they are least likely to comply with school demands and functioning.

> *Schools should develop specific outreach programmes to encourage the active participation and representation of vulnerable parents and families, such as those from low socio-economic or low education backgrounds, single-parent families and parents from migrant backgrounds. Schools should also be enabled to efficiently engage parents, students and local actors who offer their time and experience* (EC, 2013, p. 15).

Such a discourse is to be found to be a key aspect of every text analysed. School actors should "construct a trustful and open relation" with the parents ; have a "cooperative attitude" ; to consider them as "alliance partners", "activate the parental resources", help the introduction of a "common and new relational and school culture with regard to regularity and mutual trust and cooperation" (BFSFJ, 2008, p. 18). According to the French policy programme, "parents will be more associated with the school and to their children's school career. Measures and practices aiming to involve parents will be reinforced and generalised, especially in key moments concerning orientation […] If *décrochage scolaire* is, first of all, a school issue, it [the school] must necessarily involve parents and all the actors engaged in successful education for students. The relationship between schools and parents is an essential key to the success of the school of tomorrow : a school, which by paying attention to continuity between family time and school-time, puts youth at the centre of attention and invests the coeducation" (MEN, 2014, pp. 11-13).

The reference by the regional German programme to the systemic German concept of "school development" (*Schulentwicklung*) after Rolff (2016) illustrates the definition of school as a "living space" (*Lebensraum*). Students' attitudes and performance should be reflected in relation with their personal environments, while this reflection should trigger mutual improvement of teaching, professional practices and organisational settings. The regional programme "*Aktiv gegen Schulschwänzen*" reflects this approach saying that "school is not only a place where people learn but also a place that is organised as a place where young people live together […] where teachers, parents and students all share an interest in improving the school climate, in agreeing in common educational objectives and being ready to take their share of responsibility […] concretely this means: cooperation with parents […]

participation/democratisation […] cooperative learning […] social learning […] support systems … (MKJS Baden-Württemberg, 2006, pp. 39-42.)

Such discourses are hard to implement in many aspects of partnerships, which remain sources of conflicts and tensions, such as the question of power and capacity negotiation between actors embedded in different social structures and having their own norms and values; the capacity to produce, understand and make use of specific information; the distribution of local resources - in terms of out-of-school support - and their accessibility (see Walther and al., 2016, specifically chapters 4, 8, 10, 12).

There are many ways to look at the injunctions to "partnerships" with regard to the issue "early school leaving"[81]. In the context of a frame of reference emphasising the democratisation of school structures and struggle against exclusion it becomes apparent that partnerships, especially those involving parents and while paying attention to their representatives and their possibility to have a real impact on the debate, are based on the belief that better communication and real participation in decision-making would help avoid dropout processes. Partnerships should contribute to better understanding of mutual positions and also try cooperatively working towards the same outcomes.

There is, however, a risk that the understanding of partnerships follows a unilateral vision of "cooperation" should work, with the aim of raising compliance with institutional conceptions, norms and demands regarding education. In this context, partnerships are purely informative and do not aim to trigger a change in the balance of power between the institution and their participants. In the French programme, schools should develop measures that facilitate communication between schools and the parents (especially these who do not speak French) aiming at developing "better knowledge of the school institution as well as the terms and conditions of good practices regarding parenthood" (MEN, 2014, p. 14). In reality, according to the German federal programme, "families are often unable to cope with the demands of the knowledge society towards education" (BFSFJ, 2008, p. 6).

In turn and according to what can be interpreted as a give-and-take principle, schools ought to be at the service of their users and provide students and families with reactive and efficient support. The French government has created a special phone number for adolescents and their families facing issues of dropout. It promises "immediate advice and reliable information

[81] For example, F. Lorcerie suggested a typology of partnership according to the 'school model' (judgement of value). The "authoritative, Napoleonic" model; "neoliberal" model; "social-civic" model. These models frame differently the way partnerships with parents are apprehended and organised. F. Lorcerie, "La relation familles–école, une perspective systémique", article paru dans les *Cahiers profession banlieue* ("familles *et professionnels, quelle coopération?* "), Juin 2006, p. 74.

about alternative solutions […]. The councillor will guide the adolescent towards local structures that offer a personalised support" (MEN, 2014, p. 11). Through placing students and their parents at the centre of school attention, political discourses open a door leading to changing power relations or at least weaken resistance : what if these promises of a *new* school are not seen as credible ?

1.3.2.2.3 Creating learning environments triggering students' "empowerment" and "active" participation

The last aspect that these texts have in common regarding the discursive framing of the issue "early leaving" are in relation with general societal trends in other domains than education (especially in the conception of welfare), such as individualisation and activation (Castel & Haroche, 2001).

Schools should implement preventive measures and instruments of intervention in order to cope with *all* forms of dropout, "active" (physically missing) or "passive" (referring to a passive attitude in class). But beyond this, national education and training structures ought to be submitted to a "critical revision" (EC, 2013, p. 25) and change their settings in order to understand things from the perspective of those who are not "feeling" happy at school :

"Schools should enable all students to feel respected and feel that their individual strengths, abilities and specific needs are recognised. […] Secondly, learners require learning environments that are welcoming, open, safe, and friendly and where students feel noticed, valued and part of a community. Schools have the potential to empower young people with a sense of ownership, belonging and self-fulfilment, skills and knowledge that enable them to be active citizens and play a positive role in society. Schools should provide opportunities to help learners build confidence and develop a desire for learning." (EC, 2013, p. 18)

Besides providing basic knowledge and social skills, schools should be able to have an influence on the *self,* the development of emotions ('feelings') and desires. 'The student is not "a consumer of knowledge any more […]" (MKJS Baden-Württemberg, 2006, p. 41) but an "active" part of the school community, where they see the possibility of "self-fulfilment" (influence on subjectivity). Schools should be able to address and "empower" *all* students – independently of race, social and economic backgrounds and make them become self-confident "learners". In such a "benevolent" (but "demanding") atmosphere, as the words used by the French minister (MEN, 2014, p. 15) students ought to feel "at home". Measures

should enable them to be actively involved in school activities, the school "community" being presented as the anteroom of society, in which they will be "active citizens" playing a "positive role". Such conditions ought to make individuals develop "a desire for learning". Learning what, how, why and for whom ? Is such a discourse compatible with the selective role of educational qualifications ? Are the pedagogic implications of such positioning compatible with compulsory schooling, as suggested by the followings extract of an interview given by Foucault provides a critical perspective on such a concept, which might remain wishful thinking :

"The teacher is the one who says : '*Well, listen, there are certain number of things that you don't know but you should know. This is a first-step attitude that I would call* <u>*shaming*</u>*. Well, and 'secondly, these things that you should know, I know them, and I will teach them to you' ; this is the stage of the* <u>*obligation*</u>*. 'And when I have taught them to you, then you will have to know them, and I will check it'.* <u>*Assessment*</u>*. So well, there are a series of power relations, which are related to teaching. And here, in the Collège de France*[82] *classes are free to attend, this means that people come if they want to and it could be anyone. It could be a retired colonel, but it could be a 14-year-old student. If they are interested, they come, if they aren't, they don't. So finally, who is the one who is assessed, who has the power, who is submitted to whom power ? I would say that, in the Collège de France, it is the one who teaches […] I would say that the first thing that one should teach - if it makes sense at all to teach such a thing -, it is that knowledge is for all that, related to pleasure. Well, there should be a way to eroticise knowledge, to make knowledge really enjoyable ; and specifically this, that teaching is not even able to reveal this, that the function of teaching has almost become a means of showing how knowledge is unpleasant, sad, grey, little erotic, I find it a "tour de force". But there is certainly a reason why this" tour de force" exists ; one should question WHY our society has so much interest in showing how sad knowledge is. Perhaps precisely because of all these people who are then excluded from this knowledge […]"* (M. Foucault interviewed by J. Chancel, Radioscopie, 1975).

[82] The Collège de France is a prestigious research institution located in Paris. It is 'a public higher education institution, which is unique in France. […] it is committed to fundamental research, in partnership with the CNRS, INSERM and several other major institutions, but what differentiates it is that it teaches "knowledge in the making in every field of literature, science and the arts. […] New members are elected by the Assembly of Professors. There is no specific academic rank stipulated for nominees; the only relevant factors are the significance and originality of their work' https://www.college-de-france.fr/site/en-about-college/index.htm. The entrance to seminars is free.

The discourses about "early school leaving" as analysed previously emphasise the integrative role that (formal) education should perform but does not question the settings in which this role is performed through their representatives : selection, assessment, pre-given and hierarchical curriculum, the conditions in which teachers perform their tasks…. While developing the pleasure of knowledge would actually necessitates more freedom, the fight against "early school leaving" leads to the development of more control, as above analysed, which distinguishes the neoliberal governmentality (Foucault, 2004, pp. 64-68). What is to be expected from a polical class, which is increasingly homogeneous on both sides of the Rhine?[83]

To conclude, I found Verdier's interrogation relevant in this dissertation : "Struggling against "*early school leaving*" : tracking at-risk individuals or reforming education" ? (Verdier, in Boudesseul, *op. cit*., p. 215). According to Verdier (national) policy-making that addresses the issue of "*décrochage scolaire*" is torn between "the enforcement of administrative prescriptions—upgrading to standards, injunctions to comply with certain indicators—and the practical necessity to give local actors room for initiative and manoeuvre" (*ibid*., p. 219). While schools are supposed to place the issue of "early leaving" at the centre of their reflection regarding settings and professional practices, how does this actually happen ? Are the school actors' perceptions in agreement with the discursive political position that has been analysed here ? How do school professionals, in the context of school institution and organisation, manage the factors which either make it more attractive or rather leads to exclusion ?

Transition: from political guidelines, through the apprehension of local policy makers on responsibility of schools.

Erik Bohnenberger, the representative of the Balenstadt local school authority (*Schulamt*) [84] was invited to Hallstadt by the local youth social work organisation A[85], which carried out the

[83] For Germany see (Schäfer, 2015) ; For France see (Observatoire des inégalités, 2018).

[84] The governance of the school system is organised at state level in Germany. The state of Baden-Württemberg, "is divided into four regional districts (*Regierungsbezirk*) with educational departments responsible for the employment of teachers. These districts in turn are divided into 4 to 9 subordinated local school authorities (*Staatliches Schulamt)* responsible for individual schools in their district. [..] Educational governance at the level

"dropout project" (*Schulverweigererprojekt* –see introduction and part 1). Bohnerberger is in charge of the "*Schulverweigerung*" problem ("school refusal", see introduction) and was invited to discuss the topic with the organisation's volunteers[86]. Although Hallstadt County (*Landkreis*) has been co-financing this project since 2003, the local education authority in Balenstadt has only been addressing this issue since 2009. According to Bohnenberger, this issue being integrated into his portfolio resulted from the fact that schools and the youth welfare service (*Jugendamt*) felt "overwhelmed" with dropouts and thus unable to solve the issue on their own. The result was their calling in the support of the educational authority to retrieve the situation[87].

For Bohnenberger, this cry for help highlighted the considerable scale of the problem. First, he argued that not *all Schulverweigerer* are reported and *Schulverweigerung* is not regarded as an issue in all schools. Some schools kept a careful record of the number of *Schulverweigerer*, or absentees (legal and illegal) others did not. Secondly, schools have at their disposal a vast repertoire of measures ("*besonderen Handlungsrahmen*") to handle phenomena of "negative school participation" (Stamm, 2012), the application of which is based on complex, contextualised and subjective interpretations of this issue. For Bohnenberger, the fact that the different types of schools in Baden-Württemberg fell within different institutional authorities added to the general confusion because these authorities shared neither a common view nor agenda on the "*Schulverweigerung*" issue. For instance, according to Bohnenberger, there were "certainly" many *Schulverweigerer* in *Gymnasien*, but which would not be reported systematically.

This could be interpreted from the model of the "academic educational convention" (Bernard, 2013, p. 98, see Part 1), which is referred to in order to explain why "dropouts" have only recently been seen as a problem in France. According to this "convention", educational trajectories are regulated according to a certain level of expectations, which are determined with regard to a norm of excellence (meritocracy). In this respect, "early leaving is not a

---

of the Land is shared with municipalities […]". *Land* – and *Stadtkreise* (county and metropolitan areas) also have educational departments according to the distinction 'internal and external affairs", (Cramer et al., 2010, pp. 13-14). However, one must note that different school authorities are responsible for the different forms of schooling. In Baden-Württemberg, the *Regierungspräsidium (RP)* is responsible for *Gymnasien* and *Berufschulen*. The *Schulamt* is in charge of all other primary and secondary schools.

[85] Previously mentioned as the organisation specialising in youth social work, which has been developing and implementing work with dropouts (*Schulverweigererprojekt*).

[86] Volunteers mentor dropouts for a year-long programme. I was a volunteer from February 2017 until March 2018. The present extract is issued from notes taken during this engagement.

[87]Research protocol meeting on 22/02/18 at the Organisation A, Hallstadt with M. Bohnenberger. "Der Kontext sei, dass Schulen gesagt hätten "wir packen es nicht allein ein", "wir haben kein Zugriff zu dem einzelnen Schüler und das Jugendamt habe auch gesagt, dass sie es nicht allein schaffen würden".

problem but rather a solution to preserve school order and [...] the selection of elites" (*ibid*.). This interpretative framework could work for the German *Gymnasium*, which is historically the school that welcomed the well-born children (Becker, 2014; Tillmann, 2015). The *Gymnasium* delivers the school certificate (*Abitur*) required for entrance to higher education (see appendix). While historically it only concerned a minority, there has been significant growth in the proportion of people reaching upper secondary certificate (in 2016, 31% of the population from 15) while other certificates have fallen behind; the proportion of graduates attending university has constantly increased, whereas the proportion of young people attending vocational and training education (*Lehr/Anlernausbildung*) has fallen (*Bildungsbericht*, 2018, p. 55; Edelstein & Grellmann, 2013). This evolution is not only quantitative but also qualitative in terms of gender, migration and social origins. Similarly, to France, attending *Gymnasium* as well as achieving specific qualifications is socially and ethnically connoted (in France, *Lycée général et technologique*). Most of the young people achieving upper secondary certification are now girls but most of the students visiting the *Gymnasium* and achieving the *Abitur* still come from socially, educationally[88] and economically advantaged backgrounds, and have no migration background (Bildungsbericht, 2018, p. 55; Becker, 2012; Geißler, 2014). With regard to these evolutions, Edelstein & Grellmann (*op. cit*.) draw the attention to the fact that the proportion of young people leaving education without any qualification remains more or less unchanged. The fact is that educational expansion has disturbed the way social selection of elites works via membership of specific educational tracks, which, however, might be rooted in institutional memory of different school forms.

Bohnenberg concluded his intervention by suggesting that, if *Gymnasien* reported dropouts in the same way as other school forms, the school authorities would be unable to handle the sheer numbers, implying that they would be overwhelmed[89]. This statement illustrates that the apprehension of this problem likely varies from school to school. But also, that it could be apprehended as a global societal issue questioning the relation to public education. Consequently, it is difficult for local educational policy makers to have a comprehensive view on the phenomenon beyond its inscription in a specific local context and/or specific school forms.

---

[88] I refer here to parental educational level of attainment.

[89] Original quotation: "Wir hatten Angst, dass wir das nicht bewältigen könnten", Research protocol_meeting 22/02/18 at the Organisation A, op.cit.

Serge Dupont is employed by the regional school authority in France in Brittany (*rectorat*) in a decisional position (he is a chief of department). He shares a similar opinion to Bohnenberg about schools' varying apprehensions of the issue. Although they "spare no expense in making principals aware", "talk about it, implement a certain number of actions, training for principals and teachers" and will organise the "educational perseverance week ", which is an "obligation" imposed by the state (see Part 1), Dupont notes that "there are schools, which feel less concerned because they think that they don't have any dropouts". Or for which dropouts equates with "troublemakers". Other schools "are more aware of it because they are confronted with more problems". Despite the fact that "teachers feel generally concerned", especially with "passive" dropouts, the school itself does not necessarily address and reflect the issue politically and collectively. According to Dupont, the fight against "*décrochage scolaire*" "happens firstly in schools"[90].

These two examples illustrate the roles of interpretations and representations regarding the apprehension of a problem, a thematic which is totally invisible in the different political programmes and guidelines that have previously been analysed. Indeed, local bureaucrats suggest that the understanding of this problem varies considerably from school to school.

Another remark can be made as well about the integration of this thematic at local level, which illustrates previous comments about the complex, multi-stakeholder and multi-level environmental dimensions of educational governance. As we saw, Bohnenberger, the German

---

[90] Original quotations: "Y a des établissements qui sont peu concernés parce que bah ils estiment qu'il n'y a pas de décrochage chez eux. Ou décrocheur dans l'idée de l'élève qui va faire le bazar, de cette idée de l'élève perturbateur, qui va être en difficulté aussi parce que de toute façon il ne travaille pas car il met le bazar dans la classe, donc voilà y a cet élève un peu comme ça prototype. Après y a les élèves un peu comme ça passifs etc. bon moi je pense que les enseignants y sont sensibles. Bon quand y a un élève qu'on n'entend pas, qui a des résultats justes ou très faibles, mais bon y a rien etc. y a une volonté dans l'établissement de faire en sorte que ça aille mieux. J'pense que c'est comme ça sinon un prof n'est pas prof et il faut qu'il change de métier, qu'il arrête quoi. Pour moi ça doit être un souci permanent que de faire attention aux élèves qui décrochent, enfin qui sont en difficulté, qui ne sont pas bien. Y a des acteurs encore une fois. L'assistante scolaire, le médecin scolaire, le CPE aussi qui a un rôle sur la vie scolaire de l'établissement. Donc y a le prof principal qui a aussi un rôle. Y a quand même beaucoup d'acteurs. Et puis on ne travaille pas dans un bocal. On est en lien avec des éducateurs s'il le faut, y a des associations qui viennent, qui rentrent dans les établissements pour aider les élèves en difficulté. Donc après moi je. […]. Bon les établissements, le décrochage, ils savent que ça existe, je pense qu'ils sont sensibles à ça ; je ...puis bon dans les établissements y a plus de sensibilité parce que y a plus de difficulté. Et que si y a un décrocheur isolé dans un établissement qui fonctionne bien bah je ne sais pas s'il sera mieux pris en charge, est ce qu'il ne sera pas noyé dans la masse. On en parle, on met en place un certain nombre d'actions, de formations auprès des chefs d'établissements, des profs on va mettre en place la semaine de la persévérance scolaire début 2016, c'est une obligation qui nous est faite. Ça c'est de l'impulsion du niveau national [..] donc on va le faire. On va surement faire appel à des partenaires extérieurs. […] mais peut-être qu'il va falloir aussi qu'on puisse faire de l'animation, on verra mais voilà que tout le monde puisse y trouver son intérêt. Mais ça va se passer dans l'école avant tout. Mais pour moi y a aussi la question des alliances éducatives qui est très importante qui est incontournable. Donc on met entre guillemets le paquet, on fait des circulaires aux chefs d'établissement pour les sensibiliser."

bureaucrat suggests that the integration of this issue into his portfolio resulted from the pressure put on them by the youth welfare office. However, the municipality of Hallstadt has already been addressing this thematic and supported projects in this direction (like the one implemented by youth organization A). On the other hand, Dupont underlines the role of the regional authority in conveying and enforcing national views and guidelines, especially by school actors (principals, teachers).

Last but not least, the positioning of these German and French bureaucrats has in common their difficulties for not having a clearer picture and policy about this issue on individual schools.

On the one hand, there are discourses on "early school leaving" disseminated by state authorites, which aim at shaping education in a certain way according to a specific vision (see Part 1), on the other hand, these homogeneous discourses are broken down and re-emerge in "places (schools, cities, regions) where different societal levels conflate into concrete practices to demonstrate path dependencies and differences through the adaptation of these general trends to the contextual specificities" (Amos and al., 2016, p. 75; van Zanten, 2004, pp. 18 ff.). This approach of educational policy-making results from the increasing complexity of educational governance as described in the introduction. Van Zanten (2004) records French and British studies that pay attention to local orders, which are redistributed through decentralisation and free choice policies, the role of teachers resisting top-down injunctions, the tensions between traditional bureaucracy and increasing local diversity and complexity, the pressure exerted by internal organisational and normative structures unique to educational systems and individual schools resulting from their social, political and institutional environment… (van Zanten, 2004, pp. 18-21). The same author, in a study about the "school of the periphery" (2001) refers to Giddens' perspective[91], analysing the structuring processes of educational activity, which consists in analysing dynamic relations that local contexts (local communities, schools, classes) establish between actors' perspectives and global social orientations (Zanten, 2001, pp. 2–3).

The next step is to address the way actors within schools understand and address the problem of "early-leaving" (in my interactions with the actors, I used the French term "*décrochage scolaire*" and the German word "*Schulverweigerung*"). In line with the institutionalist perspective, I understand schools as institutional organisations resulting from history, the

[91] A. Giddens, *The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1984.

institutionalisation of representations, beliefs, norms and values (for example, the hierarchisation of school subjects, the separation between manual and cognitive activities) (Rey, 2016, pp. 17 ff.). “Discursive institutionalism”, as a fourth school of thought after historic, sociological, rational institutionalism aims to explain the policies through “the discursive interactions embedded in institutional configurations”; it highlights discursive dynamics through which actors perceive the constraints linked with norms and institutions, which can induce the continuity of these norms and institutions but also their modification” (Schmidt & Crespy, 2014). Rey mentions that one of the major contributions of neo-institutionalism is to emphasise “legitimation” as a factor of stability in relations between an organisation and its environment. On the contrary, change mainly results from alternative legitimacy that has been developing in the same area (*op.cit.* pp. 18–19) and power configurations at stake. Questioning the way actors understand the issue “early leaving” and perceive its legitimacy at school level aims at better understanding the naïve issue of whether it actually helps schools to become “fairer”, as is claimed by policy programmes.

This perspective is combined with the approach of “”street level bureaucracy” (Lipsky, 1980, see introduction), according to which “the behaviour of street-level bureaucrats is mainly influenced by two factors: first, the organisational context that sets the goals, rules, budgetary and time resources for bureaucratic action; and second, the intrinsic cognitive-emotional utility functions of individual street-level bureaucrats which, in the interplay with the organisational context, determines whether street-level bureaucrats rigorously apply, creatively adapt, or undermine formal policy goals in their interaction with clients and client groups” (Rice, 2012, p. 1039). The importance of school professionals’ discretionary practices and their positive or negative impact on accessibility of education in Europe has been discussed by Barberis, Buchowicz, De Luigi (2016). To summarise, according to the role professionals play (as principals, teachers, “others”) and personal dimensions such as their socio-economic status and culture, “they bring into the arena specific kinds of leverage, and interact in the negotiation process based on modes of information and participation that are school-specific” (Amos et al., *op.cit.*, p. 83).

The heuristic potential of these approaches should allow us to grasp the way international discourses like “early-school-leaving” or “equal opportunities” are “translated and adapted by specific actors who bring specific leverage into the game”; the way “policy instruments and processes of negotiation show their concrete effects” (Amos and al., op. cit., p. 80).

Are policy programmes relevant in explaining how the issue is dealt with at the school level? Or do we observe discrepancies, which support the idea of disconnection between political

frameworks and local action? Do guidelines have an impact on schools' agenda and the way they deal with this issue? Are those guidelines met with resistance or critiques at the school level, which help to uncover a gap between the political thinking and social realities? How does the empirical study of practices and representations as well as the study of different actors' perspectives in different power configurations, help to uncover the relationships between structures and agencies (Schatz (ed.), 2009)[92]?

Beyond principals, other professionals play significant roles within each school: teachers but also diverse professionals, who have been progressively integrated as internal educational support: school social workers, nurses, educational assistants, learning needs assistants, orientation councillors, and others. French and German school systems account for different institutional and organisational settings, have their own history and dynamics, which influences the way this educational support is conceived and integrated. Having this in mind, one can question the interactions that take place and mutual logic that drives the way these professionals interpret and deal with the political priority given to the fight against "early-leaving". How far are the different professionals able to influence the way this issue is interpreted and dealt with? What power configurations are highlighted by answers to this question?

This first part addresses the role of principals in the translation of the priority given to the fight against early-school-leaving. How do principals understand and integrate this issue in the definition of their school policy? What opportunity structures did discourses and policy programmes addressing this issue create for them, how do they use them? What room for manoeuvre do they have, with what constraints do they meet?

Under which conditions does a school address this issue or not? And how? What elements influence the definition process? How do principals interpret or (re)interpret policy programmes, recommendations and deal with categories related to this issue? How do school professionals arbitrate between different measures they have at their disposal, which room for manoeuvre do they have? How far are different school bodies able to influence the way this issue is addressed institutionally? To what extent do they feel they can have an impact and when do they feel this is out of their sphere of influence? The ethnographic research based on observations (fieldwork notes and protocols) and interviews, looks closer at the definition

[92] Structures (material and cultural (norms, customs, traditions and ideologies)) are the recurrent patterned arrangements, which influence or limit the choices and opportunities available. Agency is the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choice (Schatz (ed.), 2009, p. 44).

process of school policies and guidelines dealing respectively with the French and German concepts "*décrochage scolaire*/*Schulverweigerung*".

The third and fourth part of this dissertation deals with different professionals' perspectives according to which professional group they belong in the division of educational work and, often, internal hierarchy: the teaching staff and the non-teaching staff (the "others"), who were originally thought to support teachers and students in coping with their duties.

The following tables provide a global view for the reader about specific lower secondary school structures involved in this development, the French *Collège* La Balikan and the Geschwister Scholl *Gemeinschaftsschule* (GMS). The actors mentioned in each part will be mentioned again at the beginning of each stage.

Part 2
Principals

2 The role of principals, contexts and representations in understanding the issue of "early-school-leaving."

In his article summarising different theoretical approaches of change in education and entitled "*Le changement, c'est comment*?" (Rey, 2016)[93], Rey mentions an international landscape, characterised over the last thirty years by steady educational reforms. Since the 2000s, the number of declarations and major laws has increased, which are supposed to reorganise the settings of educational systems (Rey, 2016, p. 3). In France, two laws addressing educational structures have been passed since then concerning "core knowledge" (*socle commun de connaissances, de competences et de culture*)[94]. In Baden Württemberg, re-structuration of the educational landscape has taken place since 2013 with the multiplication of "*Gemeinschaftsschulen*" aiming to replace former *Sonder-, Haupt-, Real- and Werkrealschulen* (I further develop this aspect below). These reforms aim to trigger new educational governance, organisational settings, and pedagogic practices with more "responsibility" and "autonomy" being handed to the local level[95]. I have shown in the previous part how policy programmes dealing with *early-school-leaving*/ *décrochage scolaire*/*Schulverweigerung* focus on school level as being the place where "societal transformation" towards a "knowledge society" should happen.

Rey (*ibid*.), referring to Dupriez (2015), shows, however, that decentralisation policies did not seek to solve learning-centred issues. Instead, these policies put forward a new political discourse that was based on the common belief that changing educational institutional frameworks would mechanically result in changing – and thus advancing – pedagogic practices (*ibid*., p. 5). Amos *et al*. (*op. cit*.) point to the fact that, indeed, "while autonomisation, decentralisation and devolution processes are still taking place as a heritage of long-term implementation processes, voices critical of these reforms become more

[93] "Change, how?" It paraphrases the political slogan of François Hollande as he applied for the presidency in 2012 (*Le changement, c'est maintenant*.)

[94]Loi Fillon 2005 et loi Peillon de Refondation de l'école de 2013

[95] The contribution of Amos and al. (*op. cit*.) about the governance of educational trajectories in Europe help to see this critically, even arguing about a "recentralisation" of European local governance systems. I develop this later.

outspoken and influential" (p. 78). The authors argue with providing elements illustrating "recentralisation" through "new governance tools [….] such as the diffusion of good practices, organisation of arenas of negotiation, selectivity and scarcity of resources" (p. 79). Moreover, as mentioned previously, school actors at the meso-level involve their professional identity and subjectivity, based on experiences, representations and beliefs, which, in the interplay with organisational structures, rules, and local contexts, account for specific implementation at school level of political guidelines.

The next section considers the way national contexts frame the activity and roles of principals (3.1) while the second subsection investigates the way the school principal of the French lower secondary school La Balikan, Christine Madec, and her deputy, Emile George, as well as the principal of the Geschwister School *GMS*, Friedrich Markel[96], perceive and translate (or not) the problem of "early school leaving" (3.2).

2.1 National contexts and principals' perceptions of their roles and of the issue of "early leaving" from education

In the American international journal "Science" dated June 2013, and entitled "Principal as Instructional Leader: Did the States Lose Sight of the Dream?" we read that, despite the latest research on "school effectiveness" over the past thirty years accounting for the decisive role of school principals (a "bedrock") for the improvement of students' and teachers' experiences at school, most of the American states were still not able to " identify, quantify, and evaluate their own principals' leadership". Meaning that they were not able to provide "relevant data on the supply and quality of school leaders", nor could they "use their authority to improve the supply of high-quality school leaders" (Cortez-Rucker & Adams 2013). In fact, school effectiveness research has contributed to establishing the idea that the "key to school improvement is school leadership. Battlefield commander, small business executive, and front-line managers are all titles that could be held by school leadership, according to Hess and Kelly" (2007, quoted by *ibid*., p. 32). Their responsibility seems immense with regard to the normative importance given to "school attainment" and "educational quality". The fight against "early-school-leaving", set up as an indicator of performance and quality of educational systems, ought to oblige them to integrate in their duties the organization of support and prevention according to the motto, "no-child-left behind". It is much

[96] From now on, I will just mention them by their last name.

responsibility put on their shoulders, and this part of my research should provide the elements which show how they deal with such responsibility.

In France, the context of decentralisation – or "deconcentralisation" (Yves Dutercq, 2001)[97] – in education, which makes individual schools responsible for the design of their own policies has led to an increasing number of studies on the role of principals in educational governance (Grellier, 1998; Pelage, 2003; Barrère, 2006; Baluteau, 2009–quoted by Baluteau, *op.cit*., 172; Dutercq, *op.cit*. 2001). Barrère calls them the "managers of the Republic" (Barrère, 2006), given the evolution of their functions and the discourse that frames principals' role as makers of school policies in terms of efficiency. According to Barrère, "principals globally adhere to this new situation" and incorporate in their activity "their belief in Republican principles, democratisation of education, and equal opportunities". Their capacity to change school is, however, limited to a certain extent by financial or teaching resources, management of the teaching staff and specific local environments and configurations. All these aspects contribute to the production of different managerial positions (Barrère, 2013)[98].

A similar context can be observed in Germany, where principals in secondary education systems have been acquiring new dimensions of autonomy resulting from "internationally introduced discussions about "quality" and "effectiveness"; indeed in this debate, internal school steering orchestrated by principals is seen as a crucial factor in securing and developing the quality of the school educational system, as discussed above (Wissinger, Huber, 2002, p. 10). In 2016, however, the function of German principals is still torn between two domains of actions ("*Handlungswirklichkeit*"), i.e. bureaucratic administration and pedagogical innovation (Rosenbusch/Wissinger 1989, p. 14, quoted by Languth, 2016, p. 59). The management of human resources and the financial administration of the school remains the competence of higher authorities so that "the action of principals is always in tension between autonomy and dependence" (Languth, *ibid*.). Also, Languth stresses the individualisation of function and the discursive emphasis put on their "leadership" while, in this domain, they do not experience any "systematic professional training" (Languth, 2016, p. 6).

As the research on educational governance in eight European country points, "regardless of country and education systems, schools are confronted with similar problems and trends, and

[97] The concept stresses the tension between national steering and local autonomy.

[98] For a critical review of Barrere's study and references to other authors regarding the same theme see Yves Dutercq, "Barrère, Anne. *Sociologie des chefs d'établissement: les managers de la République* ", *Revue française de pédagogie* [En ligne], 158 | janvier-mars 2007, URL: [http://journals.openedition.org/rfp/525], 08/07/2018.

undergo growing pressure to increase output figures with decreasing personal and financial means to do so". This context should be kept in mind for the next development.

The next paragraph develops arguments illustrating how institutions and contexts, in interplay with principals' definition of their roles and their apprehension of the issue "early school leaving" in both France and Germany, emphasise structural reforms happening in France and Baden-Württemberg and affect secondary education systems, especially in their relation with the evolution of the role of principals. The second section discusses the way these principles concretely "handle" this phenomenon and why. I added some "exploratory" data, based on meetings with two other school executive teams in France and Germany. In this respect, the question is: are there as many ways to deal with this issue as there are principals?

2.1.1 France

The recent reforms tend to put schools in charge of and responsible for the fight against "early-leaving" through the empowerment of the figure of the principal in organisatory but also political and pedagogical matters. In this context, the French school principal Madec sees her role as a "pilot", responsible for everything. Concretely, this has two consequences: on one hand, it introduces some subjectivity into the development of school policy, which is, however, limited through her understanding of the demands of superior local and national authorities; on the other hand, her view of the causes involved in the phenomenon "early-school-leaving" is for a large extent marked by the perception of the responsibility of out-of-school elements over which she has almost no influence.

2.1.1.1 Historic and institutional highlights

The historians Vincent Troger and Jean-Claude Ruano-Borbalan explain how the French[99] educational system evolved mainly at a local level until the beginning of the 19th century. Similarly, in Germany[100], primary and secondary schools were controlled by political and religious authorities. Local teachers ("*maîtres*") were fully accountable to local, secular and religious authorities. Troger and Ruano-Borbalan emphasise the frequent dismissal of teachers during that period. Napoleon the First in 1808 laid out the fundaments of a centralised and pyramidal secondary education system, which following political regimes conserved and amplified. For the authors, the standardisation of pedagogical practices, school architecture

[99] Strictly speaking, France as culturally and administratively unified territory did not really exist before 1789.
[100] The German state was formally created in 1870 with the victory of Prussian Army over the French one.

and furniture illustrate such evolution. The authors mention as well that, if this system is "efficient" to manage education on a daily basis, it is particularly recalcitrant to reforms: the only possible reforms would be generalized and top-down, increasing the risk of failure because of the resistance of organised bodies and corporations that fear their power may be threatened when it comes to the conception and transmission of knowledge and the distribution of diplomas. Starting in the 1960s, demographic, social and political mutations have favoured the development of bureaucratic and centralised methods of school system management. Since 1981, processes of decentralisation that resulted in competences in the realms of school financing, vocational training, and lifelong learning being transferred to departments and regions induced a greater involvement of subnational authorities in education policies. Specifically regarding the issue "early-school-leaving" ("*décrochage scolaire*"), the regions have become the competent bodies charged with organising regional policies against this phenomenon based on the coordination of school and vocational institutions, civil organisations and employment institutions through the administrative entities for the tracking and support of dropouts (*Plateformes de suivi et d'appui aux décrocheurs*, PSAD; cf. previous part). In parallel, processes of "deconcentration" have maintained the national influence on the steering of educational systems, through the development of intermediary administrations and accounting practices, such as evaluating "school projects", "school performances" with regard to the measures taken against absenteeism or school failure. These control mechanisms question the "autonomy" secondary schools have gained since 1989. Furthermore, the selection of teachers (through state exams) and their distribution over the territory is still a national competence although the "development of the professional masters might eventually undermine the role of state exams and the development of local recruitment" (Troger, Ruano-Borbalan, 2009, pp. 68 ff.). The fact remains that since the creation of the administrative entity "local public secondary school" ("*établissement public local d'enseignement*" -EPLE, 1985), in the context of decentralisation and devolution processes, principals operate within a system of constraints and autonomy. I will show how the devolved local authorities (*Rectorat, Inspection académique*) play a crucial role in the way they influence and control principals implement their "school project".

In this context, the recent "*réforme du collège*" (drafted in 2015, implementation training for teachers in 2016, reconsidered and edited by the new government in 2017) is an example of the discourse about "school autonomy", which emphasises actors' and principals' "autonomy-responsibility", notably in the "profiling" of their school and being accountable for its "quality". Indeed, the reforms aim to increase the autonomy of individual schools, as well as

their “actors’ commitment” and “responsibilities” under the principal’s leadership but within the boundaries of “general guidelines”: “it is crucial to rely on actors’ commitment, on their capacity to take their responsibilities and to adapt with great intelligence general guidelines. It is important to empower them more through making the school organisation less rigid and through more teamwork regarding the establishment of teaching contents”[101]. The fight against “early school leaving” in integrated secondary schools (*collèges uniques*) is seen as particularly crucial by policy makers, since those schools have “proved to be unable” to actually promote meritocratic settings because of too little attention given to “students’ specificities”: “Furthermore, numerous students don’t find their place in school, whatever their social origins or potential, because their specificities are sometimes not enough taken into account. They have the feeling that school is not for them and is not a place where they can learn something. Some of them finally lose interest; others are suffering”. Schools have to cope with “a world, which is undergoing changes” as well as the appearance of a “new kind of student”. They have to adapt their practices and methods to all students, be they “curious” or “unmotivated”, “at ease” or “with special needs” (*ibid.*).

In fact, most research on education (e.g. on “school / teaching effectiveness”), and particularly dropout research, has accounted for the role of structures and teaching arrangements in students’ aversion to school (see introduction for references): the concepts of “school” and “teacher” effects illustrate this very much (e.g. Duru-Bellat, 2001).

However, like Stauber et al. (*op. cit.*) they argue in their study of “access” and “accessibility” in education, emergence of educational inequalities are to be reflected in the interplay of educational structures, institutional policies and institutions, discourses and individual agencies and positioning. This means that a range of other aspects, over and above the role of schools or, more specifically, the power of principals, interfere with students’ educational experience. Van Zanten (2001) writes on the “school of the periphery” where the concentration of mainly underperforming students with lower social and economic capitals and with migration backgrounds (the “visible minority” generally referring to the French colonial history), in stigmatised suburbs, schools and classes, increases teachers’ difficulty to make students develop positive dispositions towards the school work. It develops different views and perspective to knowledge, which regularly triggers misunderstandings and conflicts that contribute to students’ intellectual demotivation. Van Zanten also mentions the tendency

[101] Official publication about the reform in lower secondary education: [http://cache.media.eduscol.education.fr/file/College_2016/54/6/la_reforme_du_college_en_10_points_478546.pdf], p. 4, 01/08/18

of students who turn away from school values to get "disaffiliated" by framing themselves as internal outcasts[102]. The author shows how the inability of schools to get students' adhesion to values, culture, and to an established social order can explain why students tend to look towards the *quartier (neighbourhood)* rather than to identify themselves with the school (Van Zanten, 2001, pp. 16-17) [103]. But all this cannot be understood without taking into account a social order resulting from history, racism, specific urban policies, free-choice school policies…

Still, as I have shown in the previous part, the French governmental programme against "early leaving" from education considers schools as the main actors in this fight, which are said to be apt to adapt to those local specificities that have an impact on students' relations to school. In accordance with the above mentioned regulatory context of school goverance, Madec sees the role of the principal as someone is that of a pilot "who is responsible for everything" (Madec, 2016, p. 2)[104].

2.1.1.2 Madec, Principal of the Collège "La Balikan": the "pilot who is responsible for everything"

2.1.1.2.1 The assessment of the situation and establishment of a road map for La Balikan.

At the time of the interview, Madec had been principal of the Collège "La Balikan" for three years. Before, she had worked as a teacher of economics in a *lycée general*[105] for 14 years. She diversified her career by specialising progressively in project management and lifelong learning in partnership with firms, educational and training structures, teachers, and the department of national education. These activities, which she "enjoyed" very much, led her to apply for the state exam to become a principal. "Pedagogy", cooperation with professionals,

---

[102] Referring to P. Bourdieu and P. Champagne, 'les exclus de l'intérieur', in P. Bourdieu and al., *La misère du monde*, Paris, Seuil, 1992.

[103] Referring to S. Hall, 'Education and the crisis of urban school' in J. Raynor and E. Harris (eds), *Urban Education*, 2: *Schooling in the City*, London, Ward Lock/Open University Press, 1977; J. Ogbu, 'Ethnoecology of urban schooling', in L. Mullings (ed.), *Cities of the United States, Studies in Urban Anthropology*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1987; C: Grignon and J.-C. Passeron, Le *savant et le populaire. Misérabilisme et populisme en sociologie et en littérature*, Paris, Hautes Etudes/Gallimard/Le Seuil, 1989; D. Lockwood, *Solidarity and Schism. The Problem of Disorder in Durkeimian and Marxist Sociology*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992.

[104] Original quotation: "[...] bah si vous voulez le rôle de chef d'établissement on dit souvent que c'est résumé en un mot, on dit que c'est le pilote. C'est le pilote. C'est le pilote et le responsable de tout".

[105] After the *collège (*lower secondary school, four years*)*, students are generally oriented towards the *lycée d'enseignement général et technologique* (general and technological baccalaureates) or professional structures, such as the *Lycée professionnel* or *Centre de formation et d'apprentissage*.

educational professionals and learners, “assessment”, “evaluation”, “new missions”, “more responsibility”, “accounting for” are some of the aspects she refers to justify her progressive interests for the job (Madec, pp. 1-2)[106]. They illustrate the changing figure of principals as “project managers” and privileged intermediaries in local networks, which result from the conflation of different scales and actors at the local level that illustrate the changing governance of education (Walther and al., *op.cit*, 2016, pp. 59 ff. and 75 ff.). This role also reflects the dominant discourse about school autonomy, while principals are asked to cooperate in a cross-sectoral way and account for their results[107]. Futhermore, it also illustrates the integration of pedagogic matters in principals’ portfolio (I develop this hereinafter).

However, expectations from “above” and external factors over which she has no influence might lead to her feeling particularly pressured:

> *We were in June, the end of the year. She was looking at the window « I am observing ». There had been tensions the last days among the students and even violent acts, such as fights between the various student factions. […] She tells me that there are between eight and ten young people absent per class at the moment: “Ramadan effect. We certainly won’t get all the legal slips”. […] She looks tired and thoughtful. She mentions the authorities and all the “demands”, “expectations”, and “institutional requests” she has to cope with. She said, looking at me without losing her calm, more tired than willing to blame: “accounting for, accounting for, accounting for, accounting for, always accounting for something”*[108]*. I didn’t know what to answer. Fortunately, the first guest arrived*.
>
> Extract from research protocol 14/06/16.

At the end of June, the school atmosphere seemed to relax. It is the month that announces the end of the school year: exams and *conseils de classe*[109] are over, school reports have been sent, the weather is hot[110], the pressure calms down for everyone, who’s looking forward to

---

[106] Original quotation: “*questions pédagogiques*” “*la question de travail en concertation avec des professionnels, avec des personnels de l’éducation nationale, avec donc des apprenants*” “*évaluation*”, “*nouvelles missions*”, “*plus de responsabilités*”, “*rendre compte*”.

[107] This appetence for managerial activities and accounting practices might help to understand some tensions between the principal’s office and the other school staffs, who complain on many occasions about the fact that too little importance is given to pedagogic issues in comparison to indicators and bureaucratic procedures.

[108] ‘Rendre compte, rendre compte, rendre compte, rendre compte, toujours rendre compte’

[109] In France, in secondary education, the school year is divided into three terms. At the end of every three months, there is a “class conference”. Teachers and school administration representatives, student representatives, parents’ representatives, sometimes the school worker and the nurse meet to discuss marks and behaviour individually.

[110] Contrary to Germany, in France there is no ‘*Hitzefrei*’, that would allow the principal to cancel a school day because of hot temperatures.

the long summer holiday. The school was emptier than during the whole year, absences had augmented, the educational assistants told me about the increase of absences of students and complained about teachers, "who are even not coming anymore while students are supposed to still have class" (fieldwork notes, 29/06/18, one week before the official school year ended). The principal mentioned the Ramadan, which is no legal reason to be absent but on which she has no influence.

Despite this, the educational assistants kept recording absences in the computer program, which has a negative effect on official assessment of the "quality" of the school since absences are official indicators which provide information about the quality of the school climate; especially if students neglect to bring back the "legal slips" (*billet de justification d'absence*).

This is, for example, one aspect that limits principals' political imagination and shapes the way they could conceive their school project, assess their success and/or need for improvement. This is illustrated by the following quotation, where personal subjectivity and institutional-political framing are involved in the definition of the school project:

> *Finally, I made an analysis on the basis of elements that I had, that I saw, that I noticed, that I observed, that I heard but also according to statistics, which are updated by the regional school authority (she shows tables of numbers to me) (Madec, 2016, p. 3)*[111]

The last sentence illustrates very well how Madec applies her subjectivity[112] when defining the school policy according to her own perceptions. This subjectivity, however, remains within the boundaries of what school authorities lay down as the operational framework, as demonstrated by her use of statistics. I referred to Desrosières (*op. cit*., 2017) in the previous section to illustrate how statistics already convey a certain vision of the reality.

The "roadmap" ("*contrat d'objectifs*") - defining the school's political project, objectives and strategies – results from the analysis principals make of the situation. The roadmaps are first debated and agreed in different committees reuniting at the very least teachers and the principal councillor of education (CPE) and then submitted for approval of the regional educational authority. Madec's analysis (2015-2019) emphasises the difficult local context in

[111] Original quotation: "enfin j'ai fait un diagnostic sur la base d'éléments que j'avais, que je voyais que je constatais que j'observais que j'entendais mais aussi de données statistiques qui sont tenues à jour par le rectorat.*[Elle me montre des tableaux de chiffres]".*

[112] Understood as a property belonging specifically to the subject and resulting from personal experiences of the social life, social background and personal history of the person in question and materialised by specific representations, interpretations and significations. (Alpe et al., 2013, p. 364).

which the school is located: a disadvantaged neighbourhood (le "*quartier*")[113] characterised by social and economic issues (poverty, unemployment, mobility, single-parent families, immigration), a negative impact of official "labels" aiming to distinguish the school's particular difficulties such as "sensible zones" and "priority school areas". It also mentions elements that allow the reader to understand that the school La Balikan is likely 1) to suffer from a social homogeneity characterised by its socio-economic difficulty 2) to deal with difficult social and familial situations, which, moreover, lead to a consequent turnover among the students. Indeed, Madec's analysis of the situation recalls the absence of privileged categories in the *quartier* and the strategies of these categories living at the periphery of the "quartier" not to send their children to the local school. She stresses the "complex familial situations" of students attending the school (*Diagnostic- Projet de Réseau- Contrat d'objectifs Collège La Balikan*, 2015-2019, 05/11/2015, pp. 1-2). The evaluation of the situation is based on official statistics regarding the socio-economic landscape in which the school is embedded, as well as subjective observations visible through the usage of certain terms (in italics): "these elements highlight specific social fragilities accompanied with the augmentation of the poverty, increasing tensions among the inhabitants of the quartier, a *perception* of increasing communitarianism and an increasing *feeling* of insecurity" (*ibid*., p. 1). The document does not specify whether the "perception of communitarianism" and the "increasing feeling of insecurity" refer to the inhabitants' perspectives or the school's perspective. This context is connected with low school performance. The success rate of the lower secondary final exam (DNB) is lower than the regional and national average while one can read that "(...) students, in such a context, experience school failure as a fatality and do not project themselves in any constructive or dynamic way in position of studying more" (*ibid*., p. 3)[114] .

In the fifties, Hyman (1953) and Kahl (1957)[115] argued that (in the context of the American society) value system of different social groups varies according to their socio-economic position. This value system would be characterised by the "willingness" to study among the privileged and middle classes and an "apathy" and "fatalism" among the underprivileged

---

[113] I will keep to the French term "*quartier*" (Germ: (*Brennpunkt*) viertel; Eng.: suburban area because it is the word used by the actors, which refers to its label as "priority" area, but also insofar as it represents a place identifiable by its social issues ([which] leads to the stigmatisation of its inhabitants, particularly in a security context where inhabitants are less apprehended for by their difficulties than for their dangerosity" (C. Avenel, 2006, quoted by Vubeau in Kirszbaum, 2015, p. 12).

[114] Original quotation: "[...] dans un contexte où les élèves vivent l'échec scolaire comme une fatalité et ne se projettent pas suffisamment dans une perspective dynamique, positive et constructive de poursuite d'études."

[115] HYMAN, H. (1953). *The Values Systems of Different Classes*. In Bendix, R. & Lipset, S., Class, Status and Power. New York/London: The free Press. Macmillan. KAHL, J. (1957). *The American Class Structure*. New York: Rinehart.

classes. These differentiated value systems were supposed to explain, at least partly, the difference between students coming from different socio-economic backgrounds regarding their "mobilisation" at school and, finally, their school performances or failures. However, according to Merle and Piquée (2006), whose objective was to deconstruct the terms of "motivation" and "mobilisation", this approach could not explain whether the difference of judgement among the students the cause or of their performance or failure the consequence was (*ibid*, p. 96). Instead, their results highlight the fact that students' "mobilisation" or "motivation"[116] cannot be reduced to a quasi-naturalisation of the social (referring to Bourdieu's and Passeron's position) but is highly dependent on the individual school experience over time (*ibid*., p. 109).

This illustrates the two perspectives from which one working in school can interpret the dropout phenomenon, or rather where to place the cursor on internal or external causes: referring to the "lack of motivation", in relation with students' socio-economic or cultural (or even ethnic) background amounts to individualise and naturalise the relation to school and knowledge while the research in education has shown that this relation is far from being socially neutral; on the contrary, referring to school structures and arrangements consists of seeing the problem within the school. Often, however, professionals' testimonies mix stereotypical ascriptions and incapacitating material and emotional conditions to fulfil school expectations. If they point to school arrangements that should be improved, their remarks could be summarised by "but this is how things are", which underlines their powerlessness. In this respect, the "fatality" mentioned by Madec as regards students' attitude could actually describe her own perception of the "dropout phenomenon".

2.1.1.2.2 Madec's apprehension of the causes of "early leaving": "the school bag is already overloaded" from the outside and school "does what it can".

Madec says she "has an expression" for explaining dropout attitudes, which is based on the following metaphor: "The school bag is already overloaded before even putting a pen in it and entering the school" (Madec, p. 13)[117]. It can be interpreted in a way to see the problem outside the school, related to students' private environments, and which disturb their capacity to fufill their school duties and cope with school expectations.

She specifies that she "does not want to generalise" though and tries to avoid formulations that search

[116] The indicator 'mobilisation' is constructed from the level of performance, school experience and the valorisation of school.

[117] Original quotation: "Moi j'ai une expression parfois qui dit que le cartable est bien chargé avant même d'y avoir mis un crayon et un cahier avant même de franchir le portail de l'école".

to put the blame on one specific cause. Her discourse, however, is characterised by the relations established between dimensions that characterise the modern precariat (single parent, work precariousness), parental education, the case of migrants – language issues –lacking educational competence and authority and failure to adhere to institutional standards and expectations. Finally, it emerges from this discourse that the problem lies within the familial environment, in parental unwillingness to commit to school prescriptions and norms, in antagonistic systems of values:

> *"There are some cases… I am trying to bring precise situations to mind but I don't want to generalise…alright. For example, children who are living with their mothers. Single-parent families. But not only, of course. Single-parent families who are working either very early in the morning or very late in the evening. In these situations it is difficult for the students to wake up and be on time at school….This would be one case. There are other cases where it is not single-parent families but... where the father is... where it is difficult to make fathers come to the school. There are fathers who are working on building sites for many days, or who are away the whole week. And the mother who manages the family but... there are some questions, which are not solved or which are solved but not in the way we hoped. And there are other parameters. Parameters of understanding. I mean there are different levels of understanding: understanding French. We have got families who don't speak French at all. Well, we have the possibility to call in interpreters and it happens but it is not easy to make the families come even if they know translators can come…but sometimes it happens. But the issue of understanding French remains. In addition, issues persist regarding our expectations, our functioning. Perhaps also... in terms of adhesion. [...] I mean, there is a way to see and handle the things at home, there is what I ask my children to do or not, there is the frame I put or not. There are rules that I set up or not. And at school have our own set of rules... and these two do not always match. Most of the time they do. But, generally speaking, where there are some difficulties it is because they don't. And in addition to that there is the question of authority. Not the authority in judicial terms. The authority as a parent over the child" (Madec, 2016, p. 11)*[118]

[118] Original quotation: "Il y a des situations familiales, notamment. J'essaie d'avoir en tête des situations d'élèves précises, mais sans vouloir généraliser on est d'accord. Par exemple des enfants qui sont avec leurs mamans. Familles monoparentales. Mais pas que bien sûr. Familles monoparentales qui ont des horaires de travail tard le soir ou très très tôt le matin. Ou c'est compliqué pour les enfants de se lever, d'être à l'heure à l'école, donc y a des situations comme ça. Yen a d'autres où ce ne sont pas des familles monoparentales mais… où le père est…. Où les pères sont difficiles à faire venir au collège. Ce seront des papas qui vont être sur les chantiers pendant plusieurs jours, voire toute la semaine en déplacement. Et la maman gérant la famille mais... y a des questions de cadre quoi qui sont pas posés, ou qui sont posés, mais qui ne sont pas posés de la même manière de ce qu'on pourrait espérer. Et puis il y a d'autres paramètres. Des paramètres de compréhension. Alors c'est compréhension à différents niveaux: c'est la compréhension de la langue française. On a des familles qui parlent pas du tout la langue française. Alors on a la possibilité de demander à des traducteurs de venir et ça arrive mais c'est pas facile de faire venir les familles même si elles savent qu'on peut faire venir des traducteurs mais ça arrive. Mais y a quand même cette difficulté de compréhension de la langue. Donc compréhension de nos attentes, de notre fonctionnement. Difficulté de compréhension bah de ça. De nos attentes, de notre fonctionnement. Peut-être aussi de ... d'adhésion. C'est-à-dire que à la maison y a une manière de voir les

While Madec is conscious of social and economic issues as well as difficult life circumstances that might impact negatively on parents' and students' stance towards schooling, she still frames the problem in terms of parents' educational deficits. Many of them would not enforce school norms or have any expectations for their children (lack of "authority", rival educational standards, no "comprehension" and/or "adhesion"). Institutional "efforts", such as the possibility of involving interpreters, do not produce satisfactory results. For Madec, "there is a need to work on social norms" that go beyond the act of schooling: "there are some students who act within certain norms but unfortunately those are not the norms they should have when they are for instance at school" (Madec, p. 12)[119]. This should lead us to question the conditions in which terms these norms are (unilaterally) imposed, debated or negotiated while much research in education has shown how the school model of socialisation is aligned with the model dominating upper social classes (Forquin, 1979, p. 92).

Discourses blaming parents for the deficits of their children's school problems are best captured by the motto "children from poor backgrounds ought to be poor children" (Lahire, 1998, p. 108). Indeed, this understanding is rather common and finds scientific support in the assumed existence of a "socio-handicap" by certain populations, which leads to disqualify familial socialisation automatically (Van Zanten, 2001, p. 152). The paradigm of social and cultural "handicap" assumes that children coming from working-class backgrounds lack the cultural means and conditions that would enable them to perform well at school; instead, these conditions actually only explain disadvantage for some students in terms of psychological development and linguistic and intellectual retardation (Sicot, 2005, p. §5). Despite the fact that this approach has been regularly criticised for the lack of scientific foundations on which the theorisation is based while it rather represents a "class ethnocentrism", my research will show how it continues to play a decisive explicative role for the actors (Forquin, 1979, p. 93).

The problem is that it perpetuates a "social" gap between certain population and the school institution. For Van Zanten, discourses that disqualify (working class) modes of socialisation as such, prevent us from considering those "families" as serious actors of educational processes; they help to partially free professionals, who are experiencing difficulties in their

---

choses, y a une manière de fonctionner, y a ce que je demande à mes enfants ou pas, y a le cadre que je mets ou pas. Y a les règles que je mets en place ou pas. Et nous dans un établissement scolaire, y a un cadre, y a des règles... et elles ne se rencontrent pas toujours. Et le plus souvent si mais là quand même où il y a le plus de difficulté c'est en général parce qu'elles ne se rencontrent pas. Et avec ça il y a la question de l'autorité. De l'autorité pas au sens juridique du terme. L'autorité en tant que parent vis-à-vis de l'enfant."

[119] Original quotation: "Donc on est quand même dans la construction de l'élève et pas qu'au sens de sa formation scolaire. Mais aussi éducative, de citoyen. Donc y a vraiment un travail à faire sur les codes. Et y a des élèves, ils ont des codes, mais ils n'ont pas toujours des codes qu'il faudrait quand ils sont par exemple dans un établissement scolaire. [..] ".

job, from their responsibility (Van Zanten, 2001, pp. 151 ff., referring to Glasman, 1992). For Millet and Thin (2005), familial logics and practices cannot be separated from the school experience and settings, be they learning or cognitive issues, institutional sanctions or institutional sorting categories (Millet & Thin, p. 17). They underline the precarious economic situations and social conditions many families experience. These conditions seriously hamper chances to succeed at school and to adopt and internalise the attitudes required by the school and concerning the relation to knowledge (the "*skolè*") (*ibid*., pp. 31 ff.). A recent official report tried to emphasise these circumstances (Delaye, 2015): "below certain levels of material security deriving from a stable job, housing, regular and minimal income, individuals are not able to look into the future in a way that is necessary for school education to make sense (Millet & Thin, 2005, p. 39, referring to Bourdieu, 1992)[120]. To those conditions we can add the important role migrants' legal status plays, which is regulated by migration policies and enable people to look on a more or less confident way into the future[121]. Furthermore, Millet and Thin, referring to research conducted by Beaud (1995) explain how school expansion has contributed to changing the structures of family relations in working-class families and thus weakening the parental authority and generating structural misunderstandings between both generations (*ibid*., p. 41). Precarious social conditions and family relations combined with a deprivation from educational and cultural capital, the difficulty to mobilise resources that would help to support students' schooling, parents' former school trajectories, negative experiences of institutional domination and disqualification, accumulation of ruptures and biographical incidents are among the many factors that help to understand parents' and students' negative relations to school. However, by themselves, they are not able to explain dropouts, but only in combination with other dimensions of students' social lives, starting with school dimensions (*ibid*., pp. 102-103). This, however, does not appear in Madec's positioning. Instead, her the role and that of her deputy is to keep students "as long as possible" between the walls (to paraphrase Begaudeau's novel, see introduction).

Madec's deputy, George, whose function consists of the "daily management" of school affairs, understands his role as making students "aware of the importance of education"

---

[120] P. Bourdieu, "Les sous-prolétaires algériens", les Temps modernes, décembre 1992.

[121] On the third of March 2016, I participated in a meeting of a municipal organization, which is supervising families and students individually and anonymously. The social worker mentions the stress resulting from short-term residence permits, which are to be renewed regularly and would prevent parents and children from being able to invest positively in the school career.

(George, p. 4)[122]. How does the school consider and implement this objective? Does it apply measures of control and sanctions or acknowledge students' experiences and understanding of "usefulness"? Do measures consist of keeping the most "difficult elements" in the system "as long as possible" until they have, if possible, a qualification, as George suggests?: "We have some students, who are in a difficult situation, to say the least, and we try to find solutions in order to keep them in the system and make sure they get leave it with something; that they are orientated and, if possible, get a diploma" (George, p. 1)[123]. For Madec, institutional efforts (in terms of educational support) should concentrate on the last years of the *collège* before the transition into the upper secondary education; this is also the levels where teachers regularly observe particular difficulties experienced by the students but also for teachers doing their job. According to Madec, these difficulties are "normal" and related to "adolescence". At the age of 14-15 students "aspire" to leave the lower secondary school, which is understandable and "for the best"; however, at the same time they are afraid of *orientation* and unsure about what to do after they have left (Madec, p. 13)[124]. The orientation at the end of the lower secondary education can, in fact, be considered in line with the French historian Prost as a "sword of Damocles: 'work or you will be orientated', with which parents and teachers try to motivate the adolescents. It gives bad students notice to admit their responsibility in their failure, which makes them resign or rebel rather than to effectively encourage them to stay mobilised" (Prost, 2013, p. 194). The diversity and different worth of secondary school tracks of which students and their parents are aware[125], the ongoing stigmatisation of working-class students through their orientation into vocational tracks help to understand their fear regarding the school orientation process. This fear also leads to questioning the (belief in the) principles of "lifelong learning" which have not arrived in lower secondary schools where orientation still seems to be apprehended through its crucial and irreversible character. Duru-Bellat and

---

[122] Original quotation: "c'est lui faire prendre conscience que l'école sert à quelque chose".

[123] Original quotation: "On a quelques élèves qui sont en situation difficile pour parler simplement et on essaie de trouver des solutions pour les maintenir dans le système et faire en sorte qu'ils sortent avec quelque chose. Une orientation principalement, si possible un diplôme."

[124] Original quotation: "C'est le niveau 4ème. Si vous vous souvenez au CA sur la DGH si je pouvais avoir quelques moyens […] si c'était possible [..] de mettre des groupes supplémentaires en 4ème. Les professeurs renvoient ça. Là où c'est plus difficile, c'est le niveau 4ème […] En 3ème les élèves globalement [..]Y a une aspiration à quitter le collège et c'est tout à fait normal et tout à fait souhaitable et tant mieux. Le niveau 4ème il y a des aspects qui convergent liés à l'adolescence, liés peut-être à ce... comment dire, à ce sentiment peut-être de rupture de l'élève entre la 5ème et la 4ème qu'il ressent lui-même à la fois dans son corps et dans son esprit. Bon y a des éléments comme ça qui peuvent intervenir. Encore une année au collège et je vais faire quoi je vais vers quoi? Le niveau 4ème semble être plus compliqué. En tout cas moi c'est ce que je retiens quand on fait les conseils péda sur la DGH [..] priorité 4ème."

[125] See for example the case of the college students interviewed by G. Felouzis in 1993 (Felouzis Georges. Conceptions de la réussite et socialisation scolaire [Le cas des lycéens des filières générales, technologique et de LEP]. In: *Revue française de pédagogie*, volume 105, 1993. pp. 45-58).

van Zanten note that in French lower secondary schools, the gap between students from lower or upper social classes increases through the deepening of performance disparities and the practices of "distinction" of families, who are either unequally "equipped" or in a favourable position to influence their students' orientation (van Zanten & Duru-Bellat, 2010, pp. 46 ff.). Merle even speaks about a "segregating democratisation" (Merle, 2012) and numerous studies have highlighted institutional and school practises in the reproduction of this segregation and relations of domination between the different social groups (Duru-Bellat & van Zanten, *op. cit.*).

Of course, one can agree with Lorcerie in saying that, to a certain extent, schools "endure" their territory: they might be able to warn local decision makers but have no real power over the distribution of the diverse populations in the city nor on the demarcation of the catchment area or on avoiding practices of privileged families; the actions of principals are also framed by the structure of their educational system, which they cannot really change. However, since certain institutional arrangements and professional practices contribute to producing, mitigating or accentuating school inequalities, one can wonder how such an interpretation of "negative school participation" enables to put these practices and arrangements into question. On the other hand, one should also question the function of such an interpretation, in relation to how Madec considers that she actually addresses this issue in her portfolio. This will be the topic of the second section. Before that, I would like to introduce the German perspective of this first section dedicated to the way principals apprehend their role and interpret the issue "early-school-leaving".

2.1.2 Germany and Baden-Württemberg

In Baden-Württemberg recent governance reforms over the last decades, such as the implementation of the *Gemeinschaftsschule*, a comprehensive, all-day school besides the traditional tripartite school system (1.1.2.1), have reinforced principals' leadership and responsibility in the realisation of "equal opportunities" without the conditions for this equality being provided politically (1.1.2.2).

2.1.2.1 Baden-Württemberg: the creation of the GMS as response to the "unfairness" of a segmented school system

Similar to the Frenc case, the German school system has developed locally. It was particularly dominated and steered by religious authorities, then rich and independent cities, under the

flourishing development of trade and business. During the whole time of the *Heilige Römische Reich Deutscher Nation* (962-1806) central power is insignificant regarding the governance of the school system (Döbert, in Döbert, Hörner, von Kopp, Reuter (ed.), 2010, p. 175). Through the unification of Germany during the 19th century by the Prussian army, the school system is federally organised and characterised by "[…] the national-federal diversity, state and denominational antagonisms and the ever-overlaying idea of a national educational unification […] (Anweiler, 1996, quoted in Döbert *op. cit.*, p. 176.) Over time and caused by the gradual development of a middle class, that did not immediately put an end to the aristocracy, school structures emerged that reflected the organisation of German society into a "three-class-society". During the 19th century a secular and tripartite school system developed, which served the unification of Germany and to represent and stabilise the political and social interests of a series of complex actors, which cannot be reduced to the only elites. Indeed, the different national educational systems in Germany "did not only result from the rational planning of dominant elites, even if these were interested in the provision of adequate qualified soldiers and citizens, in order to improve the economic and military situation; the different national educational systems actually and primarily resulted from complex cultural and socio-economic processes of modernization and rationalization, which involved different groups of interests and political parties" (Becker, 2014). Nevertheless and despite democratic ideals that dominated Europa following from the Enlightenment, the democratisation of compulsory schooling and from the experience of war, which led to opening higher schools to wider and wider social categories, "the establishment of the German system is essentially distinguished for representing the political, economic and social statutory interests of a three-class society" (*ibid*.). This history is very important in understanding the positioning of the school professionals interviewed in this research which in part reflects a rooted social imaginary marked by the tension of humanist ideals (*Bildung*, represented by the historical figure of Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835)) and class distinction (structural-institutional relations between education and social structures of inequality and class) . It may be useful to keep in mind that Germany has remains an Empire until 1919 while France has experienced democratic regimes and pressures already at the end of the 18th century. The weight of conservative forces against the democratisation of the educational system may therefore have lasted longer and be stronger in Germany (especially in the liberal-conservative South-West part).

So, during the 20th century, under the pressure of progress and development regarding business, sciences, technic and state administration, as well as the development of a middle

class, a "middle school" emerged between the *Volksschule* and the *Gymnasium*. The *Volksschule* concentrated on basic literacy and numeracy and led to professional activities in agriculture and industry, the *Realschule* supplied the emerging middle classes with education adapted to the needs of non-academic white collar work, private administration and the military domain. Finally, the *Gymnasium* addressed needs of higher classes striving for higher education and leading positions in economy and politics (Becker, 2014, Cramer et *al*., 2010, p. 5). The different periods marked by international interventions and occupations, as well as by the division between West and East Germany after the collapse of the national socialist regime have influenced the way each *Land* conceives its educational system (organisation, structures, contents and evaluation). In some *Länder*, the integrated form of the school system dominates while in other *Länder* the segmented and differentiated form is preponderant, such as in Baden-Württemberg[126]. Germany has been characterised since the beginning by the establishment of a standardised and segmented school system, as well as by the development of a corporative model of professional education in which professional organisation, state bureaucracy and schools for vocational education and training cooperate while students do their apprenticeship in firms and professional schools (Jacobi, 2013). It is also important to mention that there is a long tradition of "special schools" in which students with "disabilities" are educated. Until the end of the 1960s, migrant children were not subject to the obligation of compulsory schooling. Nowadays, they are still overrepresented in *Hauptschulen* and special schools (Britz, 2007). This is a prevalent and recurrent issue in Germany, which is given important coverage in the research and the media.

After the publication of the PISA-results in 2000 ("PISA-Schock")[127], which ranked Germany below average with regards to students' school performance and pointed to the narrow relations between social origins, migrant background and gender in school performances and opportunities[128], many reforms have been undertaken at federal and state (*Länder*) levels in

---

[126] This is said to change with the introduction of the *Gemeinschaftsschule*, although it should be noted as Tillmann (2015) argues that Baden-Württemberg has expanded the structure of its education system to four segments including five different school forms.

[127] Cf. previous part. With this expression, one refers to the first PISA-publication, which revealed that German students performed below average that other tested countries. It especially pointed to a deep correlation between social origins and educational opportunities. This publication triggered in Germany a general reflection about the "quality" of the educational system and led to many reforms, which, among others, aimed to unify educational standards between the different *Länder*.

[128][http://www.bpb.de/politik/hintergrund-aktuell/174546/pisa-studie], last visit on 13/08/18. Since then, Germany has improved its educational outcomes very much (and ranks above the average) while France has seen a negative evolution of PISA indicators in many fields, especially the performance gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students and the gap between immigrants and natives. The thematic comparison for 2015 is available on the PISA Website: [http://www.compareyourcountry.org/pisa/country/FRA?lg=en], 13/08/18.

order to improve the "quality" of the educational system (Bouttemont & Plumelle, 2002, see previous part).

Similarly to French models resulting from governance shifts (see part 1), the steering of the education system under the supervision of the state and local authorities in charge of quality assurance has changed over the last twenty years. While it was initially carried out by way of political and administrative prescriptions, the steering of the German (secondary) school system has evolved towards (local) results-oriented governance (from inputs to outputs) associated with cost effectiveness, quality and efficiency (Cramer and al. *op.cit*. p. 14 and pp. 60-62). This shift could be observed in particular in Baden-Württemberg with the introduction of the *Gemeinschaftsschule* in 2012, an "inclusive" and comprehensive lower school system replacing the traditional tripartite school system (Bohl, Wacker and *al*., 2016; Wieckmann, 2009, pp. 413-415). In 2015, one could read on the official website of the Ministry of Education in Baden-Württemberg: "the *Land* understands Education policy as a process that grows from the bottom of the deck". The localisation of education policy is seen "as a guarantee to better promote educational opportunities for all"[129]. The reasons for the reorganisation of the traditional school system in Germany are various and related to demographic, financial and "efficiency" arguments. For instance, through demographic evolution and the introduction of free-choice policy regarding the orientation after primary schooling in 2012 (except in Bayern), many schools emptied out. The efficiency and legitimacy of *Hauptschulen* (vocational schools) have been continuously undermined by negative representations, parental practices regarding orientation, higher rates of class repeating and its lack of social and ethnic representativeness. Finally, the creation of a comprehensive form of schooling results from the influence of international studies comparing the performance of education systems in Europe or worldwide, which have been highlighting the bad results in terms of educational equality and justice of the segmented educational systems with early orientation (Walther et al., 2016, pp. 148-149 referring to Allmendinger's classification of the educational system (1989); (Dubet et al., 2010, pp. 92-93, referring to Mons' typology of European educational systems (2007))[130]. Against this backdrop, "the *Gemeinschaftsschule* is understood [as a means] to overcome the present observable deficits of the school system" (Wieckmann, 2009, p. 415). The central ideas of the

[129]Original quotation: "Die Landesregierung versteht Bildungspolitik als einen Prozess, der von unten wächst. Dies gilt auch und in besonderem Maße für die Einführung der Gemeinschaftsschule. Es ist uns Ansporn und Verpflichtung, beste Bildungschancen für alle zu schaffen. […]" http://www.kultusportal-bw.de/,Lde/831516) 14/9/2015

[130] In a brief historical note, K.-J. Tillmann reminds us that critiques of the three-segmented school system can be traced back to 1900 (Tillmann, 2015).

GMS in Baden-Württemberg are "a school for all" ("*eine Schule für alle*") and "diversity makes smarter" ("*Diversität macht schlauer*"). *GMS* renounces the idea of selection and promotes a better learning environment (Bohl and al. *op.cit*., p. 73). However, I will show how these ideals still need to impose themselves on a remaining competitive educational environment.

More precisely, "the idea of all-day school, on the one hand, primarily addressed schools with an over-representation of socially disadvantaged children as well as children with migration backgrounds aiming at rebalancing the time they would spend in school compared with the time spent with their families who were and are still characterised as milieus with little cultural capital in terms of education and attitudes related to education" (Cramer et al., op.cit. p. 27). The assumption of the all-day school is that the long-term participation in extracurricular activities "can enhance school attachment which in turn leads to a positive development of academic performance" (Fischer & Brümmer, 2012). The official authorities also argue that it "relieves" parents (see official website, *op. cit*.). However, the diverse orientations taken by *Gemeinschaftsschulen* developing in primary and secondary education show that the all-day school is differently understood where it is implemented. For instance, in [former] *Realschule* and *Gymnasium* "it serves as an infrastructure for the expansion of teaching hours resulting from the increasing educational demands and the shortened period to the *Abitur*" (Cramer *ibid*.). For this reason, there are many forms of all-day schools, "from simply expanding teaching with a lunch break in between to integrating formal teaching with non-formal support teaching and counselling and breaking up rigid teaching structures and mixing formal and non-formal learning through cooperation with youth workers" (*ibid*.). This has been highlighted, among others, by the cross-Länder study about the development of all-day schools by the Leibniz institute for educational research and information (DIPF)[131]. This aspect will be developed more deeply in part 4.

Markel is the principal of the Geschwister Scholl *GMS* in Sollenstadt. He is rather critical of this new reform and considers that policy makers complexified the educational landscape and governance, which increased the competition for resources.

[131] Official website: see (DIPF & StEG Konsortium, 2019).

2.1.2.2 Markel, principal of the Geschwister Scholl Gemeinschaftsschule: between exhaustion, pressure and frustration

The study of school principals in Niedersachsen conducted by Maike Languth in the framework of her PhD (2016, *op. cit*.) focuses on the perception principals have of their work ("*Berufsauffassung*"), which is theorised with regard to the theories of leadership, organisations, and of professions, as well as on the background of the latest development of the research on school leadership (*Schulleitungsforschung*). As already mentioned, it stresses the individualisation of the job and its changing dimensions under the effects of changing educational governance (see above). Today, the diversity of principals' duties stands out of proportion with remaining traditional hierarchies within the school organisation, a traditional administrative model, teachers' resistance, the scarcity of resources and limited decisional power (Languth, pp. 7-8). This knowledge background helps to understand the way Markel, principal of the Geschwister Scholl *GMS*, sees his role in relation to the development of this new school form (1.1.2.2.1), as well as his understanding of the issue of "early leaving" (1.1.2.2.2).

2.1.2.2.1 The GMS, "an evil invention in Baden-Württemberg"

When the interview took place, Markel, former teacher and deputy in other schools, had been working for ten years as a deputy and then principal. Since 2004 he has been the principal of the Geschwister Scholl *Gemeinschaftsschule (GMS)*, formerly Geschwister Scholl *Realschule*[132]. Contrary to his French counterpart Madec, he still teaches chemistry and technology for a couple of hours per week; indeed, German principals are former teachers and the conservation of teaching activities, despite their increasing number of diverse duties as "managers" and "developers" (school *profiling*), deserves specific identity significance (Languth, 2016, p. 14).

The atmosphere of the interview conducted with Markel can be best described by words like "tiredness", "personal overload", "frustration", and "irritation". Markel describes how his job has changed over time, has become more complex and more demanding in terms of time, energy and institutional demands. He complains about the fast pace with which one reform succeeds another. This context increased the tensions among teachers (*Lehrerkollegium*):

[132] See introduction.

"So, the things I don't like at all is that we are always under permanent time pressure. Everything is under time pressure. One can only do the most important thing and must constantly decide. Constantly, constantly, constantly. […]. We must be careful that parents have the impression that everything works well. This is very important. The local education authority [Schulamt] keeps asking for feedback, and lays down the rules: did you work on this or that? These are the input requirements. The municipality makes requirements where it says, OK, under these conditions you should do that. One works on the basis that schools are operatively independent; this is a new invention in Baden-Württemberg, and this is a negative invention, because they say "operatively independent", meaning I [do?] the job but financing and personnel management are dealt with somewhere else. The core instruments to steer a firm are the personnel and the money. And we don't have either competence. I am the financial manager but I cannot say, I need that much money. They give me a specific amount of money and that's it. I say I need that many people and in return we become allocated a certain number of people and that's it. And that's stressful. If I could say, I plan this and this and this, I want to develop this in a certain way, for which I need that many working hours, it would be great. But we got a predefined number of hours and that's all there is. And these hours are very limited. We would always like to do more but I cannot ask my colleagues to do all this in addition to their regular work ... Therefore it is always stressful actually […] (Markel, 2017, pp. 9-10)[133]

Markel emphasises his limited room for manoeuvre and describes the school he is leading as a half-independent firm without the possibility of managing his own budget and human resources. He talks about the numerous and diverse expectations he has to cope with: from the parents, local authorities ("*der Schulamt*"), local funding institutions like the municipality, which for example finance youth workers[134], while financial and human resources are bound, among others, to the number and quality of students the school welcomes and remains the

[133] Original quotation: "Also was ich überhaupt nicht mag ist, dass man unter permanenten Zeitstress steht. Es ist alles unter Zeitdruck. Man kann immer nur das Wichtigste machen und muss dauernd entscheiden. Dauernd, dauernd, dauernd […]. Also wir sind... wir müssen schauen, dass die Eltern den Eindruck haben, dass es gut läuft. Das ist sehr wichtig. Das Schulamt fragt auch noch, es macht Zielvereinbarungen: haben sie das und das verarbeitet? Da gibt's Vorgaben. Die Gemeinde hat Vorgaben wo sie sagt ok, in dem und dem Rahmen muss man das machen. […] Man geht von dem System einer operativ eigenständigen Schule aus, das ist eine Erfindung in Baden-Württemberg, und das ist eine üble Erfindung, weil die sagen operativ eigenständig, d.h. den Job [mache ich?] aber Finanzhaushalt und Personalhaushalt liegen woanders. Die Kerninstrumente um einen Betrieb zu steuern, sind das Personal und die Gelder. Und beide Hoheiten haben wir nur halb. Ich bin der Geldverwalter aber ich kann nicht sagen, ich brauche das und das Geld. Die geben mir eine fertige Summe und fertig. Ich sage ich brauche die und die Leute und wir kriegen die und die Leute und dann ist es fertig. Und das ist stressig. Wenn ich sage, ich habe das und das und das vor, das will ich so aufbauen, dann brauche ich die und die Stunden, dann wäre es eine gute Sache. Aber wir kriegen so viele Stunden und fertig. Und die sind knapp. Also wir möchten immer mehr machen aber ich kann nicht immer von den Kollegen sagen, sie sollten das zusätzlich machen und zusätzlich und nochmal eine Stunde... deswegen es ist immer anstrengend eigentlich […]."

[134] The same applies to the *collège* in France. Its financial and administrative resources are decided between five different authorities [http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid214/le-college-enseignements-organisation-et-fonctionnement.html#Le_fonctionnement_des_colleges], last visit on the 16th /06/2018.

prerogative of supervisory authorities[135]. The headmaster underlines this context to highlight his narrow room for manoeuvre while he has to satisfy so many different actors and lacks financial resources that he needs "to implement the things he would like to".

Markel has to manage and organise, together with his deputy, the transition from the *Realschule* to the *GMS* (since 2014), to maintain the number and diversity of students while the *GMS* suffers from negative representations, influenced by their composition consisting largely of students from lower social categories who were recommended to go to lower-rated schools such as *Haupt-* or *Werkrealschule*. Furthermore, the supply in terms of school forms has increased and thus competition between them, stimulated by the liberalisation of students' local distribution (2004) and school choice (2012) (Bohl and Wacker, 2016, p. 43). As in France with regard to schools receiving the label "priority education" (*Réseau d'éducation prioritaire*), (see Ben Ayed, 2009; Duru-Bellat & Van Zanten, 2007), German parents seem to see in the *GMS,* which aims at replacing in the long-term the "detested" *Hauptschule*[136],a new place that will gather the "problematic children" together ("*Problemkinder"*) and thus develop strategies to avoid such a school. As in France, in Germany, school choice remains very dependent on parents' socio-economic status (Krüger-Hemmer, 2016).

Markel feels bad vis-à-vis his colleagues. He cannot provide them with the necessary resources and support but at the same time understands their difficulty in coping with the reform and with the new "clients" that have resulted from the creation of the *GMS* and its "inclusive" character. As a consequence, students in the *GMS* used to be spoken in terms of "heterogeneity", which tends to recruit from the lower social classes and is characterised by its higher proportion of foreign students/ students with migration background[137]. Because of the perceived lack of resources ("we do now have other resources because of the school form but in comparison with the tasks we have got, we have very few resources (...) this is not OK!")[138], and the pedagogic duties of the *GMS,* he needs to ask the existing staff "to do more" work. This can explain the tensions between the principal and the teaching staff.

Markel is trying to keep the pace and the idea of the reform, which he considers necessary ("we don't change the school for fun") but is tired of the governance evolution that has

---

[135] Similar to France. Local authorities might simulate their calculations with regard to specific characteristics of the school (priority education, etc.) [http://www.esen.education.fr/fr/ressources-par-type/outils-pour-agir/le-film-annuel-des-personnels-de-direction/detail-d-une-fiche/?a=21&cHash=9cafb694c8] 22/06/18

[136] See the publication of the BpB "*Hauptschule*" (BpB, APUZ 28/2007).

[137] Allgemeinbildende Schulen in Baden-Württemberg, Statistik Aktuell 2017 [https://www.statistik-bw.de/Service/Veroeff/Statistik_AKTUELL/803417004.pdf], last visit 18/03/19.

[138] Original quotation: "Wir haben jetzt andere Ressourcen wegen der Schulart aber gemessen für die Aufgaben die wir haben, haben wir sehr wenig Ressourcen. Hier müssten viel mehr Sozialpädagogen, hier müssten Psychologen an die Schule, hier müsste ein Haufen an Betreuungskräfte an die Schule […] das ist nicht in Ordnung!"

accompanied the reform and increased his duties and responsibilities. At the same time, the number of "incidents" in everyday school life have increased as well:

> *Q: You said, you have been principal since 2000. What has changed in your work?*
>
> *M: oh. [Strained smile] Many things. A lot of things. It is difficult to explain. It has become much, much more complex. The work. There are many tasks that were added, which were initially not part of principals' job. It is called "Abschichtung", that is, the higher levels of administration delegate the work downward. And they say: well, this is a local issue, you are able to solve it there by yourself as well. Through a lot of online systems, and evaluation, and alson differentiated requests, it is also more work. We must manage this somehow. The everyday life has become much more complex, the incidents have become many more. Many, many more.*
>
> *Q: Because of the GMS?*
>
> *M: Through societal change. Not only through the Gemeinschaftsschule. Society is changing and because it is changing, the school form is changing. We don't change the school form for fun...but we change because of changing societal conditions, which are currently changing fundamentally" (Markel, 2017, pp. 3-4)*[139]

The *GMS*, advertised as a bottom-up process (see above) supposed to increase school autonomy in order to better cope with local needs and contexts, can be described, according to Markel's words, as a "'passive subsidiarity', where national policy proclamations and/or devolution for more local autonomy are not accompanied by any form of support for either implementation or regulatory responsibility at the subnational levels (Kazepov, 2010 in Walther and al., *op.cit*. p. 59). Indeed, the study on the governance of educational trajectories in Europe, among others in France and Germany, has accounted for the complexification of educational governance caused by decentralization and recentralisation resulting in structural governance problems leading to, for instance, the shortage of resources; especially in France,

[139] Original quotation: "Q: mm. Und sie haben gesagt, Sie seien seit 2000 tätig im Schulleitungsbereich. Was für Sachen haben sich geändert in Bezug auf Ihre Tätigkeiten?/ M: -viel. Sehr, sehr viel. Das kann man schwer vermitteln. Es ist viel, viel komplexer geworden die Arbeit. Es sind viele Aufgaben dazu gekommen, die früher gar nicht in Bereich der Schulleitung waren. Man nennt das Abschichtung, d.h. die oberen Verwaltungsebenen delegieren die Arbeit nach unten. Und sagen ja: da ist es ja vor Ort, sie können das auch fertig machen. Durch viele online Systeme, und Abfragen, und nochmals differenzierte Abfragen, ist es auch mehr Arbeit. Wir müssen das alles irgendwie... managen. Der Alltag ist hier viel, viel komplexer geworden, die Störfälle sind viel, viel mehr geworden. Viel, viel mehr./ Q: -durch die GMS? / M: -Durch die gesellschaftliche Veränderung. Nicht nur die Gemeinschaftsschule. Die Gesellschaft ändert sich, und weil die sich ändert, ändert sich die Schulform. Wir ändern nicht die Schulform aus Spaß… sondern wir ändern auf Grund ganz veränderten gesellschaftliche Bedingungen, die sich grade richtig, richtig verändern".

Germany and Italy, this context triggers feelings of disempowerment among principals (Amos, Loncle, and al., 2016, pp. 78-79):

> *"[the working conditions are] increasingly worse. I have been doing this job for many years, I have been working in this field since 2000 and I realize now that it has become too much for me. It never stops" (Fritz Markel, 2017, p. 3)*[140].

Markel says he is working "at least 70 hours per week" (Markel, p. 3). This week he did not leave the school "before 10pm". It is also "better" to arrive early in the morning because other institutions are more available at this time for phone calls[141]. The activities and his interlocutors are very diverse –which he likes (p. 8) - but this diversity and the quantity of differentiated tasks and decision processes that accompany them feel like a burden when it does not let you an instance to breathe ("I can't even do my paper work during the day")[142]; and make you arrive home after 11 pm five days out of six ("it would be great if I could leave work at 4 pm and say I've finished", p. 8)[143]. The changing pedagogic orientation and principles that have accompanied the implementation of the *GMS*, such as "inclusion" and individualisation of students' support have added new tasks, such as round-tables and more meetings with parents ("the work with parents has increased a lot. A lot of phone calls" p. 4)[144]. New pedagogic approaches have obliged a renewal of pedagogic materials and infrastructure in a short time and havingto think and organise many things differently contributes to putting Markel under increased pressure.

> *"There are so many reforms, we have so many.... things to rethink. To rethink totally. To change and... for example I renewed all the books in the school when I arrived; for € 80,000. Well, I finally have them all and the new educational plan ["Bildungsplan"] arrived, and I can get rid of all of them and order new ones, [...] the new books are not OK anymore, they must be differentiated, they must have*

---

[140] Original quotation: "Zunehmend schlechter. Ich habe es viele Jahre jetzt gemacht, ich bin seit 2000 im Bereich Schulleitung tätig und merke jetzt, dass es mir einfach zu viel wird. Es hört gar nicht auf".

[141] Original quotation: "Wir hatten gestern Abend eine Veranstaltung; und da hatten wir ein technisches Problem: das Haus richtig zu verlassen.. das ging nicht richtig; könnte man nicht richtig abschließen, da war eine Fehlermeldung. Da war ich erst um 23:15 zu Hause. Bin heute etwas später angekommen aber das ist noch… eine Ausnahme. Also . dann. Hat man morgens oft schnell Telefonate mit anderen Schulen oder mit dem Schulamt, weil man die da am besten erreicht. […] Immer spät. Also oft um 20 oder 21 Uhr. Ich habe auch Abend Veranstaltungen. Gestern habe ich... am Montag hatte ich Elternabend, am Dienstag hatte ich Theateraufführung, heute habe ich Supervision, morgen gebe ich einen Kurs, morgen Abend, d.h. jeder Tag am Abend belegt ist. Bis 10. Also die Wochenarbeitszeit liegt ungefähr bei knapp plus minus 70 Stunden"

[142] Original quotation: "ich kann meine Bürosachen am Tag gar nicht abarbeiten. Weil ich immer Störungen hab. Also eigentlich kann man sowas an einem Stück machen aber auf jeden Fall keinen Brief schreiben: da fange ich morgens an, dann gibt es die Störung, dann ist abends den Brief noch nur halb geschrieben. Also ich kann… ruhige Sachen kann ich eher nicht arbeiten".

[143] Original quotation: "es wäre gut, wenn ich auch um 16 Uhr oder so nach Hause gehen können und sagen die Arbeit ist fertig".

[144] Original quotation: "Die Elternarbeit hat sich vielfaches erhöht, viel viel Telefonate".

three levels. And this is hard when there are constantly reforms and adaptations... " (Markel, pp. 8-9)[145]

The *GMS* implements individualisation of learning and differentiated teaching, to which Markel refers to as the "three levels"[146] that aim to respond to different learning processes and capacities (*Leistungsfähigkeit*)[147]. They are reminders of the historical three-segmented educational systems where social classes were sorted out according to their assumed ability to pursue higher studies, a synonym of social distinction: for the working and lower middle classes the *Volksschule*, then *Hauptschule*, for the middle-class the *Realschule*, and the bourgeoisie / aristocracy the *Gymnasium* (see 1.1.2.1). While Markel's representations still illustrate an apprehension of "intelligence", which is socially differentiated according to the distribution of social classes in the different school forms, he, however, accuses the authorities of having missed the point of the democratisation of education:

"There are very intelligent and less intelligent students... this is normal. So, but now they are all in the same class. And this is difficult. This is a huge challenge for the teachers. This is something that pust extreme pressure on the system. Before, they were separated. Now we put them together but it is also not bad because it avoids creating ghettos. The Hauptschulen were ghettos. […] now they are open and… actually today there should be the creation of a system where everybody learns together in the same room. But again, the politicians failed to [recognise needs and take appropriate decisions]; so they must have said: now we gather all children until the 6th grade[148] *and then maybe two tracks: a middle school and a Gymnasium. But now instead of two tracks we have got five different schools, that is there are Hauptschulen, Werkrealschulen*[149]*, there are Realschulen, there are Gemeinschaftsschulen, there is the Gymnasium [...]. And the specialised Gymnasium also exists, because they can get students from the 7th grade. So, it was not made simpler and better structured, but more complex. That is, they divide the resources between five*

[145] Original quotation: "Es gibt so viele Erneuerungen, wir haben so viele ... Sachen neu zu überlegen, ganz neu zu überlegen. Zu verändern und ... ich habe z.B. alle Bücher erneuern müssen als ich in die Schule kam; habe 80 000€ umgesetzt. Und da hatte ich das schön und dann kam das neue Bildungsplan, jetzt kann ich alles weg tun und muss andere besorgen, […]. Da gehen die alten Bücher nicht mehr, sie müssen differenziert sein, sie müssen drei Niveaus haben. […] Und das ist halt die Schwierigkeit, dass es dauernd so viel Neuerungen gibt und Anpassungen, dass man ..."

[146] The three levels are: G for "basic level" (Grundlegendes Niveau), M, for average (Mittleres Niveau) and E for advanced (Erweitertes Niveau).

[147] §7 Schulgesetz Baden-Württemberg. Neufassung vom 03.05.2017.

[148] It corresponds to the 6th grade in France as well (*sixième*).

[149] This is a school form that only exists in Baden-Württemberg. It enables students to apply for a *Hauptschulablschluss* in the 9th grade or a *Realschulabbschluss* in the 10th (ISCED 2).

different school forms. Instead of making three tracks and then keeping only two and put all the resources in them. Well, stupid" (Markel, p. 5)[150].

Indeed, if the German school system is generally on the way to a bi-segmented school structure, differently named and organised in the different *Länder*, this has become apparent because only five *Länder* out of 16 have actually reached such a structure (Tillmann, 2015). Baden-Württemberg offers concretely five different school forms in lower secondary education. It does not take private schools into account, the numbers of which have greatly increased[151] and thus contribute to the diversification of and competition between educational structures (Kraul, 2014).

In this narrow and stressful context, M. Markel just wants to make sure that "things are right":

"Insofern man muss schon schauen, dass die Sachen stimmen doch, muss immer gucken" (Markel, p. 10)

At the end of the spring, the principal was placed on sick leave because of burnout. He came back at the end of the year to say goodbye. I was not there but Matthias Müller (a teacher, see descriptive tab above) told me that, for the first time, the principal seemed to "have spoken freely". He highly criticized state educational authorities, which are not enabling the fulfilment of the promises carried on by the project of the *GMS* ("*eine üble Erfindung in Baden-Württemberg"*)[152] (fieldwork notes, 13/04/2018). However, in his interview, Markel's irritation against policy makers was already quite clear.

This irritation helps to understand his ambivalent representations about the phenomenon of "early leaving" ("*Schulverweigerung*"). While, according to him, students are more able to

[150] Original quotation: "Es gibt ja sehr intelligente, intelligente und weniger intelligente... es ist normal so. so aber jetzt sind sie alle in einem Klassenzimmer. Und das ist eine Schwierigkeit. Das ist eine große Herausforderung an die Lehrer. Das ist was das System extrem belastet. Das war früher ein bisschen getrennt. Jetzt haben wir es zusammengemacht aber es ist auch vom Denken her nicht schlecht weil man kein Ghettos macht. Die Hauptschulen waren auch Ghettos. […] Jetzt hat man sie aufgemacht und… jetzt geht's eigentlich drum, man müsste ein System schaffen, wo man gemeinsam lernt. Das hat aber die Politik wieder verschlafen; also sie hätten sagen müssen, wir machen alle Kinder zusammen bis zu 6. Klasse, und danach vielleicht zwei Säulen: eine Mittelschule und ein Gymnasium, […] Jetzt aber statt zwei Säulen haben wir fünf verschiedenen Schulen; d.h. hat man mal Hauptschulen, man hat Werkrealschulen, man hat Realschulen, man hat Gemeinschaftsschulen, man hat Gymnasium. Und das berufliche Gymnasium das kommt auch noch rein, weil es ab der siebten Klasse auch schon Kinder kriegen kann. Also man es nicht vereinfacht und strukturiert, sondern macht es komplexer. D.h. teilen sie die Ressourcen auf fünf verschiedenen Schularte auf. Anstatt drei Wege zu tun…und dann nur zwei noch zu haben und da alle Ressourcen rein zu stecken. Dumm gelaufen".

[151] The number of private schools has more than doubled between 1998 and 2010, see Tillmann, *op. cit*. Abb. 2.

[152] Original quotation: "the *GMS* is an evil invention in Baden-Württemberg"

"say no" than "before"[153], the current educational structures put pressure on them and their parents which might also explain dropout processes.

2.1.2.2.2 From Markel's burnout to students' dropout: the role of structures and their impact on the margin of manoeuvre and representations.

From the 19th century, and especially during the 20th century, the progressive establishment of "youth" as a universal and autonomous life phase, normative sociocultural standard and "peculiar right" (Fuchs, quoted by Sander, 2002) have influenced the German pedagogic discussion ("*Jugendbild der Pädagogik*"). In this respect, Sander argues that, at the end of the 20th century "the diversity of youth cultures is reported in numerous empirical studies (such as the Schell-studies) and initiates a large youth cultural discourse, which does not only mirrors the pedagogic fascination for youth but also the following worry: to what extent can the autonomisation of youth harm the social integration of adults-in-becoming, their participation in social institutions or political involvement?" (Sander, 2002). The same author concludes by saying that, given to the development of far-right youth cultures in the 1980s and 1990s, the discussion has been characterised by the development of a "pedagogic scepticism" towards forms of youth self-organisation, which used to be positively connoted. The "youth in Germany and their orientation around normative examples" as regards representations concerning future life are phenomena more and more characterised by a "complex, entangled and conflicting trend" between norms generated by traditional figures of examples (pedagogues, parents) and ideals that young people construct on their own through interaction with the world (Sander, 2002), where the autonomy provided by the new technologies, the influence of the cultural and fashion industry as well as wide-ranging discourses play a significant role in relation with the experience in the familial and peer spheres (Galland, 2011, pp. 222 ff.). This background allows us to situate the discourse of Markel about "early leaving" in a wider societal context of adults' interrogations about the role of school as an institution of socialisation in tension with the autonomisation of youth with regard to the traditional forms of authority.

According to Markel, we live in different times and young people have gained in "self-consciousness" in a way that undermines traditional authorities, such as parental or institutional ones:

[153] Nota Bene: "*Verweigerung"* means "refusal". Like I said previously, this term implicitly emphasises individual responsibility and autonomy in dropout processes (see introduction and part 1).

> *"Well, now it is much... well before it was clear, you go to school and that's it. And he must go through with it, and he must achieve it and finish. And now we do a lot, we say, well, hm... We should look at it... my child does not want to go to school anymore, the parents say. 'I cannot do anything, I don't know how I should manage this'. So the... student's self-consciousness to not do something has become stronger. And the refusal (Verweigerung) to do something has become stronger as well. Thus parents are quick to say, 'I don't know what to do. He does not want to." (Markel, p. 12)*[154]

Markel's words can be placed in a more global and ideological context characterised by the domination of the (neo)liberal idea according to which the action is based on the individual initiative, or more precisely on the *homo oeconomicus*, "the individual of initiative and production" (Foucault, 2004, p. 153). For Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot, commenting on Ehrenberg's work about "the weariness of the self"[155], the discourse about the mobilisation of individual capacities and the enterprising spirit has succeeded the constraints of bodies, which was essential in the former Taylorist system. The (discourse on) self-fulfilment replaces the observance of interdictions (Pinçon & Pinçon-Charlot, 1999, p. 778), although social and economic constraints still affect people differently from different social milieus and origins. Moreover, the apparent release of physical constraints –which, however, are still important at school- do not automatically mean that people have become freer, as illustrates the title of Ehrenberg's title. Even within the discipline of sociology the perspective has shifted from the apprehension of students as "agents", whose performance and failure are determined by their socio-economic backgrounds to an analysis of the meaning of schooling as it is constructed by the student, understood as social actors: being a student has become "a job", which consists of accepting or refusing to play by the rules of the game (Sirota, 1993; Perrenoud, 1994, 2010; Breidenstein, 2006 pp. 87-223). The recent demonstrations in France and Germany related to the "gilets-jaunes" protests (France) or in the name of climate issues (France and Germany), which led students and students to take Fridays off to demonstrate can be interpreted as resulting from an interrogation about the role of school in a society, which is not able to guarantee secure feeling about the future and a legitimate societal project and vision.

Markel's words could also be related to wider scientific, pseudo-scientific and public discussions about "the crisis of authority" in traditional institutions such as families and

[154] Original quotation: "Jetzt ist es alles viel... also früher war es klar, du gehst zur Schule und dann ist das so. Und er muss dann durch, und er muss das schaffen und fertig. Und jetzt wird es viel gemacht, man sagt naja, ähm... muss man gucken… mein Kind will gar nicht mehr zur Schule sagen die Eltern dann. 'Ich kann gar nichts machen, ich weiß gar nicht was ich machen soll' ja? Also die... die Selbstbewusstheit des Schülers, etwas nicht zu machen, ist auch stärker geworden. Und die Verweigerung irgendwas zu tun ist auch stärker geworden. So sagen die Eltern auch schnell, 'ich weiß nicht was ich machen soll. Der will nicht mehr'. Ja?"

[155] Alain Ehrenberg, "*La fatigue d'être soi. Dépression et société*", Paris, Odile Jacob.

schools, in which power relations used to be authoritarian and extremely vertical. M. S. Baader analyses the motives that place the claims for change in educational relations at the centre of the 68-protest movement in Germany. For Baader, this debate is directly connected with the intellectual reflections about the reasons that led to National Socialism and with the post-war socio-political-philosophical debate about authority and antiauthority (Baader, 2008). This specific context in German history triggered many debates and initiatives, such as the "anti-authoritarian educational movement" ("*antiautoritäre Erziehungsbewegung"*). The author opposes the recurrent reproach made to the 1968 protest movements to have probably contributed to the "decline" of authority and (traditional) values to a social and political context framing education as a means to raise individuals to be self-dependent and responsible for their own success and failure. From this perspective, subordination ("*Unterordnung*") and obedience ("*Gehorsam*") are not values that prepare individuals to live in plural, modern and globalised societies; instead "the 1968 protest movement triggered an educational relation that calls for adults' critical self-reflection" (*ibid*.).

Indeed, as Walther et al. argue with regard to changing relations in the West between education and work: "At the *individual level*, young people nowadays – compared to their parents' generation – are confronted with social changes that cause more and different disruptions and discontinuities in their life conditions (Walther, 2005; Bradley and Devadason, 2008). In the period characterised by Fordism as a method of production prevailed, access to work was hierarchically pre-structured, but reliable in terms of equivalence between educational level and job position. In the knowledge society, the lack of the 'right' skills and knowledge becomes a predictor of future social exclusion, as individuals are socially excluded if they do not fit in with the dominant view of societies requiring the increase of human capital for their economic development" (Walther et al., op. cit., p. 3).

The fact remains that all these complex developments are difficult to grasp and understand in their entire interactions. So the discourse of Markel about "*Schulverwiegerung*" is characterised by its ambivalence, mixing stereotypical ascriptions and preconceptions with self-reflexion involving the role of policy makers in the shaping of educational ideals, which has increased the pressure on parents and students regarding educational outcomes while the structural educational landscape remains socially (and ethnically) segregated.

For Markel, "school refusal has increased" together with a "decrease" in "motivation to work" (*Leistungsbereitschaft*) and " potential for achievement" (*Leistungsfähigkeit*). His discourse oscillates between the disruptions resulting from the transformation of the school

public with the creation of the *GMS* and the creation of a social mix in a system that historically was socially compartmentalised. Markel mentions a global evolution illustrated by the development of the new technologies that contributed to "the dissolution of a specific mode of civism" by younger generations (Van Zanten, *op. cit*., p. 154), as well as to undermine the notion of "efforts". So, "self-dependence" ("*Selbstständigkeit*"), the internal will to stop ("das innere *Aufhören*") have increased, as have "consumer" attitudes. Beyond the specific difficulties of the "new *Hauptschüler*" and the educational support needed to address them in the settings of the integrated school, Markel speaks about a general social context characterised by development and usage of new technologies leading to attitudes of "passive consumerism". Students are not willing to make a lot of effort and tend to behave as if they were in front of the TV zapping, that is, "small movement, large effect" (p. 6). "People want money, people want beautiful cars, but people want to have it easy, not to have to do anything for it. This is related to the general belief that one can earn lots of easy money on the internet but actually 'I don't want to invest much effort' (....)" (Markel, p. 12). This explains for him why students are reluctant to enter vocational training and chose manual work (according to the discourse, handcraft is demanding in terms of efforts) and instead "prefer to study" (*ibid*.)[156].

One could contextualise such a value judgement in the sociological history of the signification of "work" and "idleness" in modern (industrial) societies (Alpe, and al. 2013, pp. 386-387; Oschmiansky, 2010); and in Germany especially in relation to Weber's theory on the development of a capitalist ethos (Weber, (French Transl.), 2017) based on the significance of (handcraft) work[157], social order, the Protestant religion and the development of a secular "*berufliche* ethos" (work as "a duty" and an "end in itself") according to which the rational pursuit of profit through the exercise of the profession is morally legitimated (Alpe and al., p. 28). But Markel's representations could also be discussed from a perspective on wider

[156] Original quotation: "ich denke, dass in der Gesellschaft, mehr... also weniger ... dieser Leitungsgedanke (...) man möchte Geld haben, man möchte schicke Autos haben, man möchte es locker haben, man möchte dafür nicht viel tun ja? Es ist auch dadurch, dass man sagt, man kann auch im Internet viel Geld verdienen aber eigentlich will ich nicht viel tun, ich denke, dass es schon viel damit zu tun, dass es weniger ... weniger Schüler ins Handwerk gehen, ja? Dachdecker, Zimmermann, Schlosserei und so. das ist gutes Handwerk, wichtiges Handwerk. Tendenziell meinen die Schüler alle, oh studieren...ja? Aber das kann nur ein Teil. Und das wird nicht eingesehen. Deswegen will man lieber nichts machen als dass man was irgendetwas machen muss und dieses oh… es ist mehr… eine Beliebigkeit, es ist mehr eine eigene Entscheidung. Früher war das völlig klar, Schule und da muss man durch. Das hat sich gesellschaftlich groß verändert. Also die Jugend ist (nicht mehr?)#58:53(?) bereit, so wirklich etwas zu leisten und so dahinter zu stehen..." [Teilweise unverständlich] (Markel, 2017, p. 12)

[157] "[…] une chose était absolument nouvelle: l'idée que l'accomplissement du devoir au sein des métiers temporels était la forme la plus haute que puisse revêtir l'activité morale de l'homme" (Weber, French translation 2017, pp. 133-134). So the popular adages: *A trade in hand finds gold in every land* /"*Handwerk hat goldenen Boden*".

representations about work, and particularly from the distinction between cognitive and manual activities since Antiquity (Decréau, 2019). Indeed, the etymology of "school" ("école", "Schule") refers to the term in ancient Greek "Skôlè", which means "leisure"; this refers to the fact that only the political and intellectual elites could dedicate themselves to the study of general knowledge and debate about the meaning of the world, which did not involve immediate material necessity. Yet, it would not occur to anyone to accuse the erudite elite of idleness.

Markel blames "demanding" parents (from lower social and economic backgrounds) who "put pressure on primary teachers" regarding the orientation of their children so that they would not be sent to the *Hauptschulen* and thus contributed to "the dissolution of the *Hauptschulen"*, which had "good resources and networks". He blames these parents who disrupted a "relatively stable social order" illustrated by the social segmentation of the school system ("before the society was relatively well organized and now […] parents have pressing demands" ; "now everyone wants to be on the top" p. 4)[158]. Parents "want" their kids to "have the Abitur", a 'title' that is seen as a symbol for social promotion, but "they do not see what great effort and work students must invest" to achieve this title (Markel, pp. 4-5)[159].

On the other hand, he recognises that *Hauptschulen* were "ghettos" and that policy makers did not solve the problem while they did not help to decrease the hierarchisation of schools and did not provide *GMS* with enough resources and conditions for educational support to address the challenges of "students' heterogeneity". More generally, students would "quickly feel overwhelmed" with educational demands. He believes in "heavy social pressure: you must have good marks otherwise you won't succeed... the pressure becomes heavier and heavier and heavier", to which parents also contribute. "My child must pass the *Abitur*, my child must." Markel says that "the refusal to go to school" is also related to certain symptoms of sickness" like "stomach ache", which is in general... the frequent argument. He has stomach

[158] Original quotation: "die Gesellschaft war relativ gut geordnet in Deutschland und jetzt ist es so, dass ach ja, kann ich so machen, kann ich so, man kriegt noch abends Anrufe von Eltern... die Elternarbeit hat sich vielfaches erhöht, viel viel telefonate […] die Eltern fordern schnell ein: 'oh ne das kann nicht sein'. Die Schule sollte das und das machen"; "Jeder will oben sein."

[159] Original quotation: "jeder will oben sein und die Eltern denken, wenn ich mein Kind ins Gymnasium anmelde, dann habe ich auch Gymnasium, kriege ich das. Aber was das Kind leisten muss, das sehen sie nicht. [...] das heißt, wir haben jetzt quasi viele Schüler, auch aus der anderen Schularten, und müssen unseres System komplett umstellen."

ache. He is afraid of school, he fears the demand for performance, he fears his peers. These are the most frequent issues for us" (Markel, pp. 10-11)[160].

This remark leads to consider elements related to the school "climate" (relational aspect) and to the competitive selection dominating educational trajectories in segmented school systems such as France and Germany (see introduction and part 1). In the former system and according to the traditional selective structure of the tripartite German education system, a minority of students were judged "able" by primary school teachers to go to the *Gymnasium* and continue in higher education[161]. If not, they were sent to learn a job in basic or intermediate school tracks. Today, an ever increasing number of 15-21 year-old people have an *Abitur* (in Baden-Württemberg, 34.1 % in 1995, 48.1% in 2008)[162]. Common manual jobs like a baker, a carpenter, and mechanic experience a great deal of trouble in recruiting people for their available apprenticeships nowadays. Common discourses in the press used to blame young people who are unwilling to work hard anymore while working conditions (wages, holiday, retirement conditions) are scarcely questioned. The qualification "*Abitur*", like the French "*baccalauréat* S, L or ES"[163] are seen as the most successful tracks towards better life chances. Further research could investigate this aspect more deeply, while, from a French perspective, the German training system still enjoys a great reputation[164]. More generally, the current aspect of this dissertation stresses the hierarchical distinction between cognitive subjects and handcraft, which are reflected discursively ("knowledge society or economy") and structurally (the concentration of students in vocational schools who have been judged too weak "cognitively" but whose handcraft abilities or interests have not necessarily been questioned).

At the end of the interview, Markel says that school needs more "social work, meaning activities, which connect, which please, which are funny. Then school will become more

---

[160] Original quotation: "es hat zugenommen… es hat es früher nicht gegeben und seit ein paar Jahren nimmt es zu. Es nimmt zu, weil ich denke, die Kinder sich ganz schnell überfordert fühlen. Also die Leistungsbereitschaft, die Leistungsfähigkeit, haben abgenommen, und die, ich glaube es ist viel gesellschaftlichen Druck darauf: du musst, du musst und da musst du gute Noten haben sonst bestehst du nicht... der Druck wird immer größer, immer mehr. Mein Kind soll Abitur haben, mein Kind soll [...] Schulverweigerung hat oft ... psychische Gründe...und das ist... Schulverweigerung geht auch oft ein bisschen zur [unverständlich] der Krankheit: Bauchweh, Bauchweh, Bauchweh. das ist meistens... das häufigste Argument. Es geht ihm schlecht. Er hat Angst vor der Schule. Er hat Angst vor der Leistungsanforderung, er hat Angst vor den Mitschülern. Das sind die häufigsten Themen bei uns."

[161] Primary teachers' recommendations are still constraining in Bayern. The critics of such a practice denounce the "*Grundschulabitur*" (a series of tests that decide about students' orientation according to their school performances); a very stressful period for parents and 10-year-old children.

[162] Statistics according to the different Länder provided by BpB: [http://www.bpb.de/fsd/studiengrafiken/studienberechtigte/studienberechtigte.html], last visit on 15/10/2018.

[163] Which has been abolished by the recent reforms replaced by a different set of options.

[164] "Le système d'apprentissage en Allemagne et en Autriche: un modèle à suivre ? ", 30/09/2015.

attractive and if school is more attractive, then it is not necessary anymore [to speak about *Schulverweigerung*?]. But the state should realise that, if it wants good things, it must be ready to really change things here... [?] which it does not do" (Markel, p. 13)[165]. So, he implicitly blames policy makers, as well as the necessity to introduce more activities, which do not exacerbate competition between students. *Refusing school* as a way to avoid this pressure? *Leistungsdruck* (pressure to perform) is a common theme in German media and has also become a subject of academic research. Often it is seen as part of the "PISA-Schock"[166], the reform of the Abitur (Kühn, 2015) and the development of a performance-oriented management of education and educational trajectories. A mediatised study conducted by a health insurance in 2017 stated that "almost every other student suffers from stress" (DAK, 2017). The same theme was taken for a quantitative and qualitative "stress study" undertaken by the University of Bielefeld (2015) that produced alarming results: '*Burn-Out im Kinderzimmer: Wie gestresst sind Kinder und Jugendliche in Deutschland?*' As Holger Ziegler put it, "given the current social evolution included from socio-political perspective, which considers childhood as a phase during which one builds on an exploitable 'human capital', one can expect that an 'outcome'-oriented educational practice will continue to be significant and potentially increase. […] Stress is possibly a central issue of growing up in the 21st century" (Ziegler, 2015, p. 6).

Markel cannot really decide whether "*Schulverweigerung*" results from political and institutional inability to face the challenge of democratisation of secondary education in a still highly standardised and differentiated school system, or whether it results from societal changes and changes in educational settings that provided parents and children with more capacities to negotiate, resist or even refuse school authority. Mc Dowell, Živoder and Tolomelli, comparing views of students, parents, and teachers on the emerging notions of relevance of education in eight European countries (in *ibid*. pp. 183 ff.) note that "in order to grasp *why* and *how* subjective notions of the relevance of education emerge, they must be placed within wider societal settings to account for the specific contemporary conditions in which the lives of students and their families are embedded, such as *individualisation* and the related increasing *individual responsibility* for managing life choices and societal

[165] Original quotation: "Schulsozialarbeit in der Schule. Aktivität die binden, die gefallen, die Spaß machen. Dann wird die Attraktivität der Schule erhöht. Und wenn die erhöht ist, dann ist es nicht so notwendig. Also diese Richtung denke ich. Die Staat muss ihr klar werden, wenn sie wirklich gute Sachen möchte, dann muss sie auch wirklich, ähm, bereit sein da etwas umzubauen [?] Das ist die... Das machen sie nicht".

[166] For instance, the short documentation on ZDF, federal public channel entitled: "Macht PISA unsere Schulen kaput?" [https://www.zdf.de/dokumentation/zdfzoom/pisatrailer-fb-102.html] 18/06/2018

reproduction (Beck, 1992; Bauman, 2001; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002); the *de-standardization* and *pluralisation* of life courses and transitions (Brückner and Mayer, 2005; du Bois-Raymond and Chisholm, 2006; Walther, 2006; Kohli, 2007); the *changing relationships* between parents and children (especially in terms of prolonged youth, education and economic dependence on parents) (Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Biggart et al., 2002; Leccardi and Ruspini, 2006; Ule, 2013; Ule et al. 2015); and the insecure, precarious and rapidly *changing labour markets*" (quoted by Mcdowell ; Živoder and Tolomelli, 2016, p. 184). In such a complex configuration, actors' representations are also influenced by interactive situations: for example, the authors underline that "teachers frequently play a crucial role in the mediation of societal and subjective needs" (*ibid*.). The results of their research, with regard to Markel's representation of "demanding" parents probably reinforced by the introduction of free choice measures, illustrate that "the concerns that parents have in regard to their child finding employment, or performing badly at school, are not directly explained by the specifics of educational systems in the individual countries. Instead, these worries are more related to the general conditions/prospects of the labour market and the economy of each country, as well as to the level of socio-economic deprivation and socio-cultural capital of the families themselves" (*ibid*., p. 196). The authors distance themselves from a solely instrumental representation of parents' practices in education, "since parents also emphasise the subjective sides of future employment, such as feelings of accomplishment, fulfilment, enjoyment in future professions where the path towards such rewarding employment is precisely through attaining high and relevant education" (p. 199). As for the students' perspective, their research accounts for the "influence of parents, educational systems and the current economic climate in their country": education is seen as very crucial for future prospects and opportunities and "the majority of them stressed some form of economic influence as to why they needed education (*ibid*.).

Regarding the first aspect, Sälzer, in her study on the relations between "school effectiveness" and school absenteeism, has shown that "the indicator 'feeling-bad' (*Sich-unwohl-fühlen*) is a strong motive for absenteeism". Although she admits that "it is hardly possible to create a daily school environment that every student enjoys", because of the diversity of students' backgrounds in terms of experiences and resources, her study shows, however, that stress factors and resources involving the school are the strongest explanatory element accounting for absenteeism: "from the perspective of students it seems that the most important implication of this study, that the perceived integrity of the school environment is a central

indicator for the emergence, or rather prevention of school absentismus" (Sälzer, 2010, pp. 197-198).

Considering Markel's stressful professional experience over the last ten years, which ended up in May 2017 with sick leave for burnout, one can wonder about the systemic relevance of "stress" regarding not only the experience of students, but also principals (or even teachers)[167]. Markel's representations of the phenomenon "*Schulverweigerung*" highlight, more or less explicitly, the pressuring role of societal structures regarding education and political responsibilities in enabling the conditions for it or not providing with sufficient resources to counter them.

In this context, it is worth asking to what extent individual principals' perceptions of their roles and of the issue "early leaving" combined with institutional-organisational settings influence the way schools actually deal with this issue.

2.2 *"Schulverweigerung," "décrochage scolaire"*: different principals, different school contexts, different ways of doing?

A recent French study conducted by Maillard et al. (2016) investigates the way how diverse secondary schools are coping with the issue *décrochage scolaire* in response to the implementation of the French national programme *"Tous mobilisés contre le décrochage scolaire*" (2014, see part 1). Under the title "Variations *autour d'un mot d'ordre national"*[168], their study underlines the variety of interpretations of national guidelines.

During the exploratory phase of my research[169], my observations in the regional research programme on the administrative entities "for the tracking of and support for dropouts" in Brittany and through in-depth ethnographic research in two lower secondary schools in Brittany and Baden-Württemberg, I observed that principals do have different ways of considering the issue "early school leaving". In three out of four schools, the issue was

---

[167] Böhm-Kasper O, Weishaupt H (2002), "Belastung und Beanspruchung von Lehrern und Schülern am Gymnasium", *Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft* 5(3): 472-499.

[168](" 'Tous' mobilisés autour du décrochage scolaire. Variations autour d'un mot d'ordre politique " (2016) ; "'All' mobilized around school dropouts: Variations on a national leitmotif ". 'Variation" in French like in English is also used in the field of music and means different ways of playing a music piece.

[169] I conducted interviews with two principals. In 2015, I met the principal of Vannes (Brittany) and his deputy in a lower-secondary school located in a priority area (*Réseau d'éducation prioritaire*) for two hours. In 2016, I had two meetings respectively with the principal, then with the principal and the school social workers and special needs assistants of a *Gemeinschaftsschule* in Heidelberg. Those meetings happened in a period during which I was looking for a school, which would accept to host my research. Unfortunately, these meetings, although very enriching, did not result in longer research stays (cf. introduction).

explicitly addressed by the principals as a problem. In two cases, principals were particularly interested in "using" my research to support their own policy in this domain.

The principal and his deputy of a lower secondary school in the "priority education"category in Vannes (Brittany) were interested to have someone who would observe and report on an experiment they had been implementing for the second year in order to change teachers' practices. The political agenda helped them to legitimate their intervention in pedagogy ("Having the arguments to exert more pressure on the teaching staff" (Vannes, p. 14)[170]. This is noteworthy, since principals in France are not necessarily teachers and do not have teaching time during their service[171], contrary to Germany. Thus, they traditionally lack legitimacy in this field. The principal and his deputy were addressing the issue from a "classroom perspective". Referring to Bourdieu and "implicit practices", which contribute to keeping students from lower social classes excluded from certain schools and educational achievements, they located the problem in teachers' indifference to the socio-economic backgrounds of their students:

> *"Bourdieu's analyses, they still exist… the transmission of a legacy…sociocultural capital, legitimate culture and everything… but the fact remains that it is implicit and above all, no teacher will explain it because teachers, well, their children are successful. They benefit from this implicit bias so why should they make it explicit? They instead reframe the problem as: "they should work more". And the idea of the "réforme du collège" put this into perspective by saying that students should acquire competences taught in an explicit way so that the teacher-student relationship is such that one tells the student: well, I'm expecting this from you and this is how you can succeed" (Vannes, p. 28)*[172]

For this school principal, fighting against "early leaving" from education means taking the opposite view of a school that is "indifferent to differences" (Sirota, 1993, p. 87). His discourse refers to a Marxist apprehension of the regulation of social groups through education, "while dominant groups use it to reproduce their dominant position in conformity

[170]Original quotation: " […] *les billes et les arguments pour peser plus sur les équipes éducatives*". This is particularly possible with the support of an official publication of a handbook in the framework of the "priority education" encouraging and informing teachers how to teach "more explicitly" (Référentiel pour l'éducation prioritaire -"Enseigner plus explicitement", 2015)

[171][http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid1133/personnels-de-direction.html#Comment_devenir_personnel_de_direction], last visit on the 15/10/18.

[172] Original quotation: "Les analyses de Bourdieu, ça existe encore tout ça….transmission de l'hérédité et heu on l'appelle comme on veut, capital socio-culturel, connivence scolaire, culture légitime et tout… mais toujours est-il qu'elle est implicite et c'est surtout pas les profs qui vont l'expliquer parce que les profs eux, leurs enfants ils réussissent alors... ils ont les usages utiles de cet implicite alors pourquoi l'expliciter? Il suffit que ça se traduise par : faut qu'ils travaillent davantage... et l'idée de la réforme du collège remet quand même ça en cause en disant que on doit acquérir des compétences enseignées de façon explicite donc on est sur une relation où on dit à l'élève : voilà ce que j'attends de toi et voilà comment tu peux y parvenir."

with their interests" (Durut-Bellat & van Zanten, 2010, pp. 243 f.). The reference to "implicit" teaching refers to Bourdieu's concept of "pedagogical arbitrary" which allows the reproduction of domination orders (Bourdieu, 1966, p. 336)[173]. Although his own example, as a challenger of the determinist analysis of P. Bourdieu and J.-C. Passeron (*op. cit.*) about the school institution as a societal antechamber where social destinies are being preprogrammed, contribute to the put this theory into perspective. Duru-Bellat and van Zanten refer to the "relative autonomy" of the school system through notably a "specific bureaucracy" enabling the implementation of "different criteria of social ordering"; also the fact that "teachers pursue their corporatist interests", speak for their distance from "dominant groups". And who are these dominants? Is this principal part of it? Actually, the "dominant group" is in itself diverse and complex and like Bourdieu underlines himself, they have diverse and divergent relations to the school system (*ibid*., p. 247).

Nevertheless, teachers appear in the discourse of this principal and his deputy to be the group on which depends the effective realisation of "equal opportunities" ("because all what we try to boost as … pedagogic evolution in teachers' practices, it has to do with this. […] how do we make students from lower socio-economic backgrounds succeed?" (Vannes, 2015, pp. 13-14))[174]. With regard to this "political priority", this "leitmotif" ("*décrochage scolaire*") the executive team stresses on "in all [their] meetings with teachers" there are the "good" and "bad":

> *"So honestly it is a leitmotif for us… I mean we stress this term in all our meetings with teachers. Now, I think some teachers are very aware of it and decide to be in priority education because of these challenges regarding a fairer school but there are others for whom it is pretty useful to repeat [this term] because it is not part of their priorities… because well, there are some teachers they can act in priority education like they would like in any other school without taking this political priority into account… (ibid)*

[173] "En effet, pour que soient favorisés les plus favorisés et défavorisés les plus défavorisés, il faut et il suffit que l'école ignore dans le contenu de l'enseignement transmis, dans les méthodes et les techniques de transmission et dans les critères de jugement, les inégalités culturelles entre les enfants des différentes classes sociales : autrement dit, en traitant tous les enseignés, si inégaux soient-ils en fait, comme égaux en droits et en devoirs, le système scolaire est conduit à donner en fait sa sanction aux inégalités initiales devant la culture" (Bourdieu, 1966 p. 336).

[174] Original quotation: "Alors honnêtement nous c'est un leitmotiv hein… c'est-à-dire qu'on a une répétition de ce terme-là dans toutes nos réunions auprès des enseignants. Maintenant je pense qu'on a une part des enseignants qui y est très sensible et qui fait le choix d'être en éducation prioritaire par rapport à ces défis de l'école plus juste mais il y en a d'autres pour qui c'est fort utile de le rappeler parce que c'est pas forcément intégré dans je dirais leurs missions prioritaires... Parce-que voilà, y en a qui peuvent agir en éducation prioritaire comme ils agiraient dans n'importe quel autre collège sans prendre en compte cette nécessité politique… […] parce que tout ce qu'on essaie d'impulser comme … évolution pédagogique dans les pratiques des enseignants ça a trait à ça. […] comment on fait pour faire réussir les élèves de CSP défavorisées?"

So, in Vannes, the problem "early leaving" was rather formulated in pedagogic terms focused on the teacher-student relation.

As already mentioned, Hummel, principal of a newly created *GMS* in Balenstadt (Baden-Württemberg) asked the local authorities to financially support the "project for dropouts" ("*Schulverweigererprojekt*"). In her view, my research would have helped to report on the need for such a project in her school and thus support her demand. This project did not aim to change teaching methods and did not particularly involve teachers on a structural level. Instead, it dealt with individualised support for a few students who had previously been identified as heavy "truants" (see Part 1):

> *"I asked her whether "Schulverweigerung" is a big problem here and she replied yes. Eventually she said that the number of problematic students consisted of 1% of all students, which amounts to five to seven students who would need the special support provided by the project." Extract of the fieldwork protocol Feldprotokoll #1 Begegnungen mit Frau Hummel, principal GMS/Werkrealschule Stadt Balenstadt 27.-9 16.*

For Hummel, "*Schulverweigerung*" is the problem of a minority of students who need particular socio-pedagogical support in order to help them cope with their social, familial and school issues. For that, she needs the support of youth workers, provided by the youth organisation "A" managing the project "*Schulverweigerer*". She learned of this project when she was working as a principal in a lower secondary school in a neighbouring city some years ago. Since her transfer in Balenstadt two years ago, she has continued to meet the director of organisation. "A" regularly, whom she referred to as a "close friend".

In this project, students are personally supervised by the project manager (who is in charge of ten other students from other local schools) and a volunteer (often a student)[175]. The project manager maintains close and personal contact with the young person, visiting them individually at home and interacting with them on social networks. The project manager makes sure that the young person in their care goes regularly to school and has a "longer-term project" like some vocational training or volunteering activities. The youth worker is the coordinating body for cross-institutional cooperation between the school (principal, teachers, school social workers), the family, the youth welfare service and other relevant actors. During the period of individual supervision, the student remains registered at the school and

[175] This is how I integrated the organisation in Hallstadt. I became a volunteer who had to support the young person in his daily life. This method using personal support is advertised in the programme "*Aktiv gegen Schulschwänzen*" published by the government of Baden-Württemberg (see previous part).

continues to visit classes on a more or less regular basis[176]. The *Schulverweigererprojekt* works like many other projects that have been set as examples in the federal programme '*Schulverweigerung: die 2. Chance*' (2008) or the regional programme against '*Schulschwänzen'* (2006) in Baden-Württemberg. Those projects are based on case management and "cross-sectoral" cooperation between the school, other social institutions and the family. They consist of close supervision of dropouts and which also brings an intrusion by institutional and public actors in the private sphere.

These exploratory interviews and informal meetings inform us about different applications of the political agenda. While the principal of Vannes refers to Bourdieu to justify his interpretation of the issue in terms of "problematic classroom practises" and teachers who are indifferent to students' personal backgrounds, Ms Hummel refers to a project and personal networks that influenced her way of considering and addressing dropouts. Both principals had in common that they work in schools that welcome students with disadvantaged backgrounds in higher proportion than other schools and were interested to use the research to support their action in this domain.

On the contrary, Madec principal of the French lower secondary school La Balikan did not seem to have any "hidden" interest in my research. She only wished to be invited to the thesis defence, as she told me during our first "get-to-know-each-other" meeting (10/11/2015). While she could not say whether "*décrochage scolaire*" was important in her school because she did not have "the indicators of comparison", she added that "a student who drops out is still a student too many" (Madec, 2016, p. 8). On the contrary, during the interview, her deputy told me that this issue was "the first topic of discussion with Madec". According to him, this phenomenon is "not new" but naturally "rooted" in the function of the school head, a function that has been now "institutionally acknowledged" (Georges, 2016, p. 4)[177]. Indeed, the theoretical approach based on the conceptualisation of "educational conventions" defining the role of school in the production and legitimation of "fair" inequalities (see previous part), aims to explain why, in some contexts, dropouts are turned into institutional issues and in other contexts they are not. For example, some argue that dropouts are a "necessary" consequence in preserving the school order based on the selection of the "best" (Bernard,

[176] During our first meeting, I asked Hummel whether she could give me the contact of the organisation which was conducting this project in Hallstadt. Some weeks later I conducted an interview with both the director of the structure and the project manager. Later and due to personal and professional interests, I involved myself as a volunteer in this project.

[177] Original quotation: "Ca a été le premier sujet de discussion avec Madame Madec" / "c'est ancré dans notre function"/ "maintenant c'est reconnu par l'institution".

2013, *op. cit.*, 98 ff.). The school deputy George underlines the role of policy makers in this institutionalisation: "it's not something new but it's true that that we are asked to work more on it" (George, p. 3)[178]. Incidentally, in La Balikan, Rousselet, Principal Councillor of Education (CPE) was named as the contact person / case manager for dropouts ("*référente décrochage scolaire*")[179].

In the Geschwister Scholl *GMS* in Baden-Württemberg, "*Schulverweigerung*" does not seem to be as central as "*décrochage scolaire*" as prescriptive a concept for the principal Markel, as it seems to be for his above-mentioned French and German counterparts. For Markel, it "sometimes appears in the media and then it disappears [...] it is an issue that happens and one should look at it" (Markel, 2017, p. 12)[180].

Framed by the European and global discourse on the knowledge economy (see previous part), the production of institutional categories such as "early leavers", "*décrocheurs*", "*Schulverweiger*" are understood as aiming to trigger a form of action in schools to address behaviours of non-commitment with school norms (Bernard, pp. 18-19), which in turn result from very diverse situations combining school and individual factors in specific historical and local contexts. The following developments, based on two ethnographic studies conducted in Brittany and Baden-Württemberg respectively – in the *collège* La Balikan and in the Geschwister Scholl *GMS* – highlight different institutional and organizational implementations, and the specific applications and measures the two principals derive from the political agenda. Now, I want to show through which processes these categories are used or not, reinterpreted, negotiated. Indeed, I have shown that principals might have their own understanding of the problem, while they tend to emphasise individual and social properties and/or blame institutional and school settings. How do their conceptions meet with existing institutional-organisational limits and opportunities?

According to P.-Y. Bernard, the political debate about ruptures in schooling essentially consists of the opposition of these two perspectives social/school, which refer to actions addressing either the socio-economic contexts of dropouts or the context of schooling (ibid., p. 59). Therefore, we must understand the motives and conditions according to which Madec or Markel situate their action.

---

[178] Original quotation: "j'ai toujours travaillé sur le décrochage scolaire. Ce n'est pas quelque chose de nouveau mais c'est vrai qu'on nous demande de travailler de plus en plus dans ce domaine-là."

[179] "Le référent décrochage scolaire" is a "new function" created by the French Ministry of Education in 2013 in the frame of the programme against "*décrochage scolaire*". Those professionals are nominated in schools with "high rate of dropouts" and are in charge "of coordinating the prevention" for students who have shown forewarning signs of dropping out".

[180]Original quotation: "Also ab und zu taucht es mal auf, dann ist es mal in der Presse und dann ist wieder weg. […] Das ist ein Thema was passiert und dann muss man gucken."

2.2.1 In La Balikan: "My definition… mirrors the National Department of Education […] because I am representing the state"

Madec's political approach of the issue is influenced by what she perceives to be the official position of the Ministry: a technical approach (1.2.1.1) coupled with the individualisation of support for "those who are not interested" (1.2.1.2).

2.2.1.1 "Pay more attention to students who are absent for more than four and half days in a month" (Madec, p. 8)

In response to my question, which probed her definition of "*décrochage scolaire*", Madec seemed to feel surprised or not at all at ease: "My definition of décrochage scolaire?"; she did not answer directly but stood up and poured herself some more tea. As she sat down again, she quickly referred to national guidelines. Instead of speaking further in her own name, she referred to the official definition:

> *"Well, the definition according to the National Department of Education – because I am a principal, I am a representative of the state - so the definition retaining its institutional meaning, at least it is how we work with it, we have very precise guidelines regarding this. It means, on the one hand, to pay much attention, to be very watchful regarding students who are absent for more than four and half days in a month, I think this is it" (Madec, 2016, p. 8).*[181]

Décrochage scolaire seems, at first sight, to be reduced to this indicator, which Madec has to account for in order to inform higher authorities about the "quality" of her school climate (see 1.1.1.2). She starts to explain the procedure in detail showing how the tracking of absences is organized in bureaucratic terms. The procedure consists of weekly meetings gathering the principal, the deputy, the CPE - in charge of bringing the list of students who missed school four and half days without justification- the school worker, and the nurse sometimes for almost two hours during which those individual cases are discussed. In these "commissions

[181] Original quotation: "Ma définition du décrochage scolaire |*se lève se servir du thé "vous permettez ? –Oui oui bien sûr allez-y", puis se rassoit. Elle reprend*|. Bah la définition au sens éducation nationale parce que moi je suis cheffe d'établissement je suis représentante de l'Etat. Donc la définition au sens institutionnel, en tout cas c'est comme ça qu'on y travaille, on a des consignes bien bien précises par rapport à ça. C'est d'une part d'être très attentifs, plus qu'attentifs, très vigilants, par rapport à des élèves qui totaliseraient plus de 4 ½ journées [d'absence] sur la période d'un mois, je crois que c'est ça."

for students' follow-up"[182], "we try to understand what explains their repeated lateness or absences and try to identify solutions so that it does not happen again and especially that it does not escalate" (Madec, p. 9)[183].

These solutions are diverse. They range from an occasional removal from the school to short-term internships, such as the "personalised path to success"[184], or six week-long stays in a special school for students "at risk of being marginalised due to their serious and repeated breaches of internal rules, non-justified and persistent absenteeism, and a lack of motivation"[185]. Other kinds of disciplinary measures, such as "follow-up forms" ("*fiches de suivi*"), seek to influence students' behaviours and make them comply with school norms and expectations. The students carry their form everywhere and school professionals report every positive and negative occurrence. Several times a week, the CPE totals "good" and "bad" points and discusses the report in a one-to-one meeting with the student. George, the deputy, summarises the school's approach as follows: "well, we implement measures to prevent them from dropping out (George, p. 4)[186]. For the principal Madec, it is important to keep a "connection" between the institution and the child. For example, the measure of "exclusion-inclusion" has been created to ban students temporarily from the class and encourage "reflection" on their misbehaviour together with a specific professional. According to Madec, this measure enables case workers and students to "work on the absences"; "that they don't stay at home"; "we don't leave a student at home" (p. 9)[187]. Such mistrust towards the private sphere is rooted in the long history of public authorities' fear towards the vagabond at the beginning of the industrial area. As vagabonds are completely cut off from any work relation [here from school relations] and out of the control of institutional frames they constitute a virtual threat towards the public order (Millet & Thin, 2005, p. 7).

The influence of the principal on the way other professionals should address the problematic "*décrochage scolaire*" as an official injunction is illustrated by the following anecdote. Indeed, the administrative tracking and management of illegal absences appeared to the deputy too superficial and he decided one day to print out the list of the weekly absent students independently of the fact if they "justified" their absences or not:

---

[182] "*Commission de suivi des élèves"*

[183] Original quotation: "on essaie de comprendre ce qui explique ces retards ou ces absences et ce qu'on peut trouver comme solution pour que ça ne se reproduise pas et que ça ne s'accentue surtout pas".

[184] The positive name of the internship program seeks to avoid further stigmatization.

[185] Official website of the "*classes"* and "*ateliers-relais"*: [http://eduscol.education.fr/pid23264/dispositifs-relais.html], last visit on the 15/10/18.

[186]Original quotation: "*On met les dispositifs en place pour éviter qu'ils décrochent quoi*"

[187] Original quotation: "travailler sur les manquements"; "qu'ils ne restent pas à la maison"; "on ne laisse pas un élève à la maison."

"One day, George the deputy was in charge of the lists (of absences) because Rousselet (CPE) who is normally in charge of this duty was absent that day. The lists he brought to the meeting were surprisingly long. George excused himself by saying that he did not only select the unjustified absences but "all of them", which would help distinguish between occasional and habitual absentees and allow for a bigger picture of this phenomenon. Madec, as if she had not heard George's justification, told him in a tone that appeared to be sharp: "yes, but this is the educational assistants' responsibility [to sort out absences]. We, we only deal with unjustified absences." The deputy tried to defend his initiative, but the principal interrupted him again, referring to the strict protocol imposed by the Ministry and which they had to enforce" (fieldwork notes 08/03/2016).

The commissions strive to maintain an administrative relation with students and families thoroughly applying the procedure of justification and the different steps involved in the administrative treatment of repeated absenteeism (informal meetings with parents, second more formal commissions). The implementation of "solutions" with other "partners" also consist of setting up fine netting (*maillage*) in order to cope with any behavioural, social, economic and/or health issues. Madec's discourse stresses on the norm of "partnership" and cross-sectoral cooperation:

> *"Well, within the schools and when we work on this question within the commissions for students' follow-up, you see that there is the councillor of education, the nurse, the social worker and I and my colleagues the deputy or the head of the inclusion track (SEGPA). Links are established with partners of the quartier through, for example, the social worker. Normally there is a tight network that allows us to work with the street workers. […] We have some connections there […] to share the information regarding students, regarding families who are at our school and live in the quartier. Beyond this, there are measures related to urban development [….] There are as well there other interlocutors" (Madec, 2016, p. 11)*[188].

[188] Original quotation: "Alors en fait au sein des établissements quand on est sur cette question-là au sein des Commissions de Suivi des Elèves, vous voyez bien qu'on a l'assistant d'éducation, l'infirmière, l'assistante sociale et moi et mes collègues principal adjoint ou directeur de SEGPA. Et que le lien ensuite il se fait avec d'autres partenaires sur le quartier par exemple, par le biais de l'assistante sociale avec les acteurs sociaux du quartier. Normalement il y a quand même un maillage comment on va travailler avec des éducateurs sur le quartier de la structure. [..] on a des liens là [..] pour partager l'information par rapport à des élèves, à des familles qui sont chez nous sur le quartier. Après il y a la politique de la ville. Là aussi il y a des interlocuteurs [..]".

Here again, the influence of the principal is essential to understand why some "partnerships" are preferred over others. While the partnership with the local police station[189] does not seem to raise any problem, the cooperation with street workers is more difficult and not really satisfying for the street workers, who hope for better cooperation on educational and social-pedagogic issues with school actors. In the arena of public education, actors do not stand on an equal footing. Actually, "by definition, and according to relevant discourses all actors should be equal in a partnership (Geddes, 2000). They have the same legitimacy and scope of influence. Politically and legally this is clearly not the case in the education field […] Educational partnership is a common and fashionable term but obscures the fact that the relationship is not based on equal terms" (Périer, 2012, quoted by Amos and al., 2016, p. 91).

On the 24th of March 2016, a meeting is organised gathering Madec the principal, George the deputy, the principal of the inclusion track, the principal Councellor of Education, the social worker and two street workers working in the "quartier". The meeting takes place in the school. Most of the participants are late and the meeting starts 15 minutes later. The objective of this meeting is to renegotiate current and possible future cooperation. The street workers were asking to intervene in the school in the context of projects that would enable a better mutual comprehension between the school, the youth, the families and the "quartier". Because the "quartier" lacks youth structures where they could meet otherwise, the school is one of the few places where street workers and young people could get to know each other. The street workers didn't deem it meaningful to escort an excursion to the cinema. After a while, the school social worker and the street workers start to argue about the conditions of such cooperation, focussing on sharing students' personal information. For the school cooperation is dependent on the sharing of students' private information. Yet, the street workers insist that they have to keep some information private in order to be considered a confidential partner in the "quartier". This position does not seem to be understood by the school and the school social worker raised her voice to say that her relationship with the student is also based on "confidentiality" and she is not allowed to share some information. […] Street workers: "We thought about calling you during the period of the terror attacks, in order to intervene with teachers and students in class; would you have accepted it?" Madec answers negatively. The meeting comes to an end, without my having had the feeling that the different actors agreed on better cooperation, nor that the youth workers' requests

[189] If students are expelled for more than three days, they can be sent to the police station, which integrates them into a special programme.

had been positively answered. The deputy asked them: "but, if you're too close [to the school], won't that damage your work in the" quartier"?" The principal announced the recruitment of a social facilitator, who will be in charge of dealing with the families [extract research protocol, 24/03/2016].

This meeting highlighted power relations, starting from the lateness of the school staff (and the waiting time of the street workers) to the objective of the street workers' visit, which was to reframe the conditions of "cooperation" with the school. The way the meeting ended did not suggest an improvement in relations between the street youth workers and the school. Yet, one could think that the integration of local youth workers would have been a bridge between school professionals and the inhabitants of the "quartier". Indeed, the research in La Balikan has shown that a majority of actors identify the "quartier" with many problems and make it the symbolic lieu of diverse negative influences on students' relations with school (family, peers, communities, foreign cultures, drugs and other illegal traffics).

Madec's following intervention shows instead that she believes that everything can be solved "internally" via the tracking of absenteeism. If "solutions" have not worked and students do not show more diligence, there are sanctions according to the official protocol, which involve the local school authority (*Inspection académique*). The fight against dropouts and their families is a means to show the institutional power and what happens outside the school walls is not relevant to address this issue:

> *"well, if you want, regarding the issue of décrochage or absenteeism … we end up organising educational commissions and then report to the academic inspectorate –because we follow the protocol. […] if we observe […] that this absenteeism is still appening or even increasing, we organise an educational commission. What we expect once we have met the family, we have been able to explain things, we have understood, we have brought some advice, solutions, so well, we hope we won't have to repeat it and we will be particularly watchful. We hope that the situation will be solved. But this is not always the case. Well, it is rare but it is not always the case. When it is not the case, we have to report the absences. There is a department for that, the students' department, so we report it. And after that the Inspectorate sends a letter to the family that says: 'be careful. The principal informed us that there was a meeting, a letter of the school, an educational commission'; signed by the Inspectorate, which reminds the parents of the school obligation of children under 16. So the inspectorate says the same thing as we do: we hope that. But it can be that it does not work and that we have to organise a second educational commission and to report a*

second time to the Inspectorate. If I remember well, we really had one or two situations like this. In this case we reached our institutional limits. There are family issues, social issues, the problem of accommodation, and financial issues. Even if we take care of the school material and appropriate clothing for example so that students are able to attend sports classes, and have warm meals, there is still such a complexity. Social care structures are mobilised in the "quartier" and the neighbourhood. Here, we must clearly admit that there are some limits. But this is only one situation"(Madec, pp. 12-13)[190].

Madec does not mention the fine that normally accompanies the fourth letter in case of repeated absenteeism. Does this mean that the impact of such a fine is insignificant? Indeed, the sanction for –unjustified and repeated – absenteeism at school was codified in 2010 and maintained largely in its original form under the socialist government. Article R624-7 of the penal code institutionalised a 750€-fine if four letters from the local school authority have not been followed by more "diligence" on the part of the student. This fine replaces the removal of family allowance implemented under the previous government.

According to Madec, those cases where the school "reaches its institutional limits" are a very limited, what she underlines by using the oxymoron "large minority". In the "educational commissions", the executive team and the CPE, the social worker, the nurse and sometimes one teacher (mainly the class teacher) meet the families together with the student. The school tries to provide a large number of solutions –particularly material solutions - so that the student has the means to come to school. At the beginning of the session, the principal or the deputy always put emphasis on the fact that this measure is about "finding solutions" to regular absences or misbehaviour, and not about "punishing" ("*on est bienveillant*"). This "kindness" is put to the fore at the beginning of each educational commission, presided and moderated by either the principal or her deputy, while legal guardians and the student have

[190] Original quotation: "Bah si vous voulez quand on est sur la question du décrochage ou de l'absentéisme et que par exemple on en vient à faire des commissions éducatives puis à signaler à l'inspection académique –car on suit le protocole- […] Si on constate [..] que cet absentéisme-là est toujours là voire qu'il s'accentue on fait une commission éducative. Ce qu'on souhaite c'est que une fois qu'on a pu rencontrer la famille qu'on a pu expliquer les choses, qu'on a compris, qu'on a apporté des propositions, des solutions, alors voilà on espère ne plus le faire et on va être vigilant, […] on souhaite que la situation se résolve. Mais ce n'est pas toujours le cas. Alors c'est rare mais ce n'est pas toujours le cas. Quand ce n'est pas le cas, on est amené à faire un signalement pour ça. Y a un service, service des élèves, donc on fait un signalement. Et après l'IA envoie un courrier à la famille en disant 'attention. Me la Principale nous a alerté que, y a eu un entretien, y a eu le courrier du collège, y a eu la commission éducative', donc signé par l'IA qui rappelle l'obligation de scolarité des enfants de moins de 16 ans. Donc l'IA se dit la même chose que nous: on espère que. Mais il se peut que ça n'arrive pas et qu'on soit amené à faire une deuxième commission éducative puis un deuxième signalement. De mémoire on a dû vraiment avoir une ou deux situations comme ça. Là on a nos limites institutionnelles. Y a une problématique familiale, sociale, d'hébergement, financier, même si on prend en charge et le matériel scolaire et l'équipement pour aller par exemple en sport, les repas. Mais il y a une telle là...Complexité. Les services sociaux sont mobilisés aussi sur le quartier, l'école aussi, donc l'IA et là très clairement il faut quand même reconnaitre bien sûr il y a des limites. Mais là on est sur une situation."

been summoned to participate in the meeting. Educational commissions are also the opportunity to address non-compliant behaviours and acquire a more precise picture of the students' familial and social backgrounds and interfere with parental educational practices as it was occasionally observed during the research.

The different measures seek to remind students and parents that schooling is compulsory, to keep an administrative connection with students and families and keep students under the control of a public institution. "*Décrochage scolaire*" from the institutional perspective means dealing with non-complying behaviour towards the school order, expressed by repeated absenteeism and/or the disruption of the pedagogic order and the resistance to the authority of the school and its agents (Millet, & Thin, 2005, p. 8).

Madec is a loyal conveyer of official guidelines and procedures that favour individual case management. The bureaucratic tracking and treatment of absenteeism, mirrors, at the school level, a general European and national public action framed by a neoliberal ideology, in which quantitative indicators and benchmarking are driving policy-making (see previous part). Following Bernard's view on European and French public action regarding the problem of "early school leaving" (in Berthet & Zaffran, 2013, p. 68), Madec's school policy can be described as guided by numbers, which associates quantitative standards with personalisation through individual support, what Foucault called a "political technology of individuals"[191].

Madec has an influence on the "partnerships" that will be developed to deal with school disruption. In the previous example, the externalization of non-compliant students to the police station seems to work well whereas the development of co-constructed projects favouring the integration in the school of street workers working in the quartier seems to be more problematic. The individualization of solutions and support based on a distinct division of tasks is prevailing over the interrogation of school structures and pedagogy in students' school experiences or even a global interrogation about this phenomenon that would involve all participants. The tracking of absenteeism is preferred to a reflection involving teachers and pedagogy, while the "réforme du collège" is on the way and anyway, "time is lacking to work closer on pedagogy" (Madec, p. 5).

[191] *Dits et écrits*, T. IV, 1988, p. 813-828.

2.2.1.2 The individualization of support and learning needs for those "who are not in the school thing" (Madec, 2016, p. 10)

Bernard argues that the "tracking" solution offers a "technical", "consensual" and "inexpensive" solution at the level of regional and national decision makers[192], because it does not point the finger at unsatisfying access or contents regarding training offers or continuing education programmes but transfers the responsibility and costs on the schools *(op. cit*., p. 71). One could argue that the "tracking" solution also offers some consensual advantage at the school level, because it is based on the traditional division of the educational work and roles that respects the "territory" of each professional (see part 4: students with health issues are "sent" to the nurse; students with discipline issues to the CPE, students with socio-economic issues to the social worker) while teachers and pedagogical arrangements are maintained at distance. The "tracking" solution also allows to reduce the complexity of school negative participation in a quantitative threshold and a precise bureaucratic procedure. Indeed, the following extract illustrates the confusion that might emerge when the nonconformity to required school attitudes are reflected beyond their bureaucratic apprehension:

> *"Question: So, if I understand it correctly, "décrochage scolaire" is mainly seen through the prism of absenteeism? –Madec: Not exclusively, because there are teachers who will tell you that there are students who are in class but ....we just speak about the students who are not in class because there is a note justifying absences or lateness so we have the listing of those students who can be at school but not in class[193]. Or who aren't at school either. But...there are also teachers who can warn us about situations such as students who are in class physically but not present in spirit, not available. So we pay attention to this as well. Because there can be students who are in class but who are not. You see what I mean? "(Madec, 2016, p. 10)[194]*

[192] Cf. Part 1: I mentioned how the thematic "tracking" focused the attention at the regional political level.

[193] This seems to be a regular phenomenon. Once I had a small talk with the principal's secretary and I shared my surprise to see so many students in corridors during class hours. She answers, pretty amused, mentioning the students' strategies in that matter: "Ah, they hide behind doors and everything, they go to the nursery…"; on the other hand, the *educational assistants* regularly talked about those kids who stayed as much as possible at school, because they did not want to go back home (fieldwork notes, 20/01/2016).

[194] Original quotation: " Question: Heu… donc le décrochage scolaire si j'ai bien compris c'est traité essentiellement à travers le suivi des absences et des retards ici au collège ?/ Madec : -pas que, parce que les enseignants aussi pourront vous dire qu'il y a des élèves qui sont en classe mais… là on a parlé de ceux qui ne sont pas en classe parce qu'il y a le billet d'absence ou de retard donc on a ces listing d'élèves qui ne sont pas en classe mais qui pour autant pourraient être au collège. Ou pas. Mais… y a aussi des professeurs qui peuvent nous alerter sur des situations d'élèves qui sont en classe mais qui ne sont pas à la chose scolaire. Donc là aussi on porte une attention. Parce qu'il y a des élèves qui peuvent être en classe et qui n'y sont pas. Vous voyez ce que je veux dire? "

As I was more or less familiar with the official language, I immediately thought of the concepts of "active" and "passive" dropouts, which echo some typologies that have been developed by researchers (see e.g. the categorisation developed by M. Janosz and his team, *in* Bernard, *op.cit*. p. 83; and see previous chapter about those categories "passive/active" integrated in policy programmes). Such categories seek to characterise students' attitudes towards the learning activity. However, from an interactionist perspective, this attitude cannot be understood outside of the relation between the school as an institution and the student, since school judgements mainly trigger processes of commitment or disengagement (Bernard, 2013, pp. 88 ff.). In particular, when it comes to students from working-class backgrounds, these relations cannot be separated from power relations and domination effects, which, even external, are reproduced or mitigated within the school institution (van Zanten, 2001; Millet & Thin, 2005).

Actually, concerning the relation to learning, the top-down reform ("*réforme du collège*") aims to change teaching curricula, methods. Madec refers to this reform as regards the pedagogic aspect of the issue "*décrochage scolaire*". In her discourse, she stresses the "Nation-state", which again, speaks for her allegiance as a loyal servant, but could also be understood as a reflection about the authority of the Nation-state, school as state apparatus, dropouts' behaviours:

> *"Well, if you like, this is a major reform because it will address all students… let's say from a quantitative but also from a content perspective because the objective of this reform is, firstly, the Nation-state decided that each child should leave the school system with a fundamental knowledge: here, we integrate in our action the core curriculum of knowledge, competence and culture, of course, we make the connection with the validation of diplomas and notably of the lower secondary school degree [DNB][195], and well, we know that each year there are 150,000 students who leave lower secondary school without having really acquired the core knowledge […] to us, this means us being everybody, teachers, this means to think about how we teach students while keeping in sight the objectives the Nation-state defined and that we have to achieve, try to achieve, of course, well it means working differently […] Working together or thinking together about how to make the connection between school subjects and the fact that they make sense to students. I think this is it. It is creating sense for the*

[195] The DNB is not really considered as a diploma anymore; at least, it does not influence the pursuit of one's studies in higher secondary education. The brevet is a series of examinations (general and vocational) taken by French students at the age of 15. It is a vestige of the "brevet d'études du premier cycle du second degré (BEPC)" created in 1947, thanks to which one could pursue further study in higher secondary education.

students. Actually so that students can effectively make sense of school indeed" (Madec, p. 4)[196].

Madec refers twice to the "*Nation(-state)*" and official guidelines and statistics that make her appear, once again, as a state's loyal servant but also illustrates the verticality of education governance. In line with the political discourse, she interprets the "*réforme du collège*" as a significant evolution in the process of democratising the education sector in terms of equal access and acquisition of minimal and core requirements regarding knowledge, skills and culture ("*les fondamentaux*"). From this perspective, dropouts are seen as the individuals lacking the necessary knowledge and competence to achieve further diplomas (the early-school-leavers measured by Eurostat). But in fact, Madec does not specify how the priority given to the diploma and to the acquisition of "core" knowledge, skills and culture is actually integrated in an institutional strategy aiming to produce sense for the students. This would suppose, actually, to give up measures aiming to ensure the compliance of students with current institutional and social norms and demands (like mentioned above) and to reflect about e.g. "capacity building" projects. These projects suppose organisational arrangements and rules, which enable students to express their preferences, to value the studies, diplomas and jobs according to their own reasons, and to participate or not in a wider realm of possibility (Berthet & Simon, in Berthet & Zaffran, 2013 pp. 83 ff.).

Last but not the least, Madec's discourse on the way she deals with the issue "early school leaving"in her school refer to a separation between teaching and no-teaching activity. On the one hand, the technical and case-management approach of the issue, which involves measures ensuring for students' and parents' compliance. On the other hand, the implementation of the reform, which at the time of the research, mainly consisted in organising training for teachers. Early-leaving is further dealt with compartimently and technically.

[196] Original quotation: "Si vous voulez c'est une réforme d'ampleur à la fois parce qu'elle va concerner tous les élèves... (…) A la fois sur le nombre on va dire mais aussi sur le fond parce que l'idée de cette réforme c'est de un; c'est la Nation qui l'a décidé, c'est que chaque enfant puisse sortir du système scolaire avec les fondamentaux ; on fait le lien avec le socle commun de connaissances, de compétences et de culture, bien sûr on fait le lien avec la validation des diplômes et notamment le DNB au collège, et donc on sait quand même que chaque année 150 000 élèves quittent le collège sans les fondamentaux donc la réforme du collège vise à faire que l'on ou comment dire, à comment faire pour que les élèves … Quand ils quitteront le système scolaire auront véritablement acquis tous les fondamentaux […]. Donc ça demande, ça nous demande, nous c'est tout le monde, les professeurs, ça nous demande de réfléchir à comment on va enseigner aux élèves avec donc les objectifs qui nous sont fixés par la Nation que nous devons atteindre, chercher à atteindre bien sûr, donc ça suppose de travailler autrement. […] travailler ensemble ou réfléchir ensemble sur comment faire le lien entre les disciplines et en fait faire sens au niveau des élèves. Je crois que c'est ça. C'est faire sens au niveau des élèves. En fait pour que les élèves puissent faire sens effectivement."

2.2.1.3 The "lack of time" to work on pedagogy

In her study of French secondary school principals, Barrère (2006) already stressed the fact that the argument "lack of time" as regards pedagogy was recurrent while this function had been recently integrated in their portfolio. Madec wishes she had "more time" to "work on pedagogy" (as "would teachers"), which could be interpreted in terms of a calculation leading to prioritise some solutions over others (Madec, p. 5)[197].

I tried to highlight of the elements influencing such a prioritisation: the fact that indicators assessing the school's "quality" consist of the rates of absences and lateness or the rate of achievement of the lower secondary grade might explain why Madec favours one approach over another. Other contextual elements, such as the specific school history, the turnover, the quality of the relations between teachers and the direction or even different institutional statutes and contracts might add to Madec's difficulty (reluctance?) to "address the issue of pedagogy" from a collective perspective. Indeed, my research in La Balikan accounted for a "trauma" regarding the failure of a pedagogic experiment the year before, which turned into a "disaster" and left many teachers with a bitter taste (I develop this aspect in the following part) [198].

Ms Madec mentions indeed teachers' professional status, historically built upon the teaching activity, as an important obstacle towards working on pedagogy *(*Ms Madec, p. 5)[199].

Working "more" on pedagogy or cross-sectoral cooperation would mean that teachers would have to stay longer at school on a voluntary basis. The concern is that many teachers would not like that: "well when these pedagogic meetings take place it is already after a working day. Doing this too often would be pushing it too far" (Madec, p. 5)[200]. Convincing teachers

---

[197] Original quotation: "Bah notamment pour travailler sur la réforme du collège, ce qui manque à un principal c'est le temps. Le temps c'est ce qui nous manque à nous pour aller au plus près de la pédagogie. On aurait de quoi travailler quelques demi-journées pour justement regarder comment à partir de ces disciplines et de ces programmes et de la réforme du collège comment on pourrait... il faudrait presque du temps pour aller dans le détail du point de vue pédagogique. Ça c'est quelque chose qui est partagé, si vous en parlez avec les enseignants ils vous le diront. Le temps. On se sent tous un peu pressés par le temps."

[198] Just after retiring, Madec's predecessor made the school board vote a pedagogic experiment aiming to involve more project-oriented teaching and free-up some time for teachers' teamwork by reducing each class by five minutes. Many teachers whilst agreeing on the experiment voted against it because they were asking for a "transition year". Madec arrived in the school and was in charge of implementing considerable changes she had not conceived and according to all testimonies, it ended up terribly. This experience, which happened the year before, divided teachers and tarnished the relationship between teachers and the direction.

[199] Original quotation: "bah le statut des enseignants ne prévoit pas...c'est pas tellement le statut. Enfin le statut oui mais dans leur emploi du temps y a pas un moment où il est dit et bien on est au collège et on a par exemple deux heures ou trois heures pour y travailler."

[200] Original quotation: "C'est-à-dire que déjà les Conseils Pédagogiques c'est quand même le soir après une journée de classe donc on peut pas non plus démultiplier les soirées"

to put in extra hours can be especially difficult if they are critical of the pedagogical top-down reform and distrust the direction (I will develop this aspect from the teachers' perspective in part 3).

For Madec, a more comprehensive and "reactive" approach to students' issues and misbehaviour requires a better cooperation between the teaching and non-teaching staff but here again, teachers' status seems to be the principal obstacle in the way of an efficient solution ("and sometimes we are left with that [report of incidents] and the teacher has finished their day and is gone, well. But there might be a responsiveness needed in some cases more than in others and well, it is important that we have got the elements and these elements, obviously, they will be provided during an exchange [with students and teachers]. It would be great if the work relationship were somewhat better" (Ms Madec, p. 8)[201]. While recent legal modifications addressing students' status has defined it in terms of individuals having obligations but also rights, Merle has shown that in the majority of cases, principals and educational counsellors (CPE) are hearing students "complaints without being able to judge or solve the conflicts without taking the risk to offend teachers and triggering unstoppable conflicts" (Merle, 2012). The latest research has shown that teachers, although they might show kindness and comprehensiveness, have the final say and perceive students' rights more in terms of "a right to know" than a freedom of expression (Rayou, 2000b, quoted by Duru-Bellat and Van Zanten, op. cit., p. 151). However, the research in La Balikan reveals that a group of experienced teachers promote democratic approach to education but because of their isolation, their initiatives remain silent and not generalisable. I develop this aspect in the second part.

Changing educational policies have reinforced the pedagogical role of the principals. However, according to Duru-Bellat and Van Zanten (2007, *op. cit.*), the existing gap between teachers and principals, tends to increase due to the evolution of recruitment processes of principals (decrease in the number of candidates with teaching background and increase of the candidates that held CPE positions before. The majority of teachers remain attached to their autonomy and the "hand-crafted" character of their job and see these evolutions as a threat (Demailly, 1999, quoted by *op. cit*., p. 151). Nevertheless, new generations are less reluctant to the increasing participation of principals in the pedagogical framing since they are "charismatic" (Rayou and Van Zanten, 2004, quoted by *ibid*.). The fact is that the numerous

[201] Original quotation: "Et quelquefois on est avec ça et l'enseignant il a fini sa journée il est parti, bon. Mais il y a peut-être de la réactivité à avoir en tout cas dans certains cas plus que dans d'autres, et donc c'est important qu'on ait des éléments et les éléments forcément ils vont être apportés au cours d'un échange. Ce serait bien si ce lien-là était un petit peu plus marqué"

and major structural reforms for the last thirty years contrast with the "remarkable stability" of ordinary practices in the class (Rey, 2016, p. 3). According to Madec, this will change with the umpteenth reform; meanwhile, the deputy mention that teachers are asked to involve in the individual coaching and supervision of students: "well now we ask them to involve in… this approach. When we do a PPR, we ask the teacher to get involved in it" (George, p. 4)[202].
The multiplication of measures that seek to "compensate" students' deficits in learning are informed by a vision of educational support perceived in terms of educational disadvantage and individual deficits. Most measures emphasise "language issues" (reading and speaking abilities) and underperformance (after-school homework assistance organised by voluntary students). In a school context where students with migration backgrounds are overrepresented, these measures implicitly contribute to justifying categorizations, exclusion and discrimination (e.g. Duru-Bellat, 2001; Pohl, 2015). Even if some professionals mention that separated classes for example have a positive impact on students' performance and confidence. Most of the time, these special classes provide more comfortable and "protected" learning environments while they discharge ordinary classes from students with learning difficulties. They also allow teachers to add extra hours to what otherwise would only be a part-time occupation[203]. "French as a second language" (FLS)[204] reveals the tension between the need to consider students' needs individually and the risk of stigmatization within the context of the integrative school system (*collège unique*) that concentrates on students with particular difficulties. Yet, one day a school inspector pulled the Balikan back into line, saying that the recruitment in those classes was vague and discriminatory; the school should account for "students' well-being" and make sure they would hear their voice. Also, the following anecdote illustrates how the principal must make do with teachers, who pursue their own interests, want to avoid difficulty within the classroom and have their own ideas and convictions about pedagogy:

Extract of the fieldwork diary 19. 05. 2016

"FLS-meeting with the inspector, the principal, the principal of the inclusion track and some FLS-teachers (Jardin, Dubuy, Salamé).

---

[202] Original quotation:"Alors que maintenant on leur demande aussi quelque part de...S'investir dans cette démarche. Quand on fait un PPR ("personalised path to success") là on demande à l'enseignant de s'investir dedans."
[203] In La Balikan, this was the case of a German teacher, who otherwise had not enough working hours to be fully employed in this school.
[204] (FLS: intercultural approach, appropriation of French as daily language and school language; theoretically made for allophone children).

Inspector: "this is quite an unusual setting here".

Jardin: "it has been working like this for eight years. We are making sure that it continues like this." Dubuy seems worried. She talks about the need to 'institutionalise' (secure?) the measure (Dubuy is a German teacher. Teaching FLS enables her to add extra hours to her part-time occupation)

Inspector: students' educative needs must be interpreted differently; you must change the measure. She compares the present situation with the old days when Breton (the regional language was still very present.

Dubuy: "but our goal is that they pass the brevet" (the final lower exam).

The inspector: "they must feel good"

To what the teachers answer that a lot of students like to go to the FLS class because they know that in other school subjects, they will have bad marks.

For the inspector, it is a "rupture with the norm". The school must be organised differently according to other existing measures, which personalise and individualise learning needs (like "Aide Personalisée" hours).

Jardin: "these newcomers should even not be here".

Inspector: "it is not that obvious. These students might have been successful in their country of origin and are having a hard time here". The school must create a group of allophones, which corresponds to a specific, institutionally identified category. It must work with groups uniting different levels. She admits that "it is not simple": "I'm not speaking in the name of the Inspection [...] it is not simple." You should listen to the children: how do they perceive this? Are they really happy with this?"

A month later, in June 2018 another meeting is set up to make sure that the school would implement the inspectors' recommendations. As for Jardin, the new setting (a mobile and flexible group of allophones) will oblige teachers to effectively work according to a more differentiated approach. Some may argue this is "a challenge in the teachers' culture" while for the inspector it is merely an organisational aspect and can be tackled through for instance a reduction of the main subjects. The principal will be in charge of dealing with this reform. Madec reassures everyone: "technically, we are able to solve many problems" (fieldwork notes 20/06/18).

Contrary to individual measures aiming to cope with students' learning deficits, measures addressing students collectively and aiming to work on cohesion are underdeveloped, although Madec has prioritized this aspect:

> *"Well, when I worked on the school project two years ago, I told the colleagues that we will prioritise actions, directions, but I would also like that you tell me what are your needs in terms of training. Well, and two years ago we worked on language skills, on learning how to learn, how the student learns, how we learn with them […] and this year we have prioritised, together with the colleagues, certain actions related to the school climate and this year, there is a training to address "crisis management" (Madec, p. 7)*[205]

However, she does not mention specific measures that work on the systemic and relational aspects of school climate (Debarbieux, and al. 2012). Her deputy mentions, besides existing above-mentioned measures and "all the measures coping with language skills […]"[206], the "integration stay" (*séjour de socialisation*) during which new students and teachers are united for two days at the beginning of the year and take part in outdoor activities. This measure is common in secondary schools in Germany (*Schullandheim*) because of the importance the German schooling system attributes to class cohesion. This cohesion is further reinforced as students used to remain in the same class during the whole secondary education, with the same class teacher for three consecutive years.

Thus, observations and interviews with the management at La Balikan have shown that the fight against "*décrochage scolaire*" is associated with measures aiming to cope with students' difficulties perceived as deficits. They favour an individual approach and reinforce the division of tasks regarding teaching and the management of educational and social issues. Madec referred to official guidelines to justify the focus on the tracking of absenteeism, which helps to "filter" certain categories of students "at risk" by showing non-compliant behaviour (repeated absences, lateness, opposition, trouble-making.). Through the establishment of categories and indicators this perspective mirrors at the school level a global political approach to education (Berthet et al., op. cit.). In this context, the professionals - except teachers and educational assistants - who, by the way, are the actors having the most regular

[205] I was not allowed to assist in this training. Some teachers mentioned tools to individualize schooling and take into account psychological issues, " Donc quand j'ai travaillé y a deux ans sur ce projet de réseau j'avais dit aux collègues on va priorisé des actions, des axes mais je voudrais aussi que vous me disiez quels sont vos besoins en formation. […]. Et il y a deux ans on a travaillé sur les compétences langagières, sur apprendre à apprendre, sur comment l'élève apprend, comment on travaille avec lui […] mais cette année on a priorisé avec les collègues et en concertation un certain nombre d'actions en lien avec le climat scolaire et cette année il y a une formation qui porte sur la gestion des situations de crise".

[206] Original quotation: "On a déjà tous les dispositifs qu'on met en place ... (semble ne pas savoir où commencer) tous les dispositifs de compétences langagières dès la 6ème parce que c'est important aussi. Plus ils vont acquérir de compétences langagières, moins ils seront en difficulté. [..] l'Afev aussi" (M. George, p. 6). Afev is an organisation, which carries out youth work projects. This project brings together volunteers (mostly university students) and students who have been selected beforehand by teachers. The students meet the students two hours per week for extra-school activities, homework support, etc. These projects are conducted in schools in underprivileged areas, which often concentrate migration and poverty.

interactions with students-, try to find the measures the most adapted to individual situations, e.g. through adapting timetable, finding some short-term internships, providing targeted economic support, increasing individual follow-up.

Madec, referring to the current structural "*réforme du collège*", underlines the necessity to "work differently" so that school "makes sense" to students; an aspect of which she says has been severely neglected. The work on "pedagogy" is limited to the implementation of the reform by teachers, which already requires them to undertake supplementary training in addition to their ordinary service. Other elements related to structural and institutional aspects, which have been defining teachers' status and professional identities over time are mentioned by the principal as main obstacles to address pedagogical issues more in-depth. Among these are the increasing number of temporary contracts. Although Madec's representations about the origins of the problem "early school leaving" are related to the characteristics of the local area (the "*quartier*") and its population (working and lower middle classes with migration backgrounds), such an apparent causality remains unquestioned, meaning that there are no measures planned aiming to understand the rationality behind the relation to school of many students and their parents living in the "quartier", and more generally their vision of the world and practices. Yet, it is urgent today to address the symbolic effects of the school system, which is reproducing social inequalities and domination orders (Cayouette-Remblière, 2016). This domination order is behind the multiplication of situations where working and lower middle classes are experiencing the disqualification of their social being; up to the higher spheres through the attitudes and decisions of a national government who does represent its own caste (Pinçon & Pinçon-Charlot, 2019 & Barrault-Stella & Pudal, 2015)[207]. The fact is that in such "schools of the peripheries" (Van Zanten, 2001), addressing prejudice and representations, which shape actors' subjective experience of each other in the school context, be students or teachers (Felouzis, 2003, p. 442), is essential.

On the contrary, some measures seek to limit the influence of the "outside" by keeping students inside the school or sending them once a week to a special programme organised by the police station. The attempt of social workers to renegotiate their "partnership" with the school on the basis of an active part in the educational activity within the school with the objective of facilitating communication and comprehension between the school professionals, the "*quartier"* and its inhabitants was rejected by Madec. This is particularly astonishing as in her discourse she emphasises the improvement of the "school climate", which involves, by

[207] What Pudal calls a "philosophy of contempt" (Pudal, 2019).

definition, "the quality of relations between the school staff and students, who pertain to a social system, shared norms, sense of community belonging, as well as a general state of mind referring to the idea teachers and school principals have of what should be the relations with the students" (Debarbieux and al., *ibid*., p. 4).

Contrary to Madec, the German counterpart Markel does not consider the issue "*Schulverweigerung*" as a priority. Actually, for the day of the interview, Markel collected some "papers" dealing with the topic. He gave them to me including the copy of an article published in an internal publication for principals entitled: "who is a dropout?" [208] From the beginning of this article, the reasons to get alarmed seem to be put into perspective by referring to a phenomenon, which is more media-friendly than actually alarming as it sounds: "No matter whether in *Spiegel*, *Focus*, newspapers or even the *Bildungszentrale für politische Bildung*- the word 'dropout' is omnipresent" (p. 292). The author concludes: "more than half of the school leavers without *Hauptschulabschluss* [ISCED 2] finally end up with a regular qualification[209]. In 2014, 60 percent of school leavers without any qualification came from a *Werk*- or *Hauptschule*. […] but there are possibilities for [these early leavers] to reintegrate into education. In 2014, 3,300 young people got their *Hauptschulablchluss* at professional schools (*berufliche Schulen*)" (*ibid*., p. 296). So, the author emphasises the numerous institutional links between the different school tracks and educational structures, which still enable people to get a minimal qualification rather than putting these educational structures into question. Indeed the author refers to the development of a "transition system".

Deep changes in the vocational education and training system (VET) following structural changes in the global economy in advanced capitalist countries since the 1990s (Kupfer, 2010) have led to the development of a so-called "transition system", consisting of interim courses or compensatory pre-vocational schemes. Since 2006, "this term refers to the system of remedial schemes for disadvantaged and unemployed" (Cramer and al., p. 48). Indeed, the authors of the European study of "educational governance and trajectories in Europe" (*op. cit*.) write in a chapter devoted to students' decision-making strategies at transitions in education: "normally, these routes do not represent individual choices but result from underachievement in lower secondary school and/or a lack of sufficient and adequate education or training opportunities. Most of these young people have experienced earlier

[208] Dr. Rainer Wolf, "Wer ist ein 'Schulabbrecher'?" Schulverwaltung. Fachzeitschrift für Schulentwicklung und Schulmanagement. 25. Jg., SchVw BW. 11. 2016, pp. 292-296.

[209] In Germany, there are qualifications "below" the *Hauptschulabschluss* [ISCED 2] for people having visited a "special school" (Sonder- or Förderschule) welcoming, in theory, young people with handicaps. With the establishment of the norm of "inclusion" these schools ought to disappear (Kerbel, 2015).

ruptures in their trajectories. Low socio-economic status, migration or ethnic minority background as well as traumatic experiences (e.g. addiction, health problems or parents' separation) are key factors. This pattern is associated with differentiated education and training systems like Germany and France where schemes tend to be stigmatising 'parking lots' for those who fail to enter regular education and training" (Walther and al., 2016, p 235). Markel has some reasons not to get alarmed: his school is not a *Hauptschule* –nor a *berufliche Schule* in the "transition system"- and according to the article published in an internal publication he put under my eyes, dropping out does not inevitably lead to the end of education since dropouts have the chance to reintegrate into the education system through specific transition classes. Nevertheless, it is worth considering how that issue is addressed in his school, particularly in the context of the newly created *GMS* which, according to national authorities, "makes sure that children and young people succeed at school and thereby increase their joy in learning" (Kultusministerum, 2019).

2.2.2 In the Geschwister Scholl *GMS*: "There is a plan of procedure (…), which we apply"

Similarly to his French counterpart, the principal of the Geschwister Scholl *GMS* refers to existing official guidelines to deal with this phenomenon on a case basis for occasional individuals (1.2.2.1). The individualised perspective, however, seems unsatisfying, and still refer to scarcity of resources to cope with students' needs and the injunction to promote "equal opportunities" (1.2.2.2).

2.2.2.1 Individual case management and working on the relationship ("Beziehungsarbeit")

I have already discussed how the German term "*Schulverweigerung*" refers to the "refusal" of the individual to cope with compulsory schooling and school demands, thereby marginalising the role of social and school structures and institutions in the production of dropouts. For Markel, "there are specific cases, who refuse without any reason *really*, who *simply* do not want to cooperate, who *simply* say: 'well, I don't do that' [but], this is a large minority" (Markel, 2017, p. 11). Markel speaks about "something that happens and then one should look at it" (p. 12). And for this minority, there is an official procedure that the school mostly follows. Similar to the French "educational commissions", Markel wants to adopt a "comprehensive" attitude to "clarify the reasons for *Schulverweigerung*" individually:

> *"There is a plan of procedures, […] and hm, we follow this plan of procedure actually, mostly. So, when it is... reported; colleagues record it firstly; the class teacher notices it in the first place and then comes the question, when does he*

come to me, and then we clarify the reasons, what is behind (a refusal attitude]: is there any illness, how is the student doing at home, what are the reasons for them to refuse to go to school, how is the student doing with friends, is the student isolated? And we examine this first so that we can find out what the problems are. And if it goes further, we contact the parents, and most of the cases are solved at this level. [...] if not, we notify the Youth Welfare Service and there they have a procedure. In specific cases, for those who refuse to go to school without having any proper reason, who simply, who simply do not want to cooperate, who just say: 'no, I don't do that', we called the police to look for them, but this is already quite a big thing. I never had to do it until now" (Markel, 2017, p. 11)[210].

This extract illustrates the fact that, to be addressed, a dropout attitude needs to be "reported", be it in terms of "passive" or "active" forms. And this is submitted to teachers' comments, particularly class teachers, who then decide to involve the school principal. This process involves a range of opportunities for discretion, which will be detailed in Part 3. Thus, the principal might only have a picture of this phenomenon according to what teachers (or other professionals) actually report to him. Absences are theoretically reported by every teacher and noted into the "class register"[211]. The register is regularly controlled by the class teacher who normally keeps records of the entries and who is supposed to inform the principal[212]. Other teachers can also report to the class teacher any difficulty or worries they may have with regards to individual students. The class teacher then decides whether it is worth involving the principal or not (examples from the field have shown how class teachers try to solve issues by themselves).

[210] Original quotation: "Da gibt es einen Ablaufplan, […] und, ähm, dieser Ablaufplan, dem folgen wir eigentlich, im weiten Teil. Also, wann ist das ... wird zu melden, der Kollege, der ... registriert das zuerst; der Klassenlehrer merkt das zuerst und dann ist die Frage, wann kommt er auf mich zu, und dann klären wir mal die Ursachen, was liegt dahinter: gibt es da Krankheit, was ist mit dem Elternhaus, was gibt's für Gründe, wie geht's mit den Freunden, hat er Kontakt, hat er kein Kontakt, ist er isoliert, ist er nicht isoliert? Und das prüft man erstmals, um genau das mal zu gucken, was los ist. Und wenn es in die weiteren Stufen geht, dann gibt's recht schnell die Elternkontakt und die meisten Fälle lösen sich auf diese Ebene […] und wenn es weiter geht, wird beim Schulamt gemeldet, und da gibt's Verfahren Es gibt auch bei bestimmten Fällen, die so verweigern ohne wirkliche große Gründe, die einfach das, einfach nicht machen wollen, einfach sagen: 'ne mache ich nicht'. Wir haben auch die Polizei zuführen lassen, dass die Polizei ihn holt, aber das ist schon eine große Sache. Das habe ich bis jetzt nicht machen müssen."
-Q:.: das ist schon eine Minderheit diese…?
-M.: sehr große Minderheit. Sehr sehr große.[…] Das ist ein Thema was passiert und dann muss man gucken".

[211] While in La Balikan teachers are invited to register absences directly in a computer program from their classroom, which might be interpreted as a porject to secure and systematize the control of absences.

[212] In Baden-Württemberg, as in France, there seems to be an official threshold according to which absences are considered as problematic, which lies at around 40 days per year (see above). This threshold is also mentioned as "condition" to be accepted in the project "*Schulverweigerung*". According to a teacher of this GMS, Müller, this threshold had been set internally by the principal": "Markel hatte diese 40 Fehltage wohl Schulintern als Richtwert ausgegeben" (Müller, Mail 05/07/2018).

Justified and unjustified absences are then published in the final school report, a practice that has been recently introduced in France as well. It implicitly reinforces the school's ability to judge performance but also behaviour. In parallel with France, the institutional control of students has been strengthened. As Sälzer writes, "the relevance of school absenteeism becomes visible when looking at the diversity of recent targeted measures, which aim to prevent unjustified absences or impose sanctions […] Different levels of escalation exist, starting from the initiative of the class teacher, to the involvement of the youth welfare office, the police and the administration inflicting fines, and should "show children and young people that [one] is interested in them and their problems with school (Heffner, 2008 about a series of measures created in 2008-2009 by the educational confederation in Stuttgart, quoted in Sälzer, *op. cit*., p. 197). I have already discussed the "police" measure, which is a symbolic instrument to demonstrate the public power but whose pedagogic efficiency is not really proved, especially for young people who miss school recurrently (Hegeler & Rademacker, in Herz, Puhr, Ricking, 2005, p. 77).

While the discourse about the *GMS* emphasises the individualisation of support and progress, Markel thinks that the most important aspect is to have good one-to-one relations. Contrary to his French counterpart, he still teaches some hours a week and his experience tells him that "nowadays", the relational aspect of educational commitment is more crucial than yesterday, where it seemed to go without saying. This implies that teachers know and care about their students' personal and family environments and/or possible private issues. Teachers should use this knowledge in the interaction with the student to negotiate their commitment to their own education:

> *"Well, having good relations with the students is very crucial. Actually it is the bottom line. Today it is necessary, in the past it was not. Today we need this. So if I ask Tom: 'Tom, why are you not writing?' And Tom says: 'I don't want to' and then I ask: 'because of yesterday?' and then he says: 'yes, because of yesterday'. So when I know something, I can step in and say: 'OK, write 5-6 more sentences. He says: 'OK, I will write five sentences? Relationship building…we do this constantly. We must constantly work on relationships. To fight Schulverweigerung, it is important that we help student build relationships from early on; that he [sic] has a group somewhere because most of them are isolated or quickly isolated. We must know very quickly, what is actually happening, so that we can look at it very early. Then, there would probably be less [Schulverweigerer]. This is always... Schulverweigerung is at the end of a long chain"(Markel, p. 13)*[213].

[213] Original quotation: "Also gute Beziehungen haben zu Schülern. Sehr entscheidend. Überhaupt das

A particular measure, the so-called "Learn Coaching" (*Lerncoaching)* illustrates this individualised pedagogic approach best. Learn Coaching consists of regular one-to-one meetings between students at risk of dropping out and trusted teaching staff. There should be a safe space for students where they can speak about the problems that prevent them from focusing on their leaning process. This measure is performance-oriented and based on the idea that every student should be "active" in their learning process but in line with their "capacity". Actually, the measure "Learn Coaching" in the context of the newly created *Gemeinschaftsschule* seeks to raise "students' responsibility for their own learning process". With "Learn Coaching", students learn how to "plan, keep records, assess and reflect their learning, i.e. they become the experts for their individual learning path, which leads preferably to an optimal final qualification" (Landesinstitut für Schulentwicklung Baden-Württemberg)[214]. There is no "passive" dropout in the class anymore and such a measure should help to overcome individual obstacles in order to achieve the best qualification.

This measure can be interpreted through the prism of the Foucauldian concept of the "governmentality" as a "governmental technique" aiming at people's guidance and the internalisation of the norm and criteria for self-optimisation (see previous part). Students from 11 years old learn how to consider educational success as a key component for future successful achievement according to a discourse emphasising the need to show effort and "keep focused". The manual on "Learn Coaching"[215] suggests teachers, or rather "coaches"[216], should "avoid judgement", and always "act benevolently" and in an accepting way assuming that "each human can and does want to learn", whilst acknowledging that

---

entscheidende. Es ist heute notwendig, früher war das nicht so notwendig. Heute brauchen wir das. Also wenn ich Tom sag, Tom warum schreibst du nicht? Und der Tom sagt, ja, ich will nicht und dann sag ich, wegen gestern? und dann sagt er ja wegen gestern. Also wenn ich etwas weiß, kann ich einsteigen und sagen, ja ok und schaffst du trotzdem noch ein bisschen? sagt er ja...da kann man dahin kommen und sagen: ok, mach mal noch 5-6 Zeile. Sagt er OK, 5 Zeilen mache ich. He? Beziehungsarbeit. Und die macht man dauernd dauernd dauernd. Es muss dauernd Beziehungsarbeit machen. Und das ist denke ich für die Schulverweigerung wichtig, dass man sehr früh zeitig, dass er eine gruppe irgendwo hat. Weil die meisten dann isoliert oder schnell isoliert sind. Auch sehr frühzeitig eine Ahnung kriegen, was da eigentlich los ist, dass man da ganz ganz frühzeitig schon gucken kann. Dann würde wahrscheinlich weniger geben. Das ist immer … Schulverweigerung ist am Ende einer langen Kette"

[214] ""Das Ziel individualisierten Lernens ist es, jede Schülerin und jeden Schüler intensiv mit ihren bzw. seinen Stärken und Entwicklungsbedarfen in den Blick zu nehmen und im Lernprozess zu unterstützen […]Schülerinnen und Schüler, die in diesem Rahmen agieren, müssen in weitaus stärkerem Maße Verantwortung für ihre eigenen Lernprozesse übernehmen. Sie planen, dokumentieren, bewerten und reflektieren ihr Lernen zunehmend selbst, d. h. sie werden zu Expertinnen und Experten für ihren ganz individuellen Lernweg, der zu einer möglichst optimalen Abschlussleistung führt" Official website: [https://www.ls-bw.de/,Lde/4619664], 15/08/2018

[215] "Taschenbegleiter Gesprächsführung für Lerncoaching" (no date). This was given to me by a teacher in June 2018.

[216] According to the *GMS*-discourse, "teachers play different roles as learning supervisor (*Lernbegleiter*), coach and traditional teacher" (Kultusministerium, 2019).

“each human learns differently”, and that “each behaviour is [the result of] what is available to the learner at the moment”. The book states further that “methods alone are useless and [teachers]’ attitude is important. According to a German proverb that can be found on an official flyer for teachers the “grass does not grow quicker even if you try to pull it out of the earth” (“*das Gras wächst nicht schneller, wenn man daran zieht*“)[217]. The leaflet criticises authoritative pressure and coercion, which it considers to be useless. Teachers are asked to be understanding and to walk in “students’ shoes” (*ibid*.). Setting “goals” together and assessing them regularly in a “benevolent” atmosphere aims to trigger students’ commitment, adhesion, interest and responsibility for their own performance. It set the school performance as a universal desirable goal while school performance. Such a measure transfers the responsibility to deal with students’ issues to the teacher, or more generally to school professionals. It remains questionable of such a measure, focused on the listening and performance-oriented can trigger organisational and institutional changes; or even trigger changes at the socio-economic structural level. On the one hand, it enables students to express their current issues and give teachers the opportunity to implement school-related solutions (e.g. work on the classroom climate…). It creates situations for positive or negative discretion, such as warming up or cooling down attitudes towards students’ educational projects.

Foucault’s theory also shows that each protagonist does have a room for manoeuvre to orientate the behaviour of the other or to resist to the steering of their own behaviour by others (Laval, 2018, p. 20). Observations of students’ behaviour during some “Learn Coaching” sessions and discussions with a teacher inform about some students’ strategies to “escape” some aspects of this measure, such as the formulation of “learning goals”. Students rather “use” the presence of the teacher and this “time-out” to share their concerns or to get some help for their homework. Furthermore, these sessions are not regular as they should and it makes it very difficult to keep the tempo of a ten-minute meeting (usually, meetings last longer and it thus postpones following meetings). Eventually, if these sessions give teachers the possibility to build up different relations with students outside of the classroom settings, they are doing this during their break between two classes. It is a supplementary workload. Furthermore, they can be critical towards a measure which fosters self-dependence in the authoritarian school settings they are representing. I will develop this aspect in the next part.

The attention given to the individualisation of support raises the question of the role of school as an institution of socialisation in a collectivity. The following remark of Markel invites to

[217] Ibid.

reflect on the question of "lacking resources", which increase when individual needs should be more considered; but also, on the group as learning situation and support:

> *"The conception of support should be, in my opinion, much better, so that one can really respond individually to students' needs; these need much more individual supervision. They already hardly achieve anything in the group, and in the class nothing anymore. Sometimes one should take them apart, and tell them precisely what they have to do…. And sometimes they overcome their mental block. But one has to do this before. Yet we don't have the resources" (Markel, p. 6)*[218]

Besides the teacher-student relationship, Markel wishes teachers would "work together more closely" concerning teaching, but he admits that this is a question of time and confidence ("this is a process", Markel, p. 7). The conditions to create this atmosphere of confidence, however, may not be institutionally and politically provided in the new settings. Teaching himself some hours a week, Markel is able to understand teachers' difficulty with the new *GMS*-settings and refers to the importance of social pedagogic approaches and notably the supportive intervention of social workers. The desire to address teaching related, structural, and organisational aspects is no mean feat and bound to encounter difficulties when being implemented.

2.2.2.2 "We should have more social workers at school" (Markel, p. 6): school confronted with the social question.

I have shown how the political discourse about "early school leaving" aims to establish the idea of a "social responsibility" of school with regards to this issue (Hegeler & Rademacker, in *op. cit*., p. 85).

In general, Markel does not think that the school should be alone in dealing with their educational duties, given the new institutional setting. He blames policy-makers for not giving the school the capacity and the means to address the new heterogeneity of the students and implement the pedagogic principles of the all-day school and *Gemeinschaftsschule* as they are theoretically developed (see 1.1.2.).

[218] Original quotation: "Ähm.. also die Förderkonzeption sollte aus meiner Sicht wesentlich besser sein, dass man wirklich individuell auf den Schüler eingehen kann, die brauchen viel mehr Einzelbetreuung. In der Gruppe schaffen sie es schon nicht mehr, und in der Klasse schon gar nicht mehr; manchmal muss man sie nehmen, sich hinsetzen und genau sagen, was sie zu tun haben, und dran bleiben, sitzen bleiben. Irgendwann schaffen sie es. Aber das muss man machen. Das haben wir aber nicht, die Ressourcen".

For Markel, cooperation with the school social worker is crucial and close –"in this respect, I'm glad it works well" (Markel, p. 7)[219]. School social workers should also be more numerous – "we should have more social workers in the school"; "there are not enough" (p. 8). They also need to be fully integrated because there are "more complicated social issues than before" (Markel, p. 6)[220]. Social school work is a professional field legally rooted in the field of Children and Youth social aid (at the federal level §11 SGB VIII/KJHG and §13 SGB VIII/KJGH). There is no equivalent in France. This is due to the different historical evolution and representations of education, and in particular the relation between non-formal education (youth work) and formal education in the context of state building (I develop this more in-depth in part 4)[221]. Indeed, as I will show in Part 4 of this dissertation, the place and role of school social work within schools varies from one school to another, as well as its institutional acknowledgment. Notwithstanding, their role as "stage in-between" makes them as crucial actors of support, not only for students, but also teachers; as well as in the context of the *GMS* which ought to be open to its local environment (Reinecke-Terner, 2017).

Markel seems to see in school social workers the possibility to cope with the social question, which has penetrated the former "*Realschule*" that used to welcome a more homogeneous clientele. The lack of school social workers (who are generally disseminated over different schools with a part-time mandate), and generally educational support is perceived all the more crucial since the new population is apprehended as "unadapted" for people having experienced the former educational system for years (see previous section): "We must have more social pedagogues, more psychologists at school, more supervisory staff who simply supervise and educate. This is not OK!" (Markel, p. 4)[222].

Facing difficulty to cope with his job to realise "equal opportunity", his discourse is shaped by a glorified past, while he himself recognised that the "school form has to be changed" (see 1.1.2.2). In the following part, I will draw some parallels between teachers' discourses following the integration of lower secondary educational tracks in France in the 1970s (Dubet, 2002) and the ones which are to be heard in the Geschwister Scholl *GMS* following from the implementation of the *GMS*; so the discourses about "decline" and experiences of increasing

---

[219] Original quotation: "Da bin ich auch froh, dass es so gut läuft".

[220] Original quotation: "Also Sozialarbeit ist sehr dicht […] Frau S. [die Sozialarbeiterin], die macht viel, wir sind immer viel im Kontakt, auch in sehr schwierigen Fällen. Da bin ich auch froh, dass es so gut läuft. Das braucht man. Da müssen viel mehr Sozialarbeiter an der Schule sein. Dass sie wirklich eingebunden werden. Die Sozialschwierigkeiten, die jetzt auftreten, die früher nicht so groß waren".

[221] See the report of the French-German study comparing the perspectives of youth work in both countries (Berger, E.; Labadie, F.;Wittmann, Svendy, 2018, S. 99ff.)

[222] Original quotation: "Hier müssten viel mehr Sozialpädagogen, hier müssten Psychologen an die Schule, hier müsste ein Haufen an Betreuungskräfte an die Schule […] das ist nicht in Ordnung!"

workload can be (partly) resituated in the context of changing clientele, and social interactions between teachers and their clientele, which have become in that sense "maladjusted".

My research stay provided evidence that Markel was not very appreciated by the teachers, or at least that his action was disputed. On the contrary, Markel does not blame teachers for his professional difficulties but accounst for the elements that contribute to deteriorating relations with the teachers, and increases them through tiredness and irritation.

> *"The social issues, which occurred, were not that dominant before. Before, we had a school… actually we started early, six hours from Monday to Friday, six hours and then, free. Before there were no afternoon classes. Then it has always been becoming more. Now one sits the whole day in school, and still one has the same number of tests to prepare, to review and they [the students] are more numerous at school. …. A lot of teachers have afternoon classes. But everything for the same income, with the same hours. But time and efforts have increased. And they are paid the same. Also everything around IT, there are many things, which have to be learned and done [….] this leads to an overload for the teaching staff" (Markel, pp. 7-8)*[223]

In their study about GMS in Baden-Württemberg, Bohl & Wacker (ed.) (2016) mention the increasing attention of the research and public authorities to teachers' health situations due to the high number of early retirement because of illness since the 1990s. The authors mention the central stress factors from which this profession is suffering on the base of different studies, such as problematic students, high number of working hours and time and missing rest periods, noise, conflicts with the colleagues or rather a deteriorated school climate (p. 159). Particularly in the *Gemeinschaftsschule*, the presence of students in need of special support ("*mit Förderbedarf*") might increase the difficulty of teachers who feel particularly unprepared and untrained. Furthermore, "the changing work and working time of teachers led in many schools to question the current teaching load model [*Deputatstudenmodell*] with the work model in the *GMS* and even experiment changing and more flexible working models" (p. 168). Eventually, they observe that the question of resources is an essential issue: if the idea of the *GMS* has received globally a positive echo, the scarcity of available resources in terms of time, human resources and rooms is a great source of tensions (*ibid*.).

[223] Original quotation: "Die Sozialschwierigkeiten, die jetzt auftreten, die früher nicht so groß waren. Früher hatte man eine Schule… hatte man eigentlich ganz früh 6 Stunden von Montag bis Freitag, 6 Stunden und dann frei. Früher gab es kein Nachmittagsunterricht und das ist immer mehr geworden. Jetzt sitzt man ganz in der Schule, hat aber trotzdem alle Klassenarbeiten, trotzdem alle Vorbereitung, alle Nachbereitung und sie sind viel mehr in der Schule. Auch die Lehrer normalerweise. Viele haben Nachmittagsunterricht. Das ist aber alles die gleiche Bezahlung mit den gleichen stunden. Aber der Aufwand ist gestiegen. Und Bezahlung gleich geblieben. Auch das Ganze was IT und so belangt, sind ja auch viele Sachen, die da gelernt werden müssen und gemacht werden müssen […] Dadurch es ist halt eine große Belastung im Kollegium".

For Markel, the problem "*Schulverweigerung*", from an institutional perspective, can be explained by the lack of support resources (in terms of more pedagogical or psychological workers) which, in turn, weighs on teachers, who are in parallel being challenged by new and more heterogeneous class settings and students with different social backgrounds, by the reorganisation of curricula and the necessity to involve in their traditional tasks more time in collective thinking[224]. This context of "overload" might have a negative impact on how teachers make themselves available and engage with children. I will develop this aspect in the next part, which addresses teachers' perspectives. Nevertheless, it is not certain that more cooperation between teachers regarding the aspect of teaching content might have a positive impact on students' commitment in class. As suggests Duru-Bellat, who summarises the latest developments in research about "school effectiveness" with regard to a possible "school" or "teacher effect" based on French and Anglo-Saxon research findings for the "*Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Bildungswissenschaften*" (2001), "in total, many results might disappoint pedagogic activists: whether teamwork, nor the implementation of innovative actions or teachers' commitment in the school policy project appear to be significantly related to school effectiveness (Duru-Bellat, pp. 327-328). Sälzer, with regard to the relations between absenteeism and school "effectiveness", comes to the same conclusion, partly because teacher-student interactions are embedded in the multidimensional school and classroom contexts: "this book is not able to say whether teachers 'can do something' in order to prevent or reduce absenteeism […] although they may play a significant role in their interactions with students" (*op. cit*., p. 200), which might contribute to students' "decision" to be present or not in class. More generally, her research advocates the integration of the reflection of "absentismus" at each level of the school environment.

In this respect, Markel's testimony interrogates the capacity of the school setting to offer the resources and conditions favouring teachers' availability to help students to cope with

[224] The school principal might refer here to the increasing number of tasks that teachers have to fulfil and which do not correspond to classical teaching tasks (preparation, teaching, supervision of students). These tasks are for example the collection of data, which are required for the production of statistics in Baden-Württemberg: VERA, Profil AC, paper work... Also, the changing pedagogic approach of assessment for example demands teachers to write personal reports about students' learning progress (*Lernentwicklungsberichte*). Then, they are more and more meetings with external support institutions, which also support teachers in the implementation of prevention and information sessions: meetings with school social workers, school psychologists, educational support staff (*Erziehungshelfer*innnen*), drugs advice, prevention of violence… To these non-teaching activities, one can add the organisation of class excursions (*Schullandheim*) with educational and team building objectives, fundraising for class budgets, career fair, graduation trip, professional practical training, food raising for social projects… All these projects demand organisatory competence and time in addition to the preparation of teaching and teaching according to the injunction of "differentiation" in "inclusive" contexts. Teachers are still remunerated according to unchanged civil servants' tariff grid of evolution with regard to their qualification as "Haupt-, Real-, Gemeinschafts- or gymnasiale" teachers.

educational demands. Indeed, “access to supportive relationships influences the way youths handle stressful situations depending on academic demands, environmental shifts (e.g. school transitions), learning and/or relational difficulties and changes in the nature and significance of familial relationships (Cauce et al., 1994 referred to by Walther and al. *op. cit*., p. 118). Amos et al. have shown that particularly related to the implementation of the *Gemeinschaftsschule* in Baden-Württemberg, “a highly differentiated support system has been established to aid students and their families, but may have very obverse effects […] because teachers tend to be particularly stressed and overworked in these schools, not the least due to political pressure and high performance expectation, and the other professions […] have their own professional procedures and organisational structures […] feedback and communication loops may be a real problem” (Amos and *al*., 2016, p. 85). Another problem mentioned by these authors as regards the issue of accessibility in education are the permanence of stereotypical ascriptions. I will develop this aspect in the next part.

***

Despite the different institutional and contextual settings differentiating the *Collège* La Balikan and the Geschwister Scholl *GMS*, the investigation of principals’ ways of doing regarding the issue of “*décrochage scolaire*/*Schulverweigerung*” informs us about common framing elements.

Both schools account for a strengthening of the control of absences. “Early school leaving” is in this respect referred to the official procedure for the tracking and registering of physical absences according to an established legal threshold although according to the latest developments of the research (including the Anglo-Saxon ones), this phase constitutes the last step in a long process (Bernard, *op.cit*., pp. 73-83), which is to be thought as complex interaction between school demands and judgements and students’ familial and local environments. Indeed, students’ experience of school results from their perceptions of school-related structures, rules, interactions and judgements, social positions (habitus) and unequal resources to cope with school issues. In both schools, “truants” are managed individually in order to identify the reasons for their behaviour and find the most adapted measures within a repertoire schools have at their disposal. This repertoire consists of measures addressing misbehaviour and underperformance but also aims to identify socio-economic, health or relational issues.

While the French principal formulates the need to work on projects that help students to make sense of school, this aspect is not really addressed. She refers to a "lack of time" to work on pedagogy, which results from an order of priority influenced by institutional factors framing the regulation and distribution of professionals in schools, defining status and identities, framing the organizational working conditions and relations; as well as by elements related to the school history. She refers to the structural reform (*réforme du collège*) that plans to have a positive impact on this. Most importantly, it seems that issues concerning negative participation should be solved internally, as well as privileged traditional partners (medico-social, police). The apparent reluctance towards a deeper integration of social youth workers could be considered as a missed opportunity to reconsider mutual relations and understanding of certain logics according to which students living in this underprivileged and segregated area construct their school experience. As for the German principal, lacking resources are constantly mentioned being able to really work on this aspect, as well as the pressure to perform (under which seems to be the principal as well). The pedagogic principles of the *GMS* aim to develop differentiated approaches of teaching and teachers' cooperation. Markel underlines the fact that such demands meet with the scarcity of resources supporting teachers in these tasks in the context of the construction of an "inclusive school", i.e. the diversification of students' origins in terms of social and migration backgrounds. He also stresses the context of work overload while the same teachers are asked to get involved in many meetings and committees, write school reports instead of simply distributing marks, set up projects and get involved in individualised "coaching" sessions for students. Those coaching sessions aim to make students responsible for their school career and identify the way they can organise their learning process better and maximise their performance.

While many (international) studies have accounted for the relevance of school climate[225] with regard to students' performance, positive integration and commitment in schools (Bernard, pp. 70 ff.; Debarbieux et al., *op. cit*., Sälzer, *op. cit*. pp. 56 ff., Stamm and al. *op. cit.*, pp. 34 ff.), principals stress measures dealing with the individualisation of relations to school (individualisation of support and supervision, of punishment, of orientation , etc.).

The professionals likely to play a role in the definition and establishment of a positive school climate are differently referred to in principals' discourse. Markel sees in the school social workers crucial resources as they address individual and collective aspects involved in the

[225] For a definition of the school climate, see Debarbieux et al., pp. 3-4 (French) or Sälzer, op. cit. p. 50 (German).

issue of negative participation; yet, their limited presence in the school does not meet the school's needs.

Madec rather formulates the problem in terms of lacking cooperation between the "school life" department (educational assistants and CPE), the employee for security and prevention in charge of the measure "exclusion-inclusion" and teachers. However, the principal measure she refers to in the name of the fight against "early school leaving" (*décrochage scolaire*) is based on a strict division of tasks and educational work. Furthermore, whether teachers, nor educational assistants, who are the professionals the most interacting with students, are part of this measure (or only indirectly through the tracking and registering of absences).

In both the French and German contexts, the difference of status, wages, historical integration, roles and professional identities, that is, power configurations might help to understand the successful or unsuccessful aspects of the relations between the teaching and non-teaching staff. Although those elements have been defined differently over time, they have also led to different organisational mechanisms at the school level.

Both principals, with regard to the current reforms, mention the need for the teaching staff to "work differently" in order to integrate every student in the learning activity (which also imply reflection about the contents and regulation of their work and working time). While Markel, who is still teaching a couple of hours a week, points out to the difficulties of the teaching staff he can well understand as a teacher himself because of lacking allocated support; George, Madec's deputy and former *CPE*, analyses the problem in terms of "fear of change", the "institutionalisation of privileges" and "the responsibility of unions" that would contribute to restraining the change of the system (this "mammoth") whereas he considers the question of resources likely to ease teachers' job as secondary:

> *"We are not allowed to complain. Personally I find resources that I did not have before […] even if we could divide classes in two, put two teachers per class sometimes as well, do more differentiated pedagogy" (George, p. 6)*[226]

How do teachers see the problem from their perspective? Do they deem useful measures to cope with students' school negative participation? How do they affect their way of working or support their teaching? What would they do differently and what are the limits they encounter?

[226] Original quotation: **"**On n'a pas à se plaindre. Moi je trouve des moyens que j'avais pas avant. [..] même si on pourrait "dédoubler" des classes, mettre deux enseignants par classe des fois aussi, faire de la pédagogie beaucoup plus différenciée".

Part 3

Teachers

The school principals were analysed as the first "filters" who "translate" the political discourse and priority addressing the issue of "early school leaving", meaning behaviours threatening the full-achievement of secondary schooling. I sought to demonstrate the complex imbrications of diverse elements related to the macroscopic, institutional/organisational and individual levels of the process. I show how these elements combine from the outset and lead to different interpretations/implementation of political guidelines in individual schools: Mrs. Hummel, German principal of the *GMS* in Bretonville wants to implement a project based on case-management for students targeted as dropouts; the principal of a French lower secondary school in V. City formulates the problem in pedagogical terms addressing teachers' practices. In the Geschwister Scholl *GMS* as previously analysed, the political agenda inviting principals to address the problem of "truancy" (*Schulschwänzen*) or "school refusal" (*Schulverweigerung*) vanishes behind the priority given to the implementation of the new comprehensive school form *Gemeinschaftsschule*. In the French lower secondary school La Balikan, the school principal Mrs. Madec wants to show that she commits to the national priority to fight against "early school leaving". This is interpreted as strengthening the tracking and control of absences and deviant behaviours and providing individual solutions.

So principals give some directions how students' "negative participation" at school is to be dealt with. But like Christin Sälzer suggests in her study regarding school absenteeism particularly, principals' positions prove to have little relevance in explaining school absenteeism. She refers to previous research connecting leadership styles or ways to cope with absenteeism with absence rates: in their capacity to establish a welcoming school climate (as perceived by the students) or rewards rather than punishment, principals may have some impact on such a phenomenon though (Sälzer, 2010, pp. 200-201). Given the systemic definition of school climate it involves other professionals, namely teachers.

The fact is, that in both schools, teachers are not integrated in collective reflection on this issue, although they are considered as the central factor as regards to the implementation of school innovation" (Terhart, Bennewitz & Rothland, 2011, p. 9 quoted by Bohl and al. *op. cit*., p. 153).

In the first section, I will clarify the socio-history of the teaching profession in their respective countries, which will help to understand teachers' positioning in both field examples in the

Geschwister School *GMS* (section 2) and in La Balikan (section 3) in relation with the transformation of the educational system. In this first section, I will also refer to the dropout research which informs about connections regarding the influence of the classroom settings and dropout attitudes. Finally, I will conclude this part with comparative lessons that can be drawn from both field research (section 4).

3 Teachers and students' "negative school participation"

To understand the relations between these two terms, we must consider the socio-history of the teaching profession, in relation with institutional settings and the elements that legitimate teachers'symbolical authority over their students and by extension, their parents. The way that French and German teachers speak about their students –especially the ones they consider as "dropouts"- reveal the interplay between their social position and institutional settings that frame their roles, enable or limit their creativity and individual capacity to support their students.

3.1 Socio-history of a profession: Role of teachers in educating, "elevating", sorting out individuals

The role of teachers is embedded in the long socio-history of educational systems, that I have summarized in the precedent part and which they inherit. Their selection, their personal background, the current institutional settings frame their action at the school level. According to democratic views, a meritocratic distribution of social positions aims to replace a social distribution according to birth while welfare and other supporting measures (scholarships, more support for disadvantaged school) are supposed to help students from underprivileged milieus to have "equal opportunities" as socially advantaged groups in education (see part 1). With the introduction of the norm of "equal opportunities", and teaching principles such as "explicit teaching", "differentiation" and "inclusion", schools, and especially teachers, are seen (made) as crucial components of the fight against the reproduction of social inequalities at school.

3.1.1 The role of teachers embedded in the socio-history of the school institution

In line with the institutionalist perspective, the school institution is based on three "pillars" (Scott, 2013, in Rey, p. 18): the "regulatory pillar" (rules, controls, sanctions); the "normative pillar" (prescriptions, evaluations, obligations) and the "cultural pillar" (shared conceptions). According to this conception, "present and future teachers are enrolled in a learning process of techniques, norms, beliefs, which thus creates a stable framework, but which also makes change more difficult because it necessitates new learning" (*ibid*.). In other words, the school is an ideal environment for path dependency to develop.

School systems have been supporting the production and division of work (and social classes) while school qualifications were recognised as relevant to sort individuals out and differentiate social positions according to the concept of meritocracy. This is the dominant social and cognitive framework that has been institutionalising schools in modern societies. Teachers, who prepare students to get the qualifications that will (theoretically) determine their social positions, have been enjoying—due to their activity— "professional legitimacy" and a "certain social recognition" (Rey, 2016, p. 18). Beside the "sorting" role of education, teachers have also a socializing function. For Emile Durkheim, public education is in charge of establishing "essential principles of the democratic moral" (Durkheim, 1922, p. 62). Teachers ("masters") are responsible for conveying a certain societal "homogeneity", which is understood as the "conditions enabling a certain heterogeneity to exist" (through the acknowledgment of and commitment to common rules and norms) and a consensus between private and collective (societal) interests (*ibid*., p. 52). This aspect assumes that these rules and norms are unanimousely accepted, which is not necessary the case anymore : F. Dubet speaks of the crisis of the (school) institution where he identifies breaches in the social consensus that have framed the legitimacy of teachers' power and authority, a major one resulting from the expansion of education (*collège unique*) following from critics made to educational structures regarding the reproduction of social inequalities.

Education in a humanist understanding also means "educating"[227] students to be future citizens, to realize their right to social participation and realize their "human potential" (emancipating). Teachers have the conviction convictions that their subject, in this sense, serves the "reflexive process of their students" (McDowel and al., 2016, p. 187), while their

[227] The etymological origin of "élève"in France, comes from "elevare" (lat.), bringing up someone above his socio-cultural determinants, help to question the world.

subjects are embedded in selective educational system, where they do not have the same instrumental value.

F. Dubet and his German counterpart W. Helsper have shown how societal changes have confronted pedagogues with professional situations of contradictory concurrency as regards many aspects of the educational interaction (Helsper, 2004, Dubet, 2002). The tensions between emancipation and discipline, individualisation and universalism, hierachical settings and democratic values, selection and socialisation to common values, are contradictory poles which frame teacher-student interaction. The recognition of the student as a "subject" in this new institutional project involves a personalisation of the teaching experience, which appears to be emotionally challenging (Dubet, 2002, p. 167).

Since the 1960s and the development of statistics, schools and particulary teachers have been continuously criticised for contributing to institionalising social inequalities. The most famous authors of these criticisms are the sociologists Bourdieu and Passeron (1964, 1970) and their followers who argue that schools are the place where dominant cultural and pedagogic standards are imposed and performed through teachers, thereby expressing a "symbolic violence". The groups who dominate the cultural *field* impose their social representations, tastes, and values on the school through implicit pedagogic practices, which in turn legitimates them. It makes working-class students and families adhere to the principles of their domination (see Duru-Bellat & van Zanten, 2010, pp. 244-247). The fact that school works as a place of social reproduction of domination orders is hardly defendable for policy makers promoting "equal opportunities". So official programmes coping with "early school leaving" fight and even official guidelines inviting (priority school) teachers to "switch from the implicit to the explicit" in their teaching methods (*Référentiel pour l'éducation prioritaire -"Enseigner plus explicitement*", 2015) or differentiate their teaching to address a range of different abilities in heterogeneous classrooms (cf. *Gemeinschaftsschule*) aim to bring about major change.

These critics have highlighted the historical elitist components of the "humanist culture", which dominate educational structures and subjects hierarchies (Decréau, 2019) while this culture and experience were used by teachers to establish their power: "the ascendancy the master naturally has over their students, following from the superiority of his experience and his culture, will naturally give to his action its necessary power" (Durkheim, 1922, p. 68)[228].

[228] Original quotation: "L'ascendant que le maître a naturellement sur son élève, par suite de la supériorité de son expérience et de sa culture, donnera naturellement à son action la puissance efficace qui lui est nécessaire".

Such a “natural” authority does not speak for itself anymore. The confrontation of teachers with the issue of “dropout” is exemplary of it, especially by German teachers, who are experiencing the dissolution of former segmentation and experiencing the “heterogeneity” of their public as very challenging. Their discourses are often associated with a “loss of authority” and “respect”.

So the dropout research points to the gap between “familial cultures and the world of school” while the political challenge is to ensure from the beginning the condions allowing all students to make sense of their school experience (Bernard, 2013, pp. 16-17).

3.1.2 Socio-economic recruitement

After the *Abitur*, future German teachers are trained in different schools, which vary according to the school form in which they plan to work. Teachers who prepare for *Gymnasien* are trained in universities, while others are trained in teacher training colleges (*pädagogische Hochschulen*). In both tracks, subject related knowledge constitutes the largest part of the training, while the pedagogical/didactic component is often marginal – particularly in *Gymnasium* teacher training (Cramer et al., p. 17). Last but not least, German teachers teach at least two subjects. During their first placements, future teachers experience the job whilst still being enrolled at a teaching academy. In Baden-Württemberg, they are usually civil servants with lifelong statutory protection. In France, they are also mostly civil servants, although there are also increasing numbers of temporary and contract teachers, appointed by the regional authority. Future secondary teachers study a discipline at the university (without any specific preparation to teach). They are “pedagogically” trained after they have passed the state exam. The training takes place on the job, they alternate between practice at the school and training at the teacher's college during their first year on the job. Still, the subject and culture of the university dominate teachers’ trajectories. In France, the introduction of a master’s degree may impact the socio-economic composition of future teachers in a sense of an elevation of social origins, thus making it difficult to understand the lives of underprivileged students (for a further description of teachers’ situation in France and Germany, see Cramer, Bohl, & du Bois-Reymond, 2013). For example, many discourses criticise parents, who do not educate their students according to institutional views. But a discourse that distinguishes between good and bad “parental involvement” may “overlook the social, economic and political obstacles as well as inequalities that make the norm of good,

responsible parenting unattainable for families from underprivileged social backgrounds" (see Ule and al., in Walther *op.cit*. p. 251). In fact, this is a common and dated observation in the Western educational research that the "recurring complaint on the 'absent parent' concerns in particular the more vulnerable, by contrast with the self-selection of 'collaborative' families among the (white) middle-upper classes" (Amos and al. *op. cit*., p. 92).

Although education and training aim to equip future teachers with the necessary tools and a shared ethos "they can frame the situation but cannot directly answer the variety of cases and potential solutions and consequences educational professionals have to take into account […] so there is much room for their discretionary power" (Barberis and al., *op. cit*.; Lipsky, 1980). This is particularly true with regard to the thematic "dropout". Also, it is important to note that the "teacher population [is] still dominated by middle-class white (female) teachers without any migrant experience" (Stauber and al., 2016, p. 103) [229]. Nevertheless, their training is meant to provide them with the knowledge informing them about the role of school in the (re)production of inequality.

As stated by van Zanten, teachers, "like every *street level bureaucrat* (Lipsky, *op. cit*.) try to reduce the distance between central norms and the ideal of service that rule their activity on the one hand, and the characteristics of their 'clients', and their working framework on the other hand. They do this when they produce stereotypical representations about their students, adapt their teaching, discipline and assessement, as well as develop context-related professional practices", (van Zanten, 2014, pp. 98-99).

3.1.3 Changing settings

Since the 19th century and more recently with the advent of a neoliberal approach to education, the child, the individual, and the learner have taken centre stage (Hermann, 2013; Baader, 2008). Values, such as freedom (free choice, free will), entrepreneurship, and self-development are at the heart of modern education. Global narratives on education promote the development of "soft skills" or "social and emotional" skills such as "cooperation, the capacity to adapt, flexibility, autonomy…", which all serve the purpose of social and economic innovation (Maire, 2018). In this context, teachers have the challenging task to raise autonomous and reflected individuals able to succeed in this complex world (Baader, 2008). This task of creating independent individuals' conflicts with the controlling, paced,

[229] For the French case, Duru-Bellat and van Zanten speak of a "slight opening of this group to young people (principally women) with migrant backgrounds, but above all in primary schools" (op. cit., p. 165).

authoritarian and selective school settings. Teachers' and students' "ordeals", especially in the lower secondary school, reflect the modern condition centred on "an obligation of freedom" and "self-engendering" (Dubet, 2002, p. 167). This situation results in an uncomfortable position for teachers, who have to enforce certain institutional programmes while students progressively, subjectively and critically, construct their own school experience (Dubet, 2008, p. 16).

If young people with qualifications are still less likely to be unemployed than those who have no qualifications, it is also true that the relation between education and job security have become less obvious (Decréau, 2019, Dubet, Duru-Bellat & Vérétout, 2010, p. 167, Duru-Bellat & van Zanten, 2007, pp. 63 ff.;). The awareness of this situation has risen, including among teachers (McDowell and al., 2016, pp. 192-193).

3.2 The relations between the classroom, teacher and students' "negative participation"

From the classroom perspective, the phenomenon is percepted from an interactionist perspective, involving the person as a teacher, embedded in broader settings (institutional, structural, discursive). Questioning the capacity of teachers to be helpful to the student leads to question the conditions according to which they are able to offer their support. Then, I will specify some elements that frame the interactions at the classroom level particularly in relation with the "dropout issue". Finally, I will clarify some theoretical elements which help to analyse teachers' positioning with regard to this issue.

3.2.1 The availability of support

As I mentioned in the introduction, most of recent Anglo-Saxon, German, Swiss, and French dropout research points to the role of school when explaining students' negative perceptions of it (Stamm (ed.), 2012, pp. 42 ff.; Sälzer, 2010, pp. 63-75; Bernard. 2013, pp. 38 ff., Berthet, 2013; Boudesseul (ed.), 2013; Wagner and al., 2007; Ricking, 2006). Wagner and al. summarise such positioning as: "Kind of generally formulated, dropouts find little recognition at school, avoid school control of performance and have interests and objectives that they cannot pursue at school or realise through school" (Wagner and al., 2007, p. 239). As for the German author Ricking: "teachers are, in the eyes of dropouts, a decisive variable for their behaviour" (Ricking, 2006, p. 81). Christin Sälzer tempers this argument: her study shows that teachers, or rather teachers' practices and discourses, as they are apprehended by

individual students, might play a role, albeit indecisive and has to be thought of in interaction with other levels of the school environment (Sälzer, 2010, pp. 199-200).

The fact remains that "educational trajectories and transitions have become more complex and prone to risks and failures than was the case for former generations. Therefore, in educational governance, young people are increasingly dependent on their two main reference groups, their parents and their teachers" (Ule and al., 2016, p. 247). This overlooked, however, the role of the non-teaching staff, which will be explored in the next and last part. We may question the role of the research in reproducing "teacher-centred" analysis of school.

In France like in Germany, official guidelines have been promoting cooperation between teachers and parents in education. How do my actors deal with this?

So the dropout thematic question the availability of support from teachers. How does this work in the *collège* La Balikan and in the Geschwister Scholl *GMS* ?

3.2.2 Influence of teachers on orientation and class-based relations

Questioning the role of teachers in producing, exacerbating or mitigating disadvantage means to question the role of pedagogy and didactics in current organisational contexts (are there better practices than others responding to the new teaching norm of heterogeneity; in turn, are there bad practices?). In France like in Germany, responses to these questions are relative – different approaches exist, which have "benefits and disadvantages that differ dependant on the contents, objectives, group of pupils, teachers etc. that are part of the learning situation" (Cramer, Bohl, & du Bois-Reymond, 2013, p. 37). In other words, there is no "efficient pedagogic practice in itself" but teaching arrangements and pedagogic styles that might work better for certain publics and less for others. There are certain beliefs and representations that might disadvantage some populations and advantage others (Duru-Bellat, van Zanten, pp. 124-126).

In underprivileged schools, certain organisational arrangements have negative effects on students' attitudes and performance. They also contribute to an ever-increasing inequality between the best performing and underperforming students. For example, the focus on discipline and control tends to be more pronounced in underprivileged schools (Douat, 2010, p. 100). Another measure with negative consequences is the creation of separated or streamed classes (*classe de niveau*). The measure seeks to prevent privileged families from avoiding a specific school by offering strategic options which used to address families already detaining

certain socio-cultural and economic capital[230] (Duru-Bellat, 2001, p. 327). Doing so, the school reproduces internally social and ethnic segregation that already prevails outside.

Patricia Loncle et *al*. (2017), in line with previous research, has shown how staff in schools dominated by working class milieus tend to consider school trajectories according to a social, national and gender typification. Insofar, the authors argue that these representations are more likely to reproduce traditional schemes of professional orientation, which is undervalued compared with general education based on cognitive performance and thus reproduce existing social domination orders. For example, working-class students tend to be directed more frequently toward vocational education than their middle-class peers. According to Pierre-Yves Bernard, summarising research work regarding dropout, some of teachers' judgments may generate self-fulfilling prophecies and "social marking" (Bernard, 2013, p. 19) in a system, which has been analysed by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron as dominated by a "pedagogical arbitrary" in favour of upper social classes (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970; Bourdieu, 1966; Bourdieu & Passeron 1964).

Also, it needs to be kept in mind that questioning the role of teachers in dropout situation of their students has to be done in relation with the school system they work in and that frame their function, objectives, duties, habitus and philosophy. The main question here is, what is to blame : teaching methods, teachers' (lack of) engagement or school structures in which their practices are embedded ?

Given the social homogeneity of teachers, in the context of mix school settings, contentious relations opposing parents and teachers involve class-based dimensions and representations.

Research in the field of education has found evidence that teachers partly develop their expectations and judgements according to prejudices and stereotypes they have about students. These are based on criteria such as social class or ethnic group, gender, appearance or the way students express themselves. These elements, as well as students' former school trajectory, failure and achievements influence teachers' judgement (Duru-Bellat and Van Zanten, *op. cit*., pp. 123-124). Negative and individual ascriptions enable an avoidance of questioning one's responsibility or institutional arrangements in students' issues or may also suggest one's powerlessness towards it. It is interesting to put this strategy with their own perception of room for manoeuvre, attempts to change certain setting insofar as their position and power allow it.

[230] This was for example the case in La Balikan with the establishment of a "bilingual" Franco-German class.

For example, French and German teachers suggest in their testimonies that the "grade" influence the importance of "dropout attitudes". But from the perspective of "school trajectory", "negative school participation" in the higher grade may involve different elements though, meaning the (negative) combination of the accumulation of class-based and school judgments, structural settings (orientation, concurrence), and individual relevance of education, which are partly framed by socio-familial habitus.

Indeed, authors of a study investigating relations between classroom characteristics and adolescent truancy note that there is no consensus in the research whether the "grade" in itself influences truant behaviours; however, beyond the role of certain structural educational, institutional and organisational factors, the "perceived quality of instruction"[231] and of "classrooms as learning contexts" by students can be considered as an "individually and contextually relevant predicator of truancy" (Sälzer and al., 2012, p. 312). A French cohort study highlights the fact that students' motivation/mobilisation in learning is likely to change, i.e. drop over time, resulting from an "accumulated" negative experience in class and of school judgements (Merle & Piquée, 2006). For the French sociologist Gérard Boudesseul, the non-commitment with school norms is related to the evolution of an understanding of the role, the value and utility of knowledge, and thus its contents (Boudesseul, 2013, p. 8). For the authors of the European study of "educational governance of school trajectories" in eight countries, the "relevance of education" varies between different actors (teachers, parents, students), as it is submitted as well to different perceptions: on the one hand education is understood "as an end-in-itself (*Bildung*) which refers to their human development and pedagogical interactions" (this is the conception mostly represented by teachers); on the other hand it refers to the instrumental role of education, meaning the "acquisition of certain set of skills […] interpreted as being useful in terms of occupational qualification and hence better life chances" (McDowell and al., 2016, p. 186). One could add to this instrumental role of education the choice of specific options and achievement of specific "titles", which open different educational access that are themselves associated with different life chances and opportunties. McDowell et al. emphasise Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus* and *cultural arbitrary* that intervene in the "predictable" shaping of conceptions and practices as regards the relevance of education for different social groups in social-based selective school systems. For François Dubet, for whom the deterministic aspect of Bourdieu's concepts are not

[231] In their study, "instructional quality" was isolated according to the following variables: "instructional pace", "student workload" and "educational achievement".

adequate to the postmodern transformation of social representations / practices associated with cultural objects (work, school, families, gender, religion….), the relevance of education cannot be reduced to students' socio-economic background. Generally, teachers' authority "is not self-evident" anymore (see above) and students need "to be convinced of the utility of their studies, either intellectual or social. They must understand that their studies help them to grow up and integrate into society, which is not self-evident anymore" (Dubet, 2002, p. 140). What was self-evident in the past (school segmentation, no link between school tracks, limited democratisation, a strict division between social classes, compulsory orientation after primary school) is put into perspective by the ideology of social opportunities that today discursively frames the school experience, and more generally the model of social justice in France and Germany (*Chancengleichheit, égalité des chances*) (see part 1; Dubet, 2011).

Certain testimonies may also refer to the influence of peers in "rebellous" attitudes to school or "communitarianism" attitudes. As for the role of peers in dropout behaviors, it been accorded greater attention, showing a certain ambivalent effect insofar as "good friends at school can increase the bond to school but they can also provoke dropout attitudes with anti-school ideas (see Stamm and al., 2012, p. 40). According to Esterle-Hedibel who reviewed the recent (international) research on "dropouts", gangs are strengthened by the "stigmatisation resulting from negative school rankings" and categorisation. In this respect, the gang offers a "refuge" and a "defence" against feelings of depreciation while it increases the process of dropping out (see Esterle-Hedibel, 2006, p. 56).

Individual representations, collective discourses, (institutional) practices and social structures entwine and jointly impact the students' school experiences. The ethno-methodological concepts of "doing difference" and "doing ethnicity" focus on the interactional and relational production of differentiation based on ethnic ascriptions processes. These processes of social exclusion and inclusion involve, as I will show especially in the French case, racist and identity approaches and beliefs based on visible characteristics, such as "fashion, hair colour, but also related to common blood and origins, skin colour and race, language, culture or religion (see Pohl, op. cit., pp. 59 ff.). Lorcerie, who applied this concept to the school field, explains that: "it is not about 'culture' but 'status'; it is not about the culture of "others" but about the status associated with the fact of being collectively seen as 'different' or to look collectively at oneself as 'different' […] It refers to a socially constructed division between 'them' and 'us', which constitutes a naturalised 'difference'" (Lorcerie, 2003, p. 6).

A number of French and American studies exist that have gathered evidence suggesting a link between diversity and "school efficiency". Underprivileged students and students with migrant backgrounds tend to benefit from a socially and ethnically diversified student body (Duru-Bellat & van Zanten, 2010, p. 120). With regard to this aspect, but also multicultural society, "heterogeneous" class-settings are preferable to multicultural democracies.

3.2.3 Theoretical elements to analyse teachers' positioning

While European and national discourses addressing the issue of "early leavers" aim to trigger changing practices at the school and classroom levels, if possible, systematically and simultaneously, it is still interesting to question how teachers position themselves with regards to this discourse.

How far do teachers grasp their capacity to help or, on the contrary, when do they consider they cannot do anything? Which elements related to history, the institutional and organisational framework combined with their social being are likely to explain their positioning? What does it mean to them, how do they apprehend the problem and relate it to their practices, as well as to organisational and institutional arrangements and constraints? How far do they see this issue as legitimate, particularly related to the official prescriptions which ask them to reconsider their ways of doing? In which conditions may alternative discourses on "early school leaving" emerge?

These questions should be answered throughout keeping in mind that formal support depends on "network structures that are influenced by national and place-specific factors in that they are tied to state regulations on available professionals, but also to regional and local regulations and practices"; on the other hand, a "redefinition of tasks assigned to teachers as a result of growing school autonomy and, more broadly speaking, decentralisation, local partnerships and place-specific practices may have differentiated locally the experience of being a teacher and the responsibilities attached to the professional as such" (Barberis and al. in Walther and al., *op. cit*., pp. 124-126).

Sälzer et al. (2012) identify "two main strands of prior research and theory building on truancy that can be distinguished in terms of who is held responsible for truancy: individuals or institutions. […] the first approach regards individual students and their families as being responsible for students' failure to realise their right to education. The second approach acknowledges that –as adolescent behaviour is affected by the setting - the school environment is a possible risk factor for truancy" (Sälzer, Trautwein, Lüdtke, Stamm, 2012).

While, as I already mentioned, recent dropout research emphasises the role of school environment, it is of interest to investigate teachers‘ perceptions of it, as well as asking about the function of one or other strategies stressing individuals and families or rather institutional settings (Stauber and al., 2016, p. 111).

According to Bruno Jobert who differentiates between “politicised” and “depoliticised” interpretations of problems (*op. cit.*), professions which control public services tend to construct the problems they deal with so that it favours their monopoly of power and reduces those affected to passive users (Jobert, 1985, p. 676). According to this analysis, it could be expected that teachers tend to interpret the problem “early leaving” as involving individual factors rather than institutional ones or even their own practices. To some extent, this is the case both in the French and German schools that were analysed, when teachers’ discourses tended to interpret students’ dropout in terms of “unsuitability”, which confirms structural and traditional power relations and domination orders. In the German school (1), this unsuitability needs to be interpreted in terms of social classes while in the French school (2), which is located in a suburban area where families with migration background are overrepresented compared with the city centre for example, the dropout problem is interpreted in “socio-ethnic terms”.

The paradigm of social and cultural “handicap” as explicative or the “deficit-oriented" approach in education assumes that working-class children lack cultural means and proper life conditions to enable them to perform well at school. It is assumed that a defunct environment disadvantages them as regards their psychological development through linguistic and intellectual “retardation” (Sicot, 2005, § 5). This approach was at the origin of the logic of compensation measures in education in the 1960s, the outcomes of which, however, have been put into question by many critics (Forquin, 1979, p. 93).

The following argument is based on the analysis of teachers’ interviews and general observations during both research periods in the lower secondary schools La Balikan in Brittany (FRA) and the Geschwister Scholl GMS in Baden-Württemberg (GER). The first two sections analyse French and German teachers’ positioning towards the issue separately, while the third part aims to summarise common elements highlighted in the preceding parts. It also creates an opening to the fourth part through analysing the apprehension by the teachers of their relations to non-teaching staff, who are supposed to help students (and teachers) cope with their rights and duties.

The ambivalence of teachers’ positioning remains in the fact that individual ascriptions

correlate with the identification of institutional and organisational shortcomings (while rarely are their own practices put into question). This ambivalence highlights the fact that the conditions necessary for them to provide change at these levels are not really met. In fact, Ule et al., studying the role of "parents and teachers in the students' educational transitions" offer evidence of German (among others) teachers' awareness and "worries" about the "structural factors in their school system that impede smooth transitions", which "greatly contributes to the reproduction of social inequality" (Ule et al., 2016, pp. 257-258). Dubet's study about the French secondary teachers shows indeed that "teachers know that the deep causes of inequalities are outside the school, but they also know that school judgements pre-empt/naturalise these inequalities and amplify them (Dubet, 2002, p. 147).

Interviews with teachers revealed the systemic dimension of "early school leaving", while many teachers' attitudes to dropout mirror in many respects those of the students. Generally, it highlights the lack of a general collective and cross-sectoral reflection about this phenomenon, which could help to address daily issues teachers face in their work. Although some teachers aspire to become a driving force in the improvement of pedagogy, institutional and organisational settings with regards to "negative school participation", they have to deal with the weight of customs and traditions, hierarchies, personalities, institutional and organisational settings, professional turnover… which do not always facilitate their capacity to create initiative and cohesion.

3.3 Teachers and "*Schulverweigerung*" in the Geschwister Scholl *GMS*

Teachers mentioned

Matthias Müller, 37, (History, English, Ethics)/in his 4th year at the *GMS* /civil servant/ interviewed by the author on February 2, 2017
Birgit Rist, 49, (English, French, Religion), in her 5th year at the *GMS*/civil servant/interviewed by the author on March 28, 2017
Leo Schatzl, 38, (Geography, German, English), in their 2nd year at the *GMS*/civil servant/interviewed by the author on May 10, 2017

In a first section, I will address the personal perceptions of German teachers regarding the problem "*Schulverweigerung*", which they tend to blame on external factors. These perceptions discourage them from questioning their own practices or the role of institutional settings in the production of "negative participation". In this section as well, I will show how

their perceptions cannot be separated from their experience of teaching, and life experiences in general. Then, I will show how the institutional settings influence their perceptions: The implementation of the *GMS* and thus opening of the former "*Realschule*" to lower social backgrounds gives the phenomenon "*Schulverweigerung*" its social and ethnic connotation. The renewal of social and racial stereotypes in testimonies reminds us of the historical class-based structuration of the school system. I will conclude with their awareness of institutional shortcomings though: This reform has been increasing the difficulty of their working conditions and their workload and does not reward them with a meaningful professional horizon.

3.3.1 Adolescent deviance and parental collusion: personal perceptions of the issue *"Schulverweigerung"*

Sälzer (2010), as mentioned in part 1, has explained the origins of the term *Schulschwänzen* back in the Middle-Age and its following meanings, which refers to deviance and the marginality of former marginal groups. Today, one associates "*Schulschwänzen*" (truancy) with a "deliberate transgression of a duty which assumes that the time gained is spent in amusement"; nevertheless, if it "doesn't get routinised", and then "threatens future economic and social integration", such behaviour belongs to the repertory of "typical adolescent rule transgression", which does not necessarily undermine socialisation processes (*op. cit*., p. 15). Most teachers' perceptions follow this muster, who see in "*Schulverweigerung*" a typical adolescent provocation. Dicourses regarding particular students correlate with generalities though, and cannot be separated from their personal (negative) experiences of teaching.

References to "materialism", "disobediance", "insolence", "disillusion" (cf. the German concept "*Verwahrlosung*") follows a similar mindset of traditional moralising discourses regarding French and German youth since 19th century (Galland, 2011, pp. 27 ff.; Sander, 2002), traditionally held by representatives of the moral order, such as teachers. On the other hand, these discourses highlight a deeper problematic relative to authority which these teachers feel has been lost on the younger generations they are supposed to educate. This calls into question the institutional capactiy to provide them with the necessary symbolic legitimacy.

Then as today, "challenges and problems students encounter during their daily lives and educational experiences, [which] increase during early adolescence […], a period characterised by profound changes involving mind, body, emotions and social relationships"

(see references in Barberis and al., 2016, p. 118). However, this dimension is not really addressed by the teachers. The mobilisation of the "juvenile" category, as a first reaction, tends to make parents and students responsible for their non-commitment rather than interrogating teachers' capacity to bridge the gap they observe between them and the young people. It is only a second thought that brings teachers to reflect on structural, institutional and organisational settings.

3.3.1.1 "At eight o'clock in the morning, [they say] I don't go to school because I don't feel like going to French class and I prefer to stay in bed"

This quote illustrates a typical individual ascription seeing their students (and their parents) as responsible for their dropout. What sounds like an experience of a provocative attitude needs to be questioned in relation with this teacher's negative professional experience.

3.3.1.1.1 A provocation

*We are in the teachers' room. I'm having a little talk with Birgit Rist; the teacher who offered to let me teach French in her classes twice a week. For this purpose, we divided each class in two groups, so we are able to work in smaller groups. A teacher comes up to us and sits down. Rist introduces us and tells her that I am doing a PhD about the topic of "*Schulverweigerung*" and that I was looking at how their school deals with this phenomenon. The teacher seems quite perplexed, her eyes were questioning: "is this a big issue here...?" I answered that my research was rather about questioning how professionals interpret and deal with this concept. So, it was not important to me whether or not the topic was a big issue in this school. Rist: "but if we think of the eighth, ninth and tenth grades*[232]*, a lot of students are playing truant, aren't they? Parents sign excuses, students don't do anything anymore, a lot of absences ... this is also a kind of "*Schulverweigerung*". The teacher nods saying that, indeed, in these classes, "truancy" ("*Schulschwänzen*") was in fact more common than in the lower grades (Extract of a research protocol, GMS Feldprotokoll #7 8/01/2017).*

At first sight, "*Schulverweigerung*" does not speak to the teacher we met in the teachers' room ("is it a problem here?"), whose attitude summarises most of the reactions I faced during the research. For Mrs. Rist, this topic was only relevant in the higher classes. On the other hand, she might want to be helpful as I am helping her on a voluntary basis with her French classes. Indeed, even before I worked in this school and told her about my research project, saying that I was looking for a school where I could conduct my fieldwork, she

[232] Corresponds to the "*quatrième, troisième, seconde*" classes in the French system. See schemas in appendix.

actually told me that the current *GMS* might not be the "optimal" choice for this kind of subject[233].

The previous extract suggests, however, that "*Schulverweigerung*" in the form of absenteeism or/and students' lack of commitment does exist in tandem with parental "collusion". The statement emphasises the responsibility of parents and students, insofar as parents "don't have their children under control anymore":

> *"It is, I believe, a problem in the upper grades [...] in the 9th and 10th grade it is often an issue yes.... Some day one finds out that the student only comes two days out of five and in principle, it leads to a discussion; one regularly takes some notes and asks for parents' justifications, which, very often, are not provided. And, in principle, you get in touch with the parents and depending on how honest parents are, you can also send the parents to a psychological helpdesk. If, at this point, the parents appear to not have their children under control, then the police come into play, I believe. But this, I haven't really experienced how this actually works [...] like I said, once, twice I heard of it [in her previous school] but never here [...] so in my opinion, real truancy in our "Schulverweigerung" story rather concerns the upper grades" (Rist, p. 13)[234].*

This extract informs us about a follow-up of absences that seems to refer to a rather vague and unsystematised protocol ("*Some days* one finds out that the student only comes two days out of five"; "one regularly takes *some* notes"; "[justifications] are *often* not provided") –a practice that the German education research noticed a long time ago (see Wagner *op. cit*. p. 240). At certain, more or less foreseeable moments, teachers, embodying the authority of the institution, are supposed to react to "any intentional unauthorised absence from compulsory schooling [which] implies an active decision on the part of the student to skip a lesson or a day at school" (Sälzer and al., 2012, p. 311). This reaction is very subjective, based on opinions and beliefs teachers make up themselves about certain students[235]. On the

[233] See introduction, in particular the section 1.3.

[234] Original quotation: "In den oberen Klassen ist es, glaub ich, ein Thema. […] In Klassen 9 und 10 wurde es oft ein Thema ja. Da gibt ja im Grunde genommen, man macht halt... irgendwann stellt mal fest, der Schüler kommt von fünf Tagen an drei gar nicht und im Normalfall führte das zum Gespräch; man macht ständig irgendwelche Notizen wo man eigentlich Entschuldigungen von den Eltern einfordert, die dann ganz oft nicht kommen. Und im Normalfall nimmst du den Kontakt mit den Eltern auf; und je nachdem wie weit das Problem geht, je nachdem wie ehrlich da auch die Eltern damit umgehen, kannst du dann die Eltern dann auch da zu einer psychologischen Beratungsstelle schicken. Wenn da die Eltern keinen Einfluss mehr haben auf die Kinder, kommt es auch vor, dann kommt diese Polizeigeschichte glaube ich ins Spiel. Aber das weiß ich jetzt aus eigener Erfahrung nicht so genau, wie es dann läuft […] wie gesagt, ein, zweimal in der S. Schule mitbekommen aber in [der Geschister Scholl GMS] noch nie […]also meiner Meinung nach betrifft wirkliches Schwänzen unserer Schulverweigerungsgeschichte eher die oberen Klassen […]".

[235] Extract of a research protocol; Feldprotokoll #29 21.6.17: "I am in the teachers' room. It is almost the end of the break. I ask a teacher, who is a class teacher, how he checks the absences of his students (just before, Rist had explained to me that this was the role of the class teacher: teachers would report the absences in the class

other hand, students can "scratch their names from the list of irregular absences[236], while others denounce teachers' "indifference" to the control of absenteeism: "they don't care"[237]. The topic "absenteeism" and its control involves a range of perspectives.

Absenteeism, according to Rist, is more likely to happen occasionally in the upper classes, where students "don't feel like going to French class" and prefer "to stay in bed" and "sleep in", what they subsequently "admit" as well (Rist, pp. 12-13)[238]. This sounds like an intended and indifferent provocation.

Like other teachers, Mrs. Rist is convinced of the interest of her subject for her students' education although students seem "to not realise it" (see below). In the interview, she takes time to argue about the positive effects of French-German exchanges, which open the mind and encourage young people's autonomy. But school subjects do not have the same

---

book with an E for 'excused' and an N for 'not excused'. Excused and unexcused absences will appear in the school report in a separated paper at the end of the year. The teacher I was talking to says that he does it every six months or so and at the end of the year. He was quite vague. He also told me that it would depend on the person. Near some names there was an 'N' written in the school book. Yet he 'knew' from that person that she 'would probably have forgotten to regularise' or he, 'would not have noticed' that she did. So, he would scratch the name out. On the contrary, he knew from specific names that they are problematic students and would ask them afterwards, to justify their absences."

[236]Y. is a student from in the ninth grade. She remains serious during the whole interview and spoke very often (saying that it was her motto, to tell her opinion openly, "regardless of the person in front of her, teacher or student" and "people who have a problem with this, it is their problem" ("ich bin halt so, wenn mich was aufregt, dann sage ich meine Meinung, und dann sage ich sie offen und ehrlich und dann interessiert mich auch nicht, ob das eine Lehrperson ist oder ein normaler Schüler. Es interessiert mich nicht, ich sage einfach meine Meinung. Wenn man damit nicht klar kommt, ist es deren Problem", p. 11). From Y.'s perspective, "a lot of students" are playing truancy (included her). They all have their strategies to not being caught, such as crossing their names out of the school book. As for Y., "if people are very not feeling like going to school, it is perhaps OK to skip school sometimes, "but not every day"; "people should not exaggerate": Y: "ab und zu zähle ich im Tagebuch wie oft ich gefehlt habe, dass ich nicht so viele habe. /C: achso !dann kannst du selbst das Tagebuch nehmen und …/Y: ja…darauf achten die nicht. Man kann auch im Tagebuch einfach die Fehltage ausstreichen. /C: achso.. voll spannend/[wird gelacht]/C: ähm.. deine Meinung nach, gibt es viele Schüler, die die Schule verweigern oder schwänzen im Jahr?/Y: ja./C: ja?/Y: ja!/C: in deiner Klasse nur oder allgemein?/Y: allgemein nicht nur in meiner Klasse. Eigentlich, ziemlich viele/C: hmm. Und was denkst du drüber? Y: das ich es persönlich verstehe. Also ich denke eigentlich nichts Schlimmes drüber. Ich verstehe die Leute, die es machen, weil ich es selber mache. Ja... Also. Ich denke, wenn man es nicht übertreibt, ab und zu nach Hause zu gehen, wenn man wirklich, wenn man wirklich kein Bock mehr hat, ist vielleicht ok, aber nicht jeden Tag" (Y., German student, pp. 10-11).

[237] Extract of a research protocol; GMS Feldprotokoll #23 04/05/2017. Context: I was given a class (10th grade),. 15 minutes before the class ended, I asked them whether they would agree to tell me their thoughts about the topic of my PhD. "[...] The discussion was agitated. One student said that it should be more severe (what should be more severe?). Actually, teachers would not systematically report "absences". Students mention a boy who in his final school report, "only" had a specific number of absences, while they said that he was missing much more than would actually be reported. I asked them why they thought teachers would not report absences systematically. They would be 'too lazy' to do it or they would be indifferent to it'. One student said that for example sometimes he is 30 minutes late and the teacher would not care about it. There would not be real consequences. The student who said that it should be 'more severe' adds that 'for example, before, students would be punished because they had not done their homework; homework would be systematically checked: it was not the case anymore'" Extract of a research protocol; GMS Feldprotokoll #23 04/05/2017

[238] Original quotation: "Aber Schulverweigerung im Kleinen heißt es natürlich auch, wenn ich morgens um 8 nicht in die Schule komme, weil ich denke, ich habe keine Lust auf Französisch, ich bleibe lieber im Bett. Es ist auch eine Form von Schulverweigerung. Georgio macht das sicherlich öfters. Er hat zu mir gesagt, ich habe verschlafen".

instrumental value (see above). This is the case of Birgit Rist's one subject (French), which attendance in the *Realschule,* compared to other options, gives the chance to apply for the *Abitur* in a (*Berufs)gymnasium* after the completion of lower secondary schooling. The relevance of education is thus associated with certain "strategies" of the students, who used to be described as "strategists" calculating their investments and efforts in terms of time, loss and benefits, social and intellectual cost effectiveness" (Dubet, 2008, p. 16). Not one student in Mrs. Rist's class was here because they were passionate about the French language or culture.

3.3.1.1.2 The parallelism of professional experiences and perceptions of "Schulverweigerung"

Interestingly, N. Kastirke and S. Jennessen (2006) want to show that "school distanciated teachers" should also be apprehended as "a phenomenon forming part of the research on school absenteeism". There is a multiplicity of studies dealing with triggering factors and explaining causes for students' dropout behaviours, as well as solutions for intervention; the authors mention a lot of studies which addressed teachers' (negative) experience of their job, but no studies address this thematic systematically (Nastirke & Jennessen, 2006, p. 103). Like their French counterpart F. Dubet (2002, pp. 165-166), Kastirke and Jennessen underline the parallels between teachers' and students' "negative school participation" regarding framing factors and conditions, the ways it expresses and the way the actors justify them (op.cit. pp. 103-112). My research which asked, for instance, in the previous part whether "Friedrich Markel's burnout" could somehow be related to "students' drop out", wants to contribute to theorising the systemic relevance of thinking students' dropout and the school distanciated (or at least critical) attitude of different professionals working in the same schools. I mean by this that the dropout phenomenon should not be only addressed as solely a phenomenon concerning ("disadvantaged") students, who are thereby threatening the potential successful achievment of their secondary schooling. More than this, it also questions conditions under which teachers feel able to embody the school's attractiveness . What if themselves do not believe in their capacity to help children grow up, feel condident, and effectively realise "equal opportunities"? Sälzer, in her study about school absenteeism wrote that "relational work [*Beziehungsarbeit*] at school does not cost additional financial and personal resources and thereby suggests itself as the starting point through which truancy [Schulschwänzen]

could be reduced" (Sälzer, 2010, p. 188). This may be discussed according to the "emotional resource" needed to realise it, in addition to the material conditions in which it is conducted.

There were a lot of signs which showed Rist was very tired of her job. This was reinforced by her perception of students' lack of commitment and disinterest in the subject she taught. On the other hand, Rist herself didn't really plan the class and kept "working on grammar from the book"[239] while she considered that I would be better at arousing enthusiasm (my classes rather focused on oral and intercultural learning: there were no formal assessement and "teaching" was based on playful activities and animation). She gave up organising the traditional exchange trip to France after not getting enough registrations two years in a row. Rist used to tell me on the way to the classroom: "Pfff, probably a lot of students will be missing today"[240] [241]. Rist's perception of the importance of "truancy" was particularly strong as the summer break approached and the period of assessments came to an end. Nevertheless, I could observe that in the classes I taught there were always one to five students missing. However, there was still a gap between her perception of absences and the reality. Furthermore, if students identified as "troublemakers" were absent, it was experienced as more as a relief than a deception.

Since students "didn't care" about French classes, she seemed to have given up as well. Her own demotivation and experience mirrored her representation of dropouts, who were generally "disinterested" (Rist, p. 14)[242], who said "the methodology doesn't please me, I

---

[239] This used to be her standard answer when I asked what she had done in class: "oh, I worked from the book". However, Rist still tries to find ways to motivate her students for French, such as organising a letter exchange with the same school with which she used to organise the school exchange.

[240]"Birgit sagte mir, dass sehr wahrscheinlich viele Schüler nicht da sein werden, denn sie hätten keinen Grund mehr (außer der Schulpflicht) in der Schule zu sein. Sie hätten schon ihre Prüfungen gehabt (10th grade). Der Schüler H. hatte schon angedeutet, dass er nicht da sein werde. Tatsächlich, sie hätten an dem Tag eine Krankmeldung bekommen .Wir kommen in die Klasse rein und sie scheint überrascht zu sein, dass so viele da sind" (extract of the fieldwork protocol, 04/05/2017). // Ziemlich viele Schüler scheinen zu fehlen. "F. ist nicht da" sagt mir Birgit. Ich freue mich innerlich auch, denn er sei ein schwieriger Schüler, wobei er eigentlich lieb ist, dennoch durch sein Verhalten öftmals das Unterrichten schwierig macht, dadurch dass er sich nicht "beherrscht" (sitzen bleiben, reden, wenn er dran ist, ständig den Wort laut ergreift und die Aufmerksamkeit auf sich zieht, stört seine Nachbarinnen und unterhält sich mit ihnen). Ich schätze die Zahl an abwesenden SchülerInnen um die 5, 6" (22/05/2017, extract of the fieldworkprotocol).// Ein anderer Schüler hat auch vergessen, dass er heute dran war mit seiner Präsentation und Birgit sagt ihm: "ich weiß nicht, wie viele Tage du gefehlt hast, und deshalb aber hättest du Zeit gehabt, dich danach zu erkundigen!". Der Schüler (apropos welchen ich oft gemerkt habe, er würde mitmachen nur wenn ich mich zu ihm setze und die Übungen mit ihm überlege) macht ein Zeichen mit der Hand so in der Luft, dass es ihm egal wäre und er nicht diskutieren wolle. Er kehrt zu seinem Gespräch mit einem Schüler zurück" (extract of the fieldwork protocol, 19/06/17).

[241] On the other hand, she knew the topic of my research and mentioning this regularly could have been a way to tell me how relevant it was that I was here for my research. Given that I taught on a voluntary basis, she perhaps thought that I needed to find some extra incentive to come.

[242] Original quotation: "Also Schüler, die zur Schule zwar kommen aber letztendlich das Lernen und diese Neugierde, und sich daran freuen, dass man dort lernen kann sozusagen, dass die das verweigern, oder die dieses Gefühl gar nicht haben, da gibt es viele, glaub ich schon" (Rist, p. 14)

don't feel like learning with books. I would prefer to do everything on the computer"[243] (Rist, 2017, p. 16). She observes that she is not able to gain students' interest with her "passion" and interests anymore (questioning in that her own responsibility due to her loss of enthusiasm[244]), that it "became a duty for the students to come and not because they feel like coming to class"[245]. This reflexion is interesting insofar as obligatory schooling until a legal age has always been the rule. It points to the fact that the instrumental aspect of education may undermine mutual teachers' and students' experiences of school because they are not necessarily gathered by their interests but "have to". Another way to look at it would be to imagine a system that allows students to choose their subjects, which would be equally recognized and offer equal life chances (assuming that social positions would also be relatively equal and release the social and economic value given to school titles).

The teacher Birgit Rist refers in her sentence to the "computer", on which students "would prefer to learn". In this context, the "computer" symbolises the technical instrument through which students can emancipate themselves from teachers' symbolic authority, who detained in the past the knowledge on which is settled their legitimate domination. It is not sure whether, in fact, students would prefer to learn on computers while school is also the place where they meet their peers in a time where the experience of juvenile culture has gained so much importance. More specifically, it informs us about a perception that is framed by the loss of certain privileges in a world that has equipped young people with technical conditions to increase their independence from adults.

To conclude, Rist's perception of "*Schulverweigerung*" remains ambivalant, insofar as her perceptions of students responsible for their own negative participation involve complex "diverse reasons, which cannot be summarised in one word" school and familial relational

---

[243] Original quotation: "Das erste das Desinteresse halt am Stoff… Dass sie die Fächer einfach nicht interessieren. Das nächste ist, dass sie viel zu viele andere Dinge im Kopf haben, keine Ahnung... ähm... angefangen von Streit mit… Streitigkeiten oder Probleme, die die Eltern oder die Familien mit reinbringen. Oder... Streiterei mit den Mitschülern. Also ganz viel so… zwischenmenschlichen Sachen, die sie daran hindern, sich endlich für was Neues zu interessieren. Glaub ich. Oder, dass man wirklich sagt, die Methode gefällt mir nicht, ich habe keine Lust mehr mit Büchern zu lernen. Ich würde gerne alles am PC machen z.B".

[244] She questions her own discouragement as a possible reason for her inability to catch students' interests like before : "Also ich habe immer den Eindruck gehabt ich kann die Schüler irgendwie packen mit dem auf was ich selber neugierig bin, dass ich selber Interesse an Englisch, an Französisch. Und an Reli habe. Aber in den letzten zwei, drei Jahren hatte ich den Eindruck, dass ist... vielleicht bin ich selbst nicht mehr so begeistert? Ich weiss es nicht…"(Rist, p. 4)

[245] Original quotation: "Also ich habe immer den Eindruck gehabt ich kann die Schüler irgendwie packen mit dem auf was ich selber neugierig bin, dass ich selber Interesse an Englisch, an Französisch. Und an Reli habe. Aber in den letzten zwei, drei Jahren hatte ich den Eindruck, dass ich... vielleicht bin ich nicht mehr so begeistert? ich weiß es nicht ... aber ich habe den Eindruck dass es ... eher zu einer Pflicht geworden ist, dass die Schüler das halt lernen müssen, aber nicht weil ich sie begeistere" (Rist, p. 4).

elements, which negatively influence participation:

"I also think that they have extremely low self-esteem" (Rist, p. 2); "monoparental families" (p. 5), "many things on their minds [….] disputes or problems involving parents or families […] disputes with peers. So, a lot of … relational things, which prevent students from taking an interest in something new. I believe". (Rist, p. 16)[246]

This ambivalence between individual ascriptions and teachers' capacity to support students in their learning is to be put into perspective with Rist own "tiredeness":

> *"Tired is, I think, the right word. I realise that it costs me lots of energy. Also, I realise of course that the relational work [Beziehungsarbeit], or to set up the relation with the student is, in my opinion, not that easy anymore. One needs more time, one needs…. Smaller classes to somehow… reach the students. And it was probably my own frustration last year, when I had the feeling that… ehm… I could not be close to these students anymore… So, emotionally… they were suddenly far away. And I had the feeling that I could not deal justly with my pedagogical duties" (Rist, p. 5)*[247]

The teacher Rist mentions "more smaller classes". She also says of the measure "*Lerncoaching*" (see previous part, a.o. supports children "at risk" to better learn how to learn) that "it's nice on paper"; in reality, they hardly have the time to correctly implement this measure and provide students with the regular support they ought to be giving.

3.3.1.1.3 The availability of support

It is interesting to bring into perspective Mrs. Rist's perceptions of the phenomenon "*Schulverweigerung*" and the perception of her capacity to provide with support.

In the above extract from my interviews, Rist's discourse informs us about a certain distrust towards the parents, who are accused of protecting students who are skipping class illegally or do not have their children "under control" anymore. "*Schulverweigerung*" is related to

[246] Original quotation: "Das nächste ist, dass sie viel zu viel andere Dinge im Kopf haben, keine Ahnung... ähm… angefangen von Streit mit… Streitigkeiten oder Probleme, die die Eltern oder die Familien mit reinbringen. Oder.. Streiterei mit den Mitschülern. Also ganz viel so... zwischenmenschliche Sachen, die sie daran hindern, sich endlich für was Neues zu interessieren. Glaub ich."

[247] Original quotation: "Müde ist glaub ich das richtige Wort. Ich merke dass es mich unendlich viel Kraft kostet. Auch ich merke auch dass natürlich die Beziehungsarbeit oder die Beziehung zu den Schülern aufzubauen meiner Meinung nach, ist nicht mehr so leicht. Man braucht viel mehr Zeit, man braucht.. man bräuchte viel kleinere Klassen, um jetzt die Schüler noch irgendwie so … zu erreichen. Und es war so auch noch wahrscheinlich letztes jahr so mein grosser Frust, dass ich das Gefühl hatte... ähm… ich komme gar nicht mehr so richtig an diesen Schüler ran. So emotional... sie waren plötlzlich soweit weg. Und ich hatte nicht mehr das Gefühl, ich kann so meiner Aufgabe, meiner pädagogische Aufgabe richtig gerecht werden".

parents' failure to "fulfil their responsibilities", that is, the failure to enforce the obligation of school on their children.

Imke Dunkake (in Wagner, *op. cit.*) investigates whether *Schulverweigerung* results, in fact, from a lack of familial control. Such a complex issue refers to parental objective capacity to keep an eye on their children, which is more difficult in monoparental families and with out-of-synchronisation jobs. Notwithstanding, they mention that the major issue should be understood less as insufficient control than as parental disinterest for their children's environment (*ibid.*, p. 130).

At this point where a parental issue has been identified, according to Rist, the "school", through the person of the principal or the social worker, might want to activate different institutions in order to mitigate what is apprehended as a parental "incapacity". These institutions can be the police or social or psychological support. Both aim to restore the legitimate authority of the school institution, but differently. They could be categorised using Loic Wacquant's typification of state priorities and actions as regards the enforcement of social norms and obligations (Wacquant, 2012). He distinguishes between the state's "right hand" (authoritative, disciplinary) and "left hand" (protective, supportive). However, even the activation of supportive institutions may provoke conflicts with parents, especially if this is bound to gaining parental acknowledgment of institutional "labelling", such as "behavioural disorders"[248]. Getting support mechanisms in place must actually be negotiated with parents. Rist accounts for the fact that these negotiations can be a source of conflicts, particularly when parents refuse to accept the evaluations provided by the school and instead blame the school for the situation. Such an attitude might increase teachers' animosity, who feel unable to cope with certain students on their own.

Already the term "Schulverweigerung" implies a therapeutical-medical perception of the phenomenon of students' negative participation (see introduction). The existence of medical categories may in turn influence teachers' understanding of the "*Schulverweigerung"*

---

[248] The Canadian report and guidebook on the "identification of students with behavioral disorders and assessment of their needs" (Canadian Ministry of Education, 1992), referring to Kaufman (1985), underlines the difficulty to define and stabilise this concept "objectively". Indeed, if it contributes to informing current social norms, "values and professional judgements assessing the level of deviance finally pertains to a subjective judgement" (ibid., p. 3). Educational Research on "behavioural disorders" defined as "significant issues as regards the interactions involving several elements of the familial, school, social environments" (*ibid.*, p. 15) invite to consider institutional practices, familial support and pedagogic solutions addressing self-esteem, regulations of emotions in communication, empathy (Chevallier, 2017). Such a concept questions the capacity of "adults" to "secure" children (Raguideau, 2012) and school organisational structures to provide with opportunities for teachers to reflect collectively on their difficulties and look for solutions (e.g. through "Kollegiale Fallberatung", Altrichter, Schley, & Schratz, 1998).

phenomenon. Stanislas Morel, author of "The medicalisation of school failure" (2014), has shown how policy makers, by developing educational policies that focus on the acquisition of core knowledge and on the individualisation of teaching in integrated school forms, have contributed to turning school failure into an individual phenomenon. In his research, he shows how medical and psychological explanations are increasingly mobilised by the school staff to deal with "difficult" cases. This is encouraged by the role of medical labels, which help to get more financial and human support and by their proximity with the socio-medical actors, with whom they are encouraged to work. This in turn contributes to further tensions between parents and school personnel because some support is bound to parental acceptance of institutional labelling[249].The medicalisation of school issues offer directly applicable solutions and to some extent free teachers from the responsibility of their students' failure. Some researchers argue that teachers who qualify school issues as a medical problem tend to support students less efficiently than their colleagues who are convinced of the role of social and school related factors and their impact on learning and emotional level (Lavoie, Thomazet and al., 2013, p. 95; see also Isaksson, 2011 who argues that using the terms "has special needs" or "in need of special support" exemplify actors' and institutions' positioning as regards the apprehension of students' difficulty in terms of individual deficiency or as a result of the interplay between individuals and their environments, in Stauber *and al*., *op. cit*. p. 108). On the other hand, it questions the institutional settings enabling teachers to formulate their difficulties otherwise than in individual terms.

This is also referred to by Rist as resulting from a long process that has "antecedents" ("*Vorgeschichte*"), which involves "a dwelling fear of school" and which leads to psychological issues and school phobia for which institutional answers are underdeveloped ("there should be therapy that often does not exist of course" (Rist, p. 13)[250]). But as mentioned before, the school settings influence teachers' perceptions, especially in the changing settings from the "*Realschule"* to the integrated school "*Gemeinschaftsschule*". This aspect is addressed in the following section.

Beyond individual issues, Mrs. Rist blames "societal changes" which have contributed to turning students into "egocentric" individuals who are unable to cope with failure and who do not show any respect towards their teachers. Students "dare" to interrupt teachers without asking themselves if the moment is opportune. For instance, they come to the teachers' lounge

[249] Original quotation: "Also die Eltern sind dafür verantwortlich, dass wir Personal bekommen für das Kind" (ibid., p. 7).

[250] Original quotation: "aber da gab es eine lange Vorgeschichte natürlich, oftmals bei Schulverweigerung steht so eine Schulangst dahinter, wo es dann halt irgendwie eigentlich therapeutische Hilfe geben sollte, oftmals das es natürlich auch nicht gibt".

with the "smallest" of problems and expect an immediate answer while teachers are asked to manage students' out-of-class agitation and disruptions: one asks for "a cool pack", the other "fought", another "got a bump". Rist describes today's students as being constantly demanding ("*Anforderungshaltung*"), which she finds extremely tiresome and irritating. She summarises her students' attitude as follows: "I am the most important person here and besides me, there is nobody else" (Rist, pp. 17-18)[251][252].

She does not feel able to perform the pedagogic principles she was taught at university: "Start with the children where they are", which consists in prioritising the management of disruptions before starting the class. Yet, students have introduced "a lot of disruptions" from the outside (Rist, p. 16)[253]. To "build a relation with the child is not that easy anymore",

---

[251]As several occasions, when we were walking through the school's corridors, she sought to draw my attention to the noise of students running and shouting. She wanted to show me a GMS-class, which had the worst reputation among the teachers. As we arrived, tables and chairs were upside-down, one child was trying to climb on the blackboard and students were very loud. It took some minutes to bring the class in order and Rist started the class with an activity aiming to make students reflect on their current state of mind and ability to get focused (students had to take their pulse for a minute and then she sorts the answers in three categories: too low, normal, too high) (abstract fieldwork protocol #20 30/03/2017).

[252] Original quotation: "Also wie können Schüler, die so unterschiedlich sind, trotzdem im Kontext Schule gut miteinander arbeiten: kooperieren, teamfähig gemacht werden, ähm….lernen, einander zuhören, ähm... reine Gesprächsregeln einhalten ähm, Toleranz, Akzeptanz, dieses Grundgerüst wo jetzt eigentlich ich immer den Eindruck hatte, dass es die Kinder mitbringen von den. … eine Reaktion sehe ich in der veränderten Gesellschaft (???); die Schüler haben ja keine Frustrationstoleranz mehr. Es muss alles immer sofort gehen und immer nach ihrem Kopf. Also dieses Abwarten... also ich hätte mir früher nie erlaubt Célia [becomes emotional], dass ich, dass ich mit so einer Penetranz die ganze Zeit Lehrer unterbreche, wenn sie gerade im Gespräch sind. Die kommen auf dich zu und dann sofort werden sie das los, was sie loswerden wollen. Sie sehen nicht, dass ich mich gerade mit dem Kollegen unterhalte. Das ist so ein kleiner Baustein. Oder, das Lehrerzimmer: das war für mich früher mehr oder weniger Tabu. Da bin ich nur hingegangen... ich als Schülerin, wenn was ganz dringend war. Also nur bei wirklich dringenden Sachen. Heute, ununterbrochen wirklich ab der 1. Stunde, schon um viertel vor acht, stehen die Schüler bei uns an dieser Tür und haben immer irgendwas zu sagen. Kommen sie bitte, der hat sich geschlagen, ich brauche wieder ein Coolpack, ich habe eine Beule, weil ich, was weiß ich, irgendwo gefallen bin; der dritte kommt weil er es nicht aushält abzuwarten wer jetzt als Vertretungslehrer kommt, 'ja aber da steht doch was ganz Falsches dran oder haben wir heute wirklich die Frau XY, obwohl die eigentlich gesagt hat, dass sie nicht kommt'. Also so Geschichten... wo ich denke... das reicht auch noch um 8. Es muss immer alles sofort beantwortet sein. Und so eine Anspruchshaltung einfach. Ich bin jetzt gerade die wichtigste Person und sonst gibt es eigentlich niemanden".

[253] Original quotation: "Oh, so habe ich studiert… eigentlich ist es immer so ein Grundthema der Pädagogik: holt die Kinder dort ab wo sie stehen. Und manchmal wenn die Welt außerhalb der Schule so unterschiedlich ist, dann schafft man diesen Spagat nicht, die Kinder dort abzuholen, wo sie gerade sind. […]weil jeder Schüler so extrem mit anderen Dingen beschäftigt ist, dass es nicht mehr geht. Ein anderes großes Thema befasst sich mit den Störungen im Unterricht: " (This sentence makes no sense. Therefore I deleted it)Bevor der Unterricht stattfinden kann, muss ein einigermaßen harmonisches Setting geschaffen werden. Wenn (#1:31:26)(?) sich zum Beispiel zwei Schüler auf dem Schulhof geschlagen haben, […], dann müsste ich rein theoretisch als Lehrerin zuerst diese Störung bearbeiten, damit ich nachher mein Wissen vermitteln kann. Inzwischen gibt es so viele Störungen, so viele Punkte, dass ich nicht weiß, wo ich da anfangen soll". (Rist, 2017, p. 16). She reports an anecdote about a conflict involving two students over the posting of a picture of one student in a Bikini on WhatsApp The father of the bikini-clad student in the photo complained and asked the school to sort it out. According to Rist, this is not the school's responsibility. She felt that the school had become involved in external issues it did not have to solve: "*Ich persönlich finde dass es nicht unsere Aufgabe gewesen wäre, die Schülerin dafür zu bestrafen, weil es hat nicht in der Schule stattgefunden sondern sie hat es daheim auf dem Sofa gemacht*" (Rist, p. 17)

especially in larger classes of 30 students where in theory everyone needs special attention in order to cater to the idea of differentiation of teaching and individualisation of learning. Rist is a "frustrated" teacher and this attitude impacts the way she considers—or rather avoids considering— potential dropouts (as the next anecdote exemplifies). Rist, who has the feeling of having lost the "connection" with students and who refused for the second year running to be nominated as a class teacher, admits taking a step back and distancing herself from her students' problems for a while. The following example illustrates this behaviour very well. She mentioned a boy who refused to commit to class, who did not write anything on his exam papers or limited himself to "writing the word 'nothing'" on the exam paper. I asked her, if she reached out to the student to understand why he acted like that. She answered by saying that she did not "make any efforts to have a close discussion with him". She thus does not know why he refused to participate in her class or even "in other classes". She refused to "make it an issue of hers" and did not try to inform other teachers about it (Rist, p. 14)[254]. Nevertheless, this student might have needed attention. Indeed, shortly after our interview, she went to him and started a dialogue in an attempt to learn about the reasons of his attitude. After this meeting, she reported that this student started to be more active in class.

3.3.1.2 "We have got truant students and they are generally .... weed heads. I believe"

The "tolerated" deviance refers to what is (to be) expected at this age, more precisely to a normal "rebellious" behaviour (2.1.2.1) that one does not need to worry about, according to Mr. Schatzl, especially if they are not corrected by the parents themselves (2.1.2.2).

3.3.1.2.1 The "tolerated" delinquency

For Matthias Müller, teacher of ethics, English and history, "*Schulverweigerer*" are mostly "weed heads" ("Kiffer") who hang out with "gang" peers (Müller, p. 17). The problem of drug consumption is also referred to by her colleague Rist, although not particularly in relation to dropouts but as a "general" problem concerning numerious students in the school. Interviews with some students designated as dropouts highlighted this issue as well, which was a "reason" for their having been "downgraded" from the Gymnasium to the *GMS*.

[254] Original quotation: "den A. kann ich dir zeigen am Donnerstag. Er schreibt prinzipiell auf jedes Arbeitsblatt... entweder füllt er es gar nicht aus oder schreibt, wenn er die Frage liest, "nichts" drauf. Nur das Wort nichts. Immer. Immer […] Also schon eine Form von Schulverweigerung. Er verweigert meinen Unterricht. […] also ich habe mich jetzt nicht darum bemüht, um ein näheres Gespräch, um rauszufinden wieso er jetzt meinen Reli-Unterricht ... oder mal zu fragen wie er sich in anderen Unterricht verhält, das habe ich bis jetzt nicht gemacht/-warum?/-vielleicht weil es mir nicht so am Herzen liegt. Ich wollte mich irgendwie auf den Jungen auch nicht so irgendwie, nicht so einlassen, dass ich das zum Thema mache für mich".

Interestingly, some personal and environmental factors might influence Müller's perception of the problem, who focused on drug consumption. He is actually an occasional weed smoker. Moreover, he is a singer-song writer integrated in the alternative cultural scene where smoking weed is rather common. Finally, according to his own statement, he lives in a student city, close to Sollenstadt where drugs "circulate easily" (Müller, p. 17). As a result of his proximity to this thematic, he may be more able than most to discriminate between the different drugs used and their effects.

To Müller as well, "*Schulverweigerung*" is not really a problem in this school. It is more an occasional problem of unauthorised absences, which "succeeds or fails" with the parents: either, they "enforce the school obligation" of their children along with the school and teachers, or they "cover" their children's absences:

> *"And ... for example, we had last year a case ... he was involved in a scooter gang, and they played truant and they met each other and... When his parents understood that the boy was not going to school ... parents quickly put the kibosh on it and since then he is always present. This is one thing..... And the other is ... there are... there are students, who tell their parents every two days: 'oh, I've got a headache, I cannot go to school'; 'Oh, I've got my periods, I cannot go to school'; this is generally girls ... and then parents always write an excuse note. I would say, these are the two kinds of truant students [...] hem... I don't really think it is [a big problem in this school]; individual students yes... so they are ... in the 9th, 10th grades ... you know, we're are here in a Realschule ... hem ... with ... it really starts approximately in the 9th grade so with 15 years old, when students cut themselves off from the parents so much that they [parents] don't get it" (Mr.. Müller, p. 17)*[255]

Playing truant is, according to Müller's perspective, to be interpreted in terms of symbolic forms of the adolescent (rather masculine) "nature" and "sociability". More than a real threat to the school order, such sociability—as described by Müller— is characterised by the

[255] Original quotation: "Ja in Bezug auf Schulverweigerer, die wir in der Schule haben, also ich... ich finde... wir haben Schulschwänzer und das sind meistens... Kiffer. Glaube ich. Bzw. es sind ...äh... die Schulschwänzer sind… ähhmm…. Schulschwänzer funktioniert nur wenn das von den Eltern… entweder gedeckt wird oder wenn die Eltern ... das nicht mitbekommen. Als Lehrer merkst du halt wenn die Schule geschwänzt wird. Und... wir hatten. z.B. letztes Jahr einen Fall... der war in so einer Rollergang, und die haben dann alle die Schule geschwänzt, und haben sich getroffen und... als da die Eltern mitbekommen haben, das der Junge nicht in der Schule ist, da, …… haben die Eltern dann ziemlich schnell einen Riegel vorgeschoben und seitdem ist er immer da. Das ist die eine Sache… und die andere ist … es gibt ... es gibt Schüler die, ihren Eltern einfach zwei Mal an zwei Tagen die Woche sagen: "oh ich habe Kopfschmerzen"; "oh... ich ... hab grade mal meine Tage ich kann nicht in die Schule", das sind meistens Mädchen... ne und die dann ... und den Eltern dann den wirklich immer eine Entschuldigung schreiben. Ich würde sagen, das ist so die zwei Hauptarten von Schulschwänzen. […] ähm... ich glaub nicht so sehr [dass es in der Schule ein Thema ist]; einzelner Schüler ja ... also es gibt... in der 9., 10. Klasse… weißt du, wir sind hier in der Realschule ... ähm… mit.... das geht erst in der 9. Klasse also mit 15 ungefähr los, dass die Schüler soweit für sich von den Eltern abkoppeln, dass sie es gar nicht mitbekommen".

student's detachment from adult supervision, school rules and norms aimed to strengthen the sense of group belonging ("finally, school is the place where students meet another 450 other students, with whom they can hang out, get to know girls, smoke their first cigarette", Müller, p. 20)[256]. Seen like this, there is not much to "worry about". Other occasional truant attitudes are to be interpreted in terms of students' "subterfuges" to "escape" from the obligation of school while the decisive element remains in his perception in both cases "parents' attitudes", who "cover" or "tighten the hold". Last but not the least, anti-conformist attitudes have to be understood according to the "type of school" ("you know, we're here in a *Realsschule*")[257]. There could be different ways to interpret this. On the one hand, *Realschüler* are assumed not to be "naturally" compliant to traditional school norms and culture, do not go to university but enter more vocational education. In this respect, the research often refers to Willis's study regarding the relations between youth subcultures and reproduction of social inequality (1977; Pohl, 2015, p. 19; Zaffran, in Berthet 2014, p. 44; Duru-Bellat & Van Zanten, 2007, p. 208) who shows how resistance to the school norms and culture is attractive to working-class students in that it paves the way to entry to adult society and the grown-up environment of the factory. Although this would apply more to "*Hauptschulen*" since *Realschulen* is more oriented to preparing for "white collar" and service sector jobs, and usually welcomes a more socially elevated clientele.

3.3.1.2.2 Making students and parents responsible for their lack of diligence

In Müller's opinion, "there is not much to say" about students' absences. If he criticises the parents who are "covering" their children's absences[258], it is also what he expects the parents to do. From his perspective—speaking as a teacher ("*aus Lehrersicht*")— and in the context of a "judicialisation" of society (Douat, 2010, p. 105), it is all about "being released" from the duty of supervision (*Aufsichtspflicht*) and making sure parents have provided a motive for students' absences. Beyond this duty of supervision, absences only become an issue for teachers at the end of the school term when they have to decide whether a student is able to move up to the next class, has to repeat it or should even be "redirected" to other schools or school types. They are a means of control and pressure, and future orientation since they are

[256] Original quotation: "Auf der anderen Seite es sei Schule auch der Platz wo man hingeht wo 450 anderen Schüler sind, mit den man abhängen kann, wo man Mädchen kennenlernt, wo man seine erste Zigarette raucht, usw. usw. Schule halt, ich glaub, da hat sich nichts geändert."
[257] In 2016-2017, the 8th, 9th and 10th grades are still "Realschüler" while the implementation of the GMS started three years ago.
[258] And still, this attitude might apply only for particular parents, cf. Anecdote footnote 268.

published in school reports. So, "personally", Müller does not care "whether a student comes to school or not". For him, parents and even children are responsible for this. Müller restricts his role to teaching (institutional function), while compliance to obligatory schooling is a parental role. His assumptions contain some moral judgements and stereotypes (enforcing the school obligation instead of buying their children "the coolest and newest clothes"). Especially when those students, once in class, "do not want" to "play the game" and thus "do not help to make the class better", there are no reasons to worry about them (Müller, pp. 17-19)[259].

3.3.1.3 "The 9th grade is famous for that. Performances and absences increase. This is also the age […] everything is important except school"

Mr. Shatzl shares his irritation about students that he does not seem to have "in control" (as a main reproach addresses to parents as well), which leads to make them responsible for their lack of diligence while his discourse demonstrates a difficulty to identify precisely the complexity of the phenomenon.

3.3.1.3.1 Irritation

For Mr. Schatzl, in line with his colleagues, non-compliant behaviours are perceived as resulting from typical adolescent behaviour.

It appears to be an age range where students start to be considered as young adults responsible for their future life, especially when teachers are struggling to enforce their authority. Unable to discipline students who are "not willing to play the game", the teacher Leo Schatzl arrived

[259] Original quotation: "Aus Lehrersicht, ist es einfach so: sobald, dass der Schüler eine schriftliche Entschuldigung von den Eltern hat, ist es ja sein gutes Recht zu fehlen. Und dann ist nur die Frage wie oft und ... erst wenn der Schüler 40 Fehltage hat, können die Lehrer darüber nachdenken, ob das Konsequenzen hat... […]. Aber 40 Fehltage ist viel. Und dementsprechend ist es letztendlich nur die Frage, hat er eine Entschuldigung, hat er eine schriftliche Entschuldigung von den Eltern oder vom Arzt unterschrieben?[…] ganz ehrlich.. Céli. Wenn ein Schüler nicht in die Schule kommt, dann ist es auch sein Problem. Und… die Schüler, die Schule schwänzen, sind auch die Schüler die stören wenn sie da sind ... deswegen… ich meine, ich sag natürlich.... wenn da viele Fehltage sind sag ich den Eltern: "Hey , kümmert euch drum. Aber es gibt einfach Eltern, denen ist alles egal, denen sind ihre Kinder egal, meistens sind das die Kinder, die die geilsten neusten Klamotten anhaben, die teuersten Klamotten, aber du merkst, dass die Kinder nix wollen und [unterbricht]… ja.. also ich weiß nicht. Ich würde sagen als Lehrer... das ist einen riesen Aufwand sich darum zu kümmern, und man hat nichts davon. Der Unterricht wird davon nicht besser sondern wird schlechter... wenn der Schüler nicht zur Schule kommen will… also wenn es nach mir ging… also mir ist wichtig, dass er eine Entschuldigung hat… weil er muss ja eine Entschuldigung haben. Weil ich eine Aufsichtspflicht habe. Aber mir persönlich ist es nicht so wichtig, den Schüler zu beaufsichtigen. Wenn er eine Entschuldigung hat und ich von der Aufsichtspflicht entbunden bin, ist mir doch sowas egal. Es ist auch Sache seiner Eltern... ich informiere seine Eltern, dass sie wissen was los ist ... aber…".

at a point where he calls in their own responsibility for their future and told them: "we have so little time [...] we should plan a test every six weeks ... and when you spend most of the time disturbing the class, you will miss everything. But this is your business. I won't look after the ones who mess things up, I want to look after the ones who are here" (meaning, willing to play the game). He blames their lack of maturity and "keeps expelling" the troublemakers: "you want to have all the rights and no duties? Do you know what types of people do act like this? Children! Children! Little kids!" (Schatzl, p. 7). His exasperation and anger seem useless against students who are just annoyed of being lectured: "oh no, a sermon, once again" (Schatzl, p. 18-19)[260]. Looking to create universal adhesion is tiring and finally he "cannot look after everyone". It is hard to oblige students to cooperate "if they have decided that they won't". "They are almost 15, at this age, everyone is able to reflect" (Schatzl, p. 19), meaning, able to appreciate the consequences of not wanting to play the game at school[261].

Schatzl considers "*Schulverweigerung*" as a "great issue", an issue that concerns his class, "because a lot of students used to skip classes". Echoing Müller's words, he is convinced that parents "cover" for these absences and "write excuses". Like Müller, Schatzl explains this phenomenon by referring to an autonomous juvenile culture assuming that "everything is more important than school" [262]. This is especially true if deviant practices allow students to free themselves from the influence of parents and teachers. According to François Dubet,

---

[260] Original quotation: "Aber ich ziehe das jetzt durch, bis Klasse 10, Prüfungen, mir egal. Und ich habe denen auch gesagt, ihr schreibt in der 10. Klasse vier Klassenarbeiten. Wir haben so wenig Zeit weil das Schuljahr endet schon April. Ich habe ihnen gesagt, wir haben so wenig Zeit, dass wir dann quasi alle sechs Wochen eine Klausur schreiben... und wenn ihr dann große Zeit… weil ihr gestört habt, kriegt ihr nichts mit. Aber das ist eure Sache. Ich werde mich nicht um die kümmern, die Mist bauen, ich will mich um die kümmern, die da sind []" (Schatzl, p. 7). "Ich habe denen auch schon gesagt: meine Klasse, wisst ihr? Ihr wollt alle Rechte haben aber ihr wollt keine Pflichte haben. Wisst ihr welche Gruppen von Menschen genauso handeln? –ne, ne; wer sind sie denn? –Kinder! Kinder! Kleine Kinder! Sie wollen alles dürfen, aber müssen nichts tun, und genauso seid ihr, wie Kinder. Rrrrrrr. Eh was ich denen schon ... da meinte dann schon irgend ein Mädchen aus meiner Klasse, so, "oh nee, nicht schon wieder eine Predigt". [lacht, etwas erschöpft]" (Schatzl pp. 18-19)

[261] Original quotation: "also inzwischen… ja doch, es gibt immer welche, die nicht mit machen und sagen ... keine Ahnung. Aber es ist halt nicht mein Problem also... du musst doch die... du willst doch die Prüfung machen, also inzwischen sage ich da ja…aber ich meine das natürlich doch gar nicht so... eigentlich will ich schon helfen und sagen, he, aber ich kann mich halt nicht um alle kümmern, ja? Und wenn sie sagen, wenn sie beschließen, he, ich mach nicht mit, dann... irgendwann müssen sie... sie sie sind bald 15 alle. So ein bisschen kann man auch mal nachdenken".

[262] Original quotation: "Schulverweigerung? Tolles Thema. Auch Thema in meiner Klasse [lächelt] […] weil ganz viele Schüler häufig fehlen und die werden auch entschuldigt von Eltern. Mmm. Aber es ist zu viel. Also ich habe einen Schüler, der hat [unverständlich] Fehltage. Also über 40 Fehltage" (Schatzl pp.13-15) […] "also, laut Chef, es ist wohl so, dass in Baden-Württemberg allgemein, die Fehltage zugenommen haben. Ganz allgemein. Ähm. Die 9. Klasse ist wohl dafür bekannt, dass... ähm... die Leistungen runter gehen und dass die Fehlzeiten nach oben gehen. Also, das ist auch so dasAlter, wo die Freundinnen haben ... und so und Freunde, also Freunde und Freundinnen und ... oft kiffen, was weiß ich, Party machen, dass alles wichtig ist nur nicht Schule" (Schatzl, p. 17)

juvenile cultures "allow a 'wild' way to ritualise something that society does not ritualise anymore" (Dubet, 2014, p. 22):

However, Dubet also shows how such signs of "tolerated deviance" go hand in hand with the evolution of a "social control" of this "deviance" (*ibid.*), that I mentioned in the first part with particular attention given to "at risk population" and the security-oriented understanding of dropout as an issue. A German report (June 2010) in which the GOETE research (*op. cit.*) describes such a social control through support and prevention measures targeting mainly anti-conformist (male) groups and/or with migration backgrounds. This population has gained "more and more attention due to their low school achievement, problematic behaviour, school attendance (Bassarak, 2008, p. 56 in *see after*). Because of increasing school absenteeism, a broad range of support measures were developed to combat truancy through preventive processes" (Cramer et al., p. 29). Such measures might, however, reinforce the stigmatisation effects they want to avoid. Another aspect of this question is students using "puberty" as an excuse to legitimate inappropriate behaviour in class[263]— "yes, this is also always an excuse, like I can behave like I want, after all I am in puberty" (Schatzl, p. 18).

3.3.1.3.2 "Overwehlmed parents", "overwhelmed teachers?"

According to Schatzl, "a lot of" parents are overwhelmed by their children and are not able to enforce educational rules. Schatzl goes as far as to speak of a "veritable trend" of increasingly overwhelmed parents. "Parents are kind of overwhelmed with their children", they "do not understand their children anymore" or "how to speak with them" (Schatzl, p. 19)[264]. But he also seems to struggle to enforce his authority.

---

[263]It is interesting to note that some students know how to use this attribution (which attribution, word choice) to explain and excuse their inability to conform to expected roles (Breidenstein, 2006; Perrenoud, 1988). One day I was unable to conduct a proper class and felt overwhelmed by students' "misbehavior" (from a teacher's perspective). At the end of the class (9th), I just told the students that this day was terrible for me because of their behavior. I reminded them, like I told them at the beginning of the year, that they were always able to make suggestions for improving the content or the methods. I tried my best to give interesting classes but I also told them that I could only do grammar exercises. Or I could stop coming because I was here on a voluntary basis, something that neither teachers nor students can say. I asked them whether today was a special day, or whether they had any reasons to behave in such a way that we were unable to work. In fact, students were listening very carefully. One of them said that they all were "teenagers" and that it has nothing to do with me personally. His words received a general approbation. After the class, and when everyone left, two girls, whose attitudes usually designate them as the "young adults" of the class and "committed" students, came to apologise for their peers: "they are children sometimes" and ask me "not to leave" The argument of puberty, which "naturally" explains school nonconformist behaviors is hardly debatable since teachers use it as well, and might turn against them. It remains a hard time to go through: "*Ja, das ist auch immer so eine Entschuldigung, so ich kann mich verhalten wie ich will ich bin ja in der Pubertät"* (Schatzl, p. 18).

[264] Original quotation: "Ich glaube, sie sind in der Art überfordert mit ihren Kindern. Also wenn ich häufig Rückmeldung gekriegt habe, dann war das: ich verstehe mein Kind nicht mehr. Ja? /C: ist das oft vorgekommen? /M: Ja, schon. Also schon so, dass ich sagen kann, ich erkenne da jetzt einen Trend/ C: mm M: also... Pubertät,

Furthermore it is difficult to verify such an assertion scientifically, it can be used as an indicator to debate evolution of parents-children educational relations, as well as relations between adults, institutions and younger generations with regard to the increasing autonomization of the (pre) adolescent phase (Galland, 2011, pp. 223 ff.). The European research project on educational trajectories in Europe (GOETE, *op. cit.*) argues that "despite the stereotype of conflicting relationships between adolescents and their parents, the latter remain a leading source of help, while friends become a fundamental emotional support with whom students engage more and more from early adolescence onwards" (*op. cit.*, p. 119). Notwithstanding the variety of opinions on the role of parenting, "parents still have a significant and often decisive role in their children's lives" (*ibid.*, p. 252). The French sociologist Olivier Galland discusses a "crisis of authority" assuming parents have more difficulty to exert a certain form of control and authority agaist the backdrop of an increasing (pre) adolescent autonomy (see a similar diagnosis made by Sander, *op. cit.*). Galland also underlines parents' struggle to cope with the difficulties their children face daily. However, he also mentions that the "lack of authority" is often diagnosed by … other parents about other parents as showed by a survey carried out in 2010 (Galland, pp. 222 ff.). In this respect, it may be more accurate to speak of a "diffuse feeling and societal malaise (*ibid.*).

3.3.1.3.3 The difficulty to identify the "whys and whereabouts"

"The reasons for Schulverweigerung? Well … there are so many….", Mr. Schatzl sighed (p. 18). The latest developments in the dropout research account for the complexity of the phenomenon of "early-school-leaving", by stressing the interaction of structural, institutional, political, and individual factors (see introduction). In fact, teachers' discourses refer to this complexity, insofar as it appears difficult for the teachers of the Geschwister Scholl *GMS* to identify specific factors among the variety of possible factors triggering "*Schulverweigerung*". This is especially true when students' "resistant" attitudes do not correspond to common prejudice or stereotypes. For Rist for example, the range of factors playing into the problem of "*Schulverweigerung*" comprises the above-mentioned adolescent drive to rebel against the system, social changes (individualisation, digitisation, familial restructuring), the role of social media, the new heterogeneous settings of the classroom, the challenges raised by differentiation, and the evolution of the "adolescent character", which "is unwilling to accept

---

da wenn die Eltern sagen, eh ich komme nicht mehr an mein Kind dran, mein Elternsprecher, der sagt auch schon, eh, ich weiß nicht mehr, wie ich mit meinem Sohn reden soll"

frustration anymore" (Rist, p. 17, see hereinafter).

For Schatzl, there are also "good students" who can be considered as "*Schulverweigerer"*, although they do not correspond to the "stereotypical" image of this category (misbehaving, underperforming, playing truant) because they "perform too well" for that. "Is that *Schulverweigerung*?", meaning students "[looking] at him a whole hour as if he was a stag about to be run over", who "do nothing" (Schatzl, p. 18)[265]. Despite what he sees as his efforts to motivate them to participate "what is your opinion on this?" they do not react and remain entirely "so uninvolved"[266]. His discourse, however, underlines school settings in the triggering of such an attitude besides "puberty", referring to students' low self-esteem regarding a specific subject or the school climate that triggers by some students aversion to school ("depression", "I don't feel well there", *ibid.*).

Schatzl's testimony underlines his powerlessness to catch students' attention and to get them interested in the class. The testimony questions the "institutional category" of dropouts, often limited to troublemakers and underperforming students (see part 1, section 1.2.2), since the issue appears to be more systemic and global and involves the meaning of teachers' experience. Rist's demotivation facing her "unmotivated" students, Schatzl's feeling "like a stag about to be run over" struggling with discipline issues, Müller's feeling of being tricked by "fake excuses" but disclaiming responsibility for students' absences since he considers doing everything he can for his class, shows how much teachers struggle on their own to cope with students's "negative participation" (I develop this in more depth in the fourth section in a comparative perspective). Their own negative attitude is put into perspective with the reform of the educational system, the introduction of free choice measures regarding orientation, and their experience of the shifting school type from "*Realschule*" to "*Gemeinschaftsschule*". These transformations influence teachers' representations of "*Schulverweigerung*" and goes hand in hand with a discourse about a loss of prestige and authority.

---

[265] Original quotation: "[die Gründe] für Schulverweigerung? Mmm ... da gibt es so viele... also einmal, ich bin zu schlecht für das Fach, also ich kapiere das nicht, ich mach nicht mit". Das ist eins. Das hatte ich früher auch in Mathe. Dann vielleicht Depression. Dass sie sagen ich will nicht aufstehen, ich will nicht in der Schule, also irgendwann… also nicht die klassische Depression sondern so... ich will einfach nicht in die Schule, ich fühl mich da nicht wohl… ich komme nicht. Pubertät vielleicht auch […] Ja... naja, also ... ich habe genug Kinder, die nichts machen. Also, ich habe, ich habe... ganz witzig, ich habe in Reli habe ich die 9c und die 9b. Die kenne ich alle vom letzten Jahr, weil ich auch Deutsch in der 9b hatte. Und jetzt habe ich die auch in Reli. Und das sind ganz ganz liebe Mädels dabei teilweise. A, die auch richtig gut sind in der Schule eigentlich ja? Und... ja… die schauen mich eine Stunde lang an, wie so ein Reh, kurz bevor es von einem Auto überfahren wird, aber es kommt kein Beitrag ja? [lacht] dann frage ich so, wie ist dann deine Meinung dazu? So. Ja? Und ist das jetzt Schulverweigerung? Was ist das? Also das ist... ich meine, die sind zu gut für Schulverweigerung, die werden auch nicht so die klassische Schulverweiger mit... rumschreien, und Sachen beafen (?), (…), aber die sind so... unbeteiligt".

[266] Schatzl accounted for some successful classes though, but he was rather talking about a general observation.

3.3.2 Institutional settings influencing teachers' perceptions of "*Schulverweigerung*"

3.3.2.1 Breaches in formerly sealed walls

Discourses of the German teachers are reminiscent of the discourses of their French counterparts, which have been analysed by François Dubet in the "decline of the institution" (2002). The implementation of the *Gemeinschaftsschule* since 2012 as an integrated school form seems to trigger similar reactions as the ones that resulted from the introduction of the "*collège unique*" (from segmented to integrated lower secondary school form) in France in 1975. This reform was unifying lower-secondary differentiated tracks into the same structure, thus bringing together students with different social, familial, economic, religious, and cultural backgrounds. German teachers are confronted with the same "invaders" who were previously sorted into different school types. In Baden-Württemberg, which school system, historically social class-based (cf. Part 2, 3.1.2), "has conserved the differentiation among tracks in secondary education to the biggest extent" (Cramer and al., 2010), the introduction of the integrated school form *Gemeinschaftsschule*, as well as the polical motto to promote inclusive school and classroom settings to break up the social and educational separation of student groups may have triggered similar feelings of "invasion" by teachers, in majority originating from the, upper middle class. The idea of an idealised job in charge of educating the elite (aristoricatic or *bourgeois*), was confronted with changing working conditions notably through socially more heterogeneous classrooms. As a matter of fact, dealing with "heterogeneity" has been the focus of the pedagogic research in education in Baden-Württemberg for the past few years, aiming to support teacher training (Bohl, Budde & Rieger-Ladich (ed.), 2017). This means teachers have to completely rethink their ways of teaching and to conceive their pedagogy differently, as well as their relations with other professionals. This new context also demands that schools are provided with enough resources and rooms. Varying resources from place to place have generated more or less stressful situations and resulted in many different local translations of "inclusion" (Kerbel, 2015).

As already mentioned, the teacher Matthias Müller considers the nature of relations between the school and the parents extremely crucial to understanding "negative school participation". According to Mr. Müller, these relations largely depend on the positive or negative "image" that parents have of individual schools, of their "leadership" (Mr. Müller, as well as his colleagues are critical against the principal, which is also a form of "depolitisation" of the

interpretation of problems, Jobert, *op. cit.*), and of the teachers in general. According to Mr. Müller, this last point is the "true problem". Teachers would be constantly criticised by "parents", whose anti-teacher and anti-school discourses characterise the "collusion" between them and children and undermine the legitimacy of the school and the credibility of teachers ("this increases students' aversion to teachers and prevents students from reflecting on learning processes" (Müller, pp. 15-16)[267]). Teachers would be considered by most people, and particularly by parents, as privileged professionals who benefit from a secured statute (civil servant), are well paid and have a considerable amount of holidays[268]. Such a point of view can only be understood within the context of a neo-liberal labour market. Since the 1980s, the precariousness and instability of jobs has been increasing, especially for the lower strata of the population. Workers have been encouraged to demonstrate "flexibility". In this context, civil servants appear as privileged categories, still benefiting from higher and secure wages and positions.

But if Mr. Müller has the feeling that "parents and students" stand together against the school ("School and teachers generally are not respected anymore", p. 15), this is "different from school to school" (which may refer to different clienteles as well); furthermore, I showed and I will show that teachers as well hold negative discourses about lower social backgrounds. In other words, discussions about "*Schulverweigerung*" reveal class-based arguments.

The transformation of the institutional settings questions the nature of the normative consensus that ought to unify students and teachers as the heterogeneity of backgrounds and

---

[267] Original quotation: "und was noch vielleicht interessant für deine Arbeit sein könnte, noch eine Wahrnehmung ähh. Extrem wichtig für die Schule sind auch die Eltern, wie du merkst, wie man an dem, was ich grade erzählt habe merkt…ja… und ... dafür ist es ganz wichtig was die Schule für ein Image hat. Und heutzutage ist es eben doch so, dass für viele Eltern, Schule und Lehrer generell, Lehrer werden nicht mehr so sehr respektiert. Ich bekomme es selber mit, dass es einfach Bevölkerungsschichten gibt, da kriegst du immer dumme Sprüche zu hören wenn du Lehrer bist [er imitiert gewisse Eltern]: "aaaahhh ich schaffe nix und habe immer nur Urlaub und Schüler quälen usw.!", das macht die Zusammenarbeit mit Eltern schwierig, weil du als Lehrer... Wenn die Eltern ihren Kindern sagen: "Ich glaub dein Lehrer ist auch gemein, oder ich glaub dein Lehrer …. Du hast einfach einen ungerechten Lehrer und echt? Du hast eine Strafarbeit bekommen und du hast gar nichts gemacht? Das ist voll unfair vom Lehrer'. Dann … dann stärkt das ja die Abneigung der Schüler dem Lehrer gegenüber und verhindert, dass die Schüler irgendwie nachdenken und sich ein Lernprozess etabliert. Und ich glaub das variiert auch von Schule zu Schule" (Müller, pp. 15-16)

[268] This topic emerges under a different form in the French data, notably from other school professionals working in the school (principal's deputy, educational assistants and principal councillor for education, special needs assistants). This diversity and difference of statutes with different security and institutional recognition damages the relations between the different school bodies working in the school (see further below). More generally, A.-M. Bourgeais' article "les enseignants fonctionnaires" informs about the conditions in which such a critical discourse towards teachers can emerge, while temporary and precarious contracts have been becoming the norm. On the other hand, I have shown in the previous chapter how education has been made responsible for producing the human capital necessary to social growth (Berthet and al., 2013, pp. 11-12) but also to help individuals to blossom by recognizing and enhancing their individual talents; parents' critical attitudes and demands towards school could be interpreted as a result of the high ascendancy of education on individual trajectories.

biographies becomes more diverse and unequal but the discourse on "equal opportunities" more pressing. This awareness among teachers is particularly well illustrated by the case of Rist. At the end of our interview she admitted that teachers "pretend that [dropouts] do not exist and say, well, that one is lazy or that one does not care … he has so many other interests" but the institution does not seek to deconstruct these categories (Rist, p. 20).

Justified by the discourse on "equal opportunities", the introduction of "free choice" principles notably deprived primary teachers in 2012 of their prerogative to decide about children's future orientation. This led to a rebalancing of existing power relations between parents and the representatives of public education. How do teachers react to the changing conditions of their jobs and how does this affect their understanding of the phenomenon of "*Schulverweigerung*"?

Kosar Altinyelken and her colleagues identify, in several European countries, (class and ethnic-related) conflicts opposing these parents and teachers, with the "high risk of engaging in unproductive 'blame games'" (2016, p. 178). As an anecdote by Mr. Müller revealed, these parents particularly are those who are not seen as legitimate to negotiate their children's absences[269].

3.3.2.2 Unproductive blame-games?

Teachers' discourses reveal class-based perceptions of the problem, where common prejudices correlate with negative arguments regarding the new institutional settings that open to lower social milieus.

3.3.2.2.1 "I believe there are parents who simply … for 20 years have been living thanks to the support of Hartz IV- subsidies"

According to Mr. Müller, different generations of teachers emphasise either the transmission and respect of cardinal values (*Primärtugenden,* aiming to guide the human action like moral values, justice, ...) or dedicate themselves to secondary values (*Sekundärtugenden,* that is, evolving and context-related social norms and personal properties without ethical but civil value, like diligence, punctuality, obedience, self-discipline). Young teachers would be paying

[269] However, parents covering their children's absences do not necessarily belong to this group. Mr. Müller, in his interview, accounts for parents who "negotiated" the absence of their student from the detention hours he was supposed to do at the end of the day, so that they could "go earlier on ski holiday". Mr. Müller "didn't want to give parents a hard time" and accepted without arguing (another element, which might have played, is that contrary to France, teachers have to take on the detention hours they give) (Müller, p. 18).

more attention to the enforcement of secondary values, which are also the behavioural codes necessary for teaching in the current settings but has no meaning to people excluded from work. The following extract puts into perspective the meaning and legitimacy of school in relation to the meaning of work as a norm of integration:

> *"Because [in the past] children have brought a certain educational consensus because, somehow, from the start, it was clear to the children that being assiduous is…. worthwhile. Children already learned this at home, just like punctuality. Or, more importantly: work. Before it was clear for the parents that they want their children to have a job. Today I am not that sure. I believe there are parents who simply … for 20 years have been living thanks to the support of Hartz IV-subsidies. Meaning that the child has no experience of parents who go to work" (Müller, 2017, pp. 4-5)*[270]

Müller does not put into question the "secondary values", which he embodies through his role. Instead, he mobilizes a stereotype –the "Hartz-IV person", see after- to explain why young teachers have trouble in enforcing these behavioural codes. Firstly, his arguments may be interpreted by referring to the former class-connexion between teachers and their clientele before the implementation of the *GMS* (consensus on middle-class values and behavioural codes: norms did not need to be clarified or even negotiated). He then mentions the internalised norm of work parents passed on to their children, to eventually introduce the disputed norm of work, which finally ends up with the "Hartz-IV" figure.

Hartz IV is, generally speaking, the name given to the minimum living wage given to people in Germany who have been durably unemployed, or for any other reason unable to provide for their subsistence. It refers to the reform of the welfare state according to the former VW-Manager Peter Hartz's suggestions to reduce unemployment at the beginning of the 2000s. Hartz IV is the last law of this "reform package" and refers to the merger of unemployment aid and social benefits in one benefit (*ALG-II*). This benefit is associated with more control of recipients, activation measures and sanctions (cut, suppression). Supposedly, and among other interpretations, the multiplication of "poor workers" due to the liberalization of the labour market and the multiplication of "mini-jobs" may have played a role in the increase of the number of *Hartz-IV* recipients in the first three years after its introduction (BpB, Fünf Jahre

[270] Original quotation: "Weil [früher] die Kinder auch einen gewissen Bildungskonsens mitgebracht haben weil irgendwie, schon von vornerein, den Kindern klar war, fleißig sein ist... für alle erstrebenswert; das haben die Kinder von zu Hause mitbekommen oder Pünktlichkeit oder viel wichtiger noch: Arbeiten; früher wollten die Eltern, dass ihre Kinder ein Job bekommen. Heute bin ich mir da nicht mehr so sicher. Ich glaube heute gibt's einfach Eltern... die seit 20 Jahren auf Hartz IV sind. Sprich das Kind hat noch nie erlebt, dass die Eltern arbeiten gehen".

Hartz-Reformen, 2007; Promberger, 2010). The *Harz-IV person* is also a social figure gathering many negative prejudice and stereotypes attributed to "inactive" people in modern societies[271] (Schulz & Frieg, 2014). But, numerous researches working on the issue of poverty have provided evidence for work as a norm and a means of self-fulfilment, speaking against ascriptions like "laziness" or the disincentive effect of benefits (Promberger *op. cit.*).

Their discourse reminds of McDonald's contribution to the discussion of the concepts of "underclass membership" and "social exclusion". Drawing on the results of ethnographic research between 1998 and 2001[272] in Britain's poor neighbourhoods, contexts of severe socio-economic deprivation, he accounts for opposite findings to W.J. Wilson's analyses that said, [in a "seminal text *When Work Disappears* (1996) about US ghettos (1996, pp. 52-53)]:

"[young people] lose their feeling of connectedness to work in the formal economy …// … they may grow up in an environment that lacks the idea of work as a central experience of adult life – they have little or no labour force attachment …//… [Those] who maintain a connection with the formal labour market - that is, those who continue to be employed mostly in low-wage jobs – are, in effect, working against all odds."

MacDonald demonstrates "the continued attachment of people to work and connection to (low wage) employment": "we uncovered an insistent valuing of work as a source not just of income but of self and family respect: old-fashioned, 'respectable' working-class views about the importance of working for a living, of self-reliance and of stigma against those perceived to be work-shy. […] Interviewees sometimes laughed, literally, at the notion that because their parents had been unemployed that they had learned that a life of unemployment was acceptable. Conversely, the poverty and joblessness of parents spurred young adults to avoid the same for themselves (MacDonald, 2008).

Unemployment, or other forms of irregular (low wage) work are still associated with stigma. According to Müller, those parents, "who don't care about anything" and especially not about their children's education or school career have a disincentive effect on their children ("They are generally children who don't care about anything and you see that the parents as well

[271] Thereby belonging to the old history of the social perception and construction of poverty as "deserving" or not collective or individual support. In fact, the blaming of "inactivity" or "idleness", as categories distinguishing between the "good" and the "bad", the "honest" and the "pretending" unemployed people have been investigated deeply (see e.g. Noiriel, 2017; Castel, 2009; Wacquant, 2004; Castel, 1995, reed. 2000; Topalov, 1994).

[272] *Snakes and Ladders* (Johnston et al 2000) and *Disconnected Youth? Growing up in Britain's Poor Neighbourhoods* (MacDonald and Marsh 2005)

don't care about anything. These children are mostly alone at home in the afternoons. Because the parents are working. Or because there is only one parent left and this parent has to work"). Referring to the above-mentioned thematic of parents covering their children illegal absences, Müller does not only condemn such parental behaviour, but also puts into question these parents' mental capacities, associated with Harty-IV benefits " Yes … there is … among the Hartz IV parents, it's so that they are overwhelmed; that we've got very quickly the feeling that students are smarter than their parents … that the parents … don't get it at all … what they … just signed" [silence]" (Müller, 2017, pp. 5-6)[273].

These parents who are accused of being "indifferent" to their children's absences are in fact belonging to the modern precariat, resulting from the "precarisation of work and retrenchment of welfare" –who are, for L. Wacquant, the major targets of the "punitive paternalism" of the contemporary neoliberal Leviathan (Wacquant, 2012). Castel in his work on "disaffiliation" and the "social question", argues about a relation between these evolutions and the disruptions happening in the educational sector insofar as it affects the feeling of belonging, self-esteem, responsibility[274]. Neoliberal principles[275] under which the reforms of employment and welfare have been conducted in post-industrialised societies are happening at the expense of certain

---

[273] Original quotation: M: "Ich merke zum Beispiel, dass es Schüler gibt die 40 Fehltage haben und dann sagst du zu dem Schüler: "Hey, Junge, du hast 40 Fehltage, davon sind 20 unentschuldigt". Und der Schüler antwortet: "Naja, kein Problem, ich bringe eine Entschuldigung morgen". Am nächsten Tag kommt er dann mit einer Entschuldigung auf der steht: 'Ich entschuldige meinen Sohn vom…..ersten Dezember bis zum fünfen Dezember, vom dritten Juli bis zum achten Juli und vom zweiten Februar letzten Jahren bis Ende Februar letzten Jahres. Er… hatte Kopfschmerzen'.Unterschrieben von den Eltern. Wo ich ganz klar weiß, alles klar, das Kind lügt, die Eltern decken das Kind beim Lügen. /F: -und redest du manchmal mit dem Kind darüber? /M:- Jetzt mit Kindern bei denen das so ist? Ja.../F:-und was sagen sie?/ M :-[lächlet]. Nicht viel. Das sind meistens Kinder, denen ist alles egal und du merkst halt, dass deren Eltern auch alles egal ist. Das sind meistens Kinder die nachmittags allein zu Hause sind. Weil die Eltern am Arbeiten sind. Oder weil sie nur einen Elternteil haben und der Elternteil arbeiten muss./ F:-und du kannst arbeiten und trotzdem Hartz-4 beziehensein? /M: -Ne. Ne aber .. das ist ... also ich spreche nicht von konkreten Kinder, es war nur ein Beispiel. /-Ok./-weil.. Ja… es… bei den Hartz IV Eltern, das ist es so, dass sie überfordert sind. Da bekommt man ganz schnell das Gefühl, dass die Kinder irgendwie fitter sind als die Eltern. Dass die Eltern gar nicht … raffen. Was sie… da grade unterschreiben". [Schweigen]

274 Robert Castel is a French sociologist, who has been continually working on the "social issue" (social exclusion and 'disaffiliation'). I am referring here to one of his last conferences given in Spain (15/07/2009) based on his last work "La montée des incertitudes" (2009) entitled: "La crise de la cohésion sociale: l'école et le travail dans un temps d'incertitude" organized by the Fundació Jaume Bofill and the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya; online viewing (French) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WiglZGVYUVM] 21/08/18

[275] For L. Wacquant, these are: "(i) Commodification as the extension of the market or market-like mechanisms, based on the notion that such mechanisms are universally optimal means for efficiently allocating resources and rewards. (ii) Disciplinary social policy, with the shift from protective welfare, granted categorically as a matter of right, to corrective workfare, under which social assistance is made conditional upon submission to flexible employment and entails specific behavioural mandates (training, testing, job search, and work even for subpoverty wages, but also curtailing fertility, abiding by the law, etc.) (iii) Expansive and pornographic penal policy aimed at curbing the disorders generated by diffusing social insecurity in the urban zones impacted by flexible labour and at staging the sovereignty of the state in the narrow window of everyday life it now claims to control. (iv) The trope of individual responsibility as motivating discourse and cultural glue that pastes these various components of state activity together" (*op. cit.*, p. 72).

categories of the population, who do not have the means to behave like "responsible" individuals due to the pressurisation of their situations (reappearance of the "poor worker" character - *figure du "travailleur pauvre*"). Activation and a market logic of welfare based on a "give-and-take logic" consists of "asking a great deal from people who might not have a lot to give". For Castel, individuals can only act responsibly if they can benefit from a certain security. As for Castel, to achieve participation and responsibility, resources and independence need to be secured and social protection and rights need to be provided. "Negative school participation" could be interpreted from this perspective, meaning that compliance to school norms and expectations compared to the demands and/or feeling of security the school environment is able to provide with; as well as the meaning of work, self-esteem and economic security. Yet, as I will show through the two other teachers, unemployed parents are mostly presented as responsible for their own helpless situation (and that of their children at school), but when they want to place their children in higher school types providing with better chances, they are reproached for this as well for not remaining "where they belong to".

3.3.2.2.2 "I believe… […] Hauptschule-teachers would be better reporting on this"

Rist regularly told me that "*Schulverweigerung*" is an issue that one mostly encounters in *Hauptschulen* (vocational secondary schools). "*Schulverweigerung"*, according to her, is a problem for students growing up in "less-educated" families (*Bildungsfern*), which are in fact overrepresented in *Hauptschulen*[276]. In *Hauptschulen*, according to Rist, children are more likely to have parents who "stay in bed the whole day and do not bother whether their children

[276] Similarly to France, the expansion of education has led to a transformation of the social composition in the traditional German educational system and the increase of the level of qualification (Geißler, 2014; Allmendiger & Nikolai, 2006). The *Volksschule* (later *Hauptschule*) was visited by 79% of the students (7th grade) in 1952 and fifth (?) went to the Realschule (6%) and Gymnasium (13%). Like in France, the students achieving the *Abitur* (*baccalauréat*), general qualification for the university entrance, was a tiny minority. Today and since the 1990s they are a majority to visit the Gymnasium. In 2012 they were 7% of the 14-year-old students to go to the *Gymnasium*, 24% to the *Realschule* und 20% to integrated schools (these figures do not add up) (Geißler, 2014). The first PISA-study (2000) has revealed how heavily the attendance of a specific type of school depends on the social and cultural background of the family (Allmendiger & Nikolai, 2006). While educational opportunities have increased for all social classes, the system has failed to abolish educational inequalities related to social origins (e.g. Geißler, 2014; Becker, 2012). Even between the different Länder educational opportunities are different. In Bayern and Baden-Württemberg in 2010, students coming from a working class have 6.5 times fewer chances to visit a Gymnasium, and even less if they have a migrant background. In Berlin, they had only 1.7% less chances (BpB, Welchen Einfluss hat die soziale Herkunft beim Zugang zum Gymnasium? (2010), 2015). In 2000, 48% of the children from lower (30%) and middle (18%) classes were visiting a *Hauptschule*; in 2009 they were respectively 27% and 15% (BpB, Hauptschul- und Gymnasialbesuch von 15-Jährigen nach sozialer Herkunft, 2013).

have got a butty for the morning at school". These children then "start to play truant": anyway "nobody cares about them" (Rist, p. 13) [277].

Rist asked me at the end of the interview whether I would be interested to meet a "*Berufsschullehrer*", who used to teach, among others, young people who left the general education system without any qualification or training contract; these are "held back" in the "transition system", a recently established schooling structure[278].

Hauptschulen, historically a fundamental element of the democratisation of education in Germany, have suffered from a bad image for several decades. *Hauptschulen* and their public have been the focus of debates about educational inequality and democratisation of education, ghettoisation issues and other societal problems: "*Haupschulen: Problemsschulen*?" (Trautwein et al., 2007). In their empirically driven study, Trautwein et al. (2007) try to answer the question of how the *Hauptschule* has acquired such a negative image. Considering the school type effect on performances, they also draw particular attention to the influence of "students-composition effects" on students' relation to learning, their "performance" and "motivation".

The *Hauptschulen* are the school types in Germany, which particularly suffer from collective stress factors and stigmatisation effects. They are home to students with social and school issues, such as the proportion of students retaking the year, a lower level of performance and capability, students from less-educated families and an increasing proportion of young people living in particularly difficult social and family conditions, as well as foreign students or students with migrant backgrounds (*ibid*.). The authors conclude that *Hauptschulen* can work only "if the recruitment of its public is considerably large and heterogeneous" to break up with the idea that *Hauptschulen* are effectively "problem schools" and provide with similar

---

[277] Original quotation: Ich glaube... darüber würden jetzt gerade die Hauptschullehrer mehr berichten können. Weil ich glaube dort ist es immer mal ein Thema weil in Hauptschulen sind oftmals Kinder aus noch bildungsferneren Elternhäusern wie jetzt an Realschulen oder Gemeinschaftsschulen… wo die Eltern sich dann halt selber den ganzen Tag im Bett liegen und sie dann halt auch nicht drum kümmern, dass die Kinder morgens ein Pausenbrot haben, um in die Schule zu kommen. Und die fangen mal an mit Schwänzen; kümmert sich ja niemand darum"

[278]A larger part of young people, after leaving the general educational system, start a vocational training in "vocational schools" (Berufsschule; Berufsfachschulen in the dual system) and switch between part-time vocational school and the firm. Part-time vocational schools are also visited by young people without any training contract but who are still under the school obligation. Berufsschulen (more specifically its special programmes for "dropouts", Berufsvorbereitungsjahr, Berufsgrundbildungsjahr …) also welcome students who have not graduated in the general education system. Students visit special classes preparing for a vocational education and try to obtain a leaving certificate (Haupt- oder Realschulabschluss) or basic job-related skills "in order to increase their chance for an internship" (Krüger-Hemmer, 2016). Students visiting these special schools are, in majority, also the ones whose parents have generally lower educational levels than the parents of kids in any other school form (ibid. "Der sozioökonomische Status der Schülerinnen und Schüler").

attractive opportunities and quality of teaching and learning than other school forms[279]. The authors also mention that if many Länder have decided to abolish the *Hauptschule* to be replaced by the *Gemeinschaftsschule* (*GMS*) many challenges remain. In 2007, they wrote that teachers (*Realschullehrer*) and parents fear the changing composition of students resulting from a merger of *Realschulen* and *Hauptschulen*. Insofar as the supply of educational structures remains very diverse and certifications important in the distribution of life chances, concurrence and practices of distinction between social milieus to improve or maintain one's position may not increase the diversity of *Gemeinschaftsschule*.

As a matter of fact, teachers of the Geschwister Scholl *GMS* affirm that the population at their school has been "changing" while higher and middle-class parents prefer to send their students to other schools. For Rist this can be explained by the fact that the *GMS* is seen as the "new *Hauptschule",* where mostly students from disadvantaged and migration backgrounds are to be found (Rist, p. 10)[280]. Does this perception have an impact of the feeling of symbolical downgrading of the profession?

Her colleague Schatzl believes that the transformation of the *Realschule* into the *GMS* has increased the number of "underperforming" and "difficult" students in class, or at least provoked the exodus of (upper) middle-class students, because "educated" parents whose "children sometimes read a book at home" are "sceptical" towards this new school form. Moreover, parents with migrant backgrounds, "who don't speak German and don't really care about learning it" are now sending their children to the *GMS*. Together, he argues, these factors would explain the decreasing performance of the *GMS* (Schatzl, pp. 3-4)[281].
As mentioned in the previous part, this extract also informs about persisting categorisations of "intelligence" and "abilities" in "three" hierarchical groups which correspond to the tripartite

---

[279] "Dieser Befund deutet darauf hin, dass sich eine Sicherung der Arbeitsfähigkeit an Hauptschulen vermutlich nur erreichen lässt, wenn sie Anlaufstelle für eine ausreichend breite und heterogene Schülerklientel ist".
[280] Original quotation: "Durch die Auflösung der Hauptschulen... hat sich in der Gesellschaft so das Bild verfestigt, dass eben die jetzt GMS eigentlich die neue Hauptschule ist".
[281] Original quotation: "Also es gibt viele also Bildungs… man spricht immer von bildungsnahen Eltern, Eltern die sehr gebildet sind und Jobs und auch gebildete Kinder haben, die auch mal ein Buch lesen daheim. Von denen sind viele skeptisch. Und ich meine es gibt sehr viele Eltern von Kindern, besonders mit Migrationshintergrund, sie wissen was GMS ist ja?[???] Und die können auch nicht so gut Deutsch und sie beschäftigen sich gar nicht so damit. So und die sagen halt, 'ja, mein Kind geht ja auf die GMS'. Wir haben wenige Kinder, die ein wirklich hohes Niveau haben, wo wir sagen können, ok, da, die könnte ich mir auf dem Gymnasium vorstellen. Echt wenige. Also vielleicht zwei in einer Klasse oder so, oder drei... und dann haben wir ein paar Kinder die ein durchschnittliches Niveau besitzen und dann gibt es ganz viele die sind auf Hauptschulniveau. Das liegt daran, dass die Eltern der höheren Bildungsschichten der GMS gegenüber skeptisch sind".

division of the German educational system (Edelstein & Veith, 2017)[282]. Schatzl blames the parents (particularly those with migrant backgrounds) for the students' underperformance because they have not sent their students to the "right" school:

> *"Yes there are still students who have difficulties, notably in German. They might be good at mathematics. Others do not meet the Realschule requirements from the beginning. They would be better off at the Hauptschule. Some of them should even be considered for the Förderschule" (Schatzl, p. 3)*[283]

The majority of research in education, social and intercultural pedagogy has regularly pointed to the negative consequences of the vertical and horizontal segmentation of the educational system for young people with migration backgrounds. Georg Auernheimer[284] says that "the separation of students according to school types with the concentration of youths with migration backgrounds in *Haupt-* and *Sonderschulen* promote representations of a natural inequality according to giftedness and ethnic origins [and] a 'secret curriculum' of racism" (quoted by Britz, 2007). Indeed, since compulsory schooling applies to migrant children, these have been overrepresented in vocational and special schools. In Baden-Württemberg, "German children with migration background" and "foreign students" constitute 41% of the public attending the *Haupt-/Werkrealschule*, 29. 1% of the public attending special schools, 25.2% attending the GMS, 18.5% of students attending the *Realschule, and* 11.4% of students attending the Gymnasien[285]. Stauber *et al*. (*op. cit*.) identify discursive patterns according to which "the fact that migrant students show more difficulties in their educational trajectories quasi automatically is interpreted in terms of cultural difference and often reduced to language problems. The fact that they are often performing much better in school is simply ignored, and there is only limited consciousness of the issues of institutional discrimination" such as

[282] Contrary to the ambitious educational project elaborated by the Prussian diplomat and philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) in cooperation with the policy maker Johann Wilhelm Süvern (1775-1829). This project aimed to generalize access to education and abolish the separation between lower and higher classes in a comprehensive horizontal school system. The defeat of Napoleon (1815) is characterized by the coming back of conservative forces in Europe. By consequence an educational system based on class separation trumped Humboldt's plan in Germany (*op. cit*.).

[283] Original quotation: "ja es gibt immer Schüler die halt ihre Schwierigkeiten haben, gerade im Deutschunterricht. Die sind dafür dann in Mathe gut. Manche sind auch von Anfang an nicht für die Realschule geeignet. Sie wären besser auf einer Hauptschule aufgehoben, manche sogar auf einer Förderschule".

[284] *Schieflagen im Bildungssystem. Die Benachteiligung der Migrantenkinder*. 5. Auflage, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden 2013. *Ungleichheit erkennen, Anderssein anerkennen! Ausgewählte Texte über Unterricht, (interkulturelle) Bildung und Bildungspolitik.* Regener Verlag, Berlin 2010.

[285] Official statistics of Baden-Württemberg: [https://www.statistik-bw.de/Service/Veroeff/Statistik_AKTUELL/803417004.pdf], 17/12/2018

selection, constitution of homogeneous groups and stigmatisation effects, teachers' recruitment and their socio-economic homogeneous properties (*ibid*., p. 109).

Finally, Schatzl's testimony illustrates what these authors refer to as "unspoken white middle-class assumption of *normalcy* [consisting of] the assumptions about normal/average learning attainments and acceptable behaviour" (*ibid*., p. 110). When Schatzl opposed "educated families" who have "educated children" who "sometimes read a book at home" and whose parents flee from the migrant families who are "invading" the *GMS*, he reproduces this discursive pattern of *normalcy* (see above): children from educated parents are assumed to read, which will advantage them in education while children from less-educated families are assumed to not read. Leroy and Xavier, in their analysis of young people's biographies in Germany and France with migrant backgrounds, point out that "although not all of the young people do read regularly, the book consists of the most mentioned medium […] mostly described as a source of knowledge" (Leroy & Xavier, pp. 79-80, 2013)[286]. Of course the practice of reading advantages the development of skills, which are particularly valued at school (reflexivity, critical mind, certain vocabulary, general knowledge, better grammar). The authors underline though the different ways these young people with migration backgrounds consider books specifically –i.e. not only in a scholastic purpose. The relation to the book is not necessarily a practice acquired in the familial environment, leads to diverse usages and purposes and is often related to their intimacy. In turn, they suggest that the positive or negative relation to school impacts the consideration of the object "book" and the relations to their peers. In the perceptions of less-performant students ("with less shiny school career"), the act of reading distinguishes the students who are institutionally labelled as "intelligent", who speaks the institutional language and may trigger aversion feelings by those who are having a more difficult time in class (*ibid*., pp. 81-82). More generally, such a reflection questions the way teachers' prejudice may influence their relations to students while teaching or supporting them and give them the feeling they are in the right place, or not.

[286] However, Galland refers to different studies showing that young French people in general (regardless of their socio-economic status), despite higher levels of qualification, do not consume more traditional cultural products, like reading (). Three interpretations of this trend could be advanced here: the role of cultural industries, which are inspired by members of the lower classes of society compared to the 1960s; the autonomization of an "adolescent culture" from the school culture; the dissemination of a liberal model of education and the role of new technologies, which enable this autonomy within specific social milieus (Galland, *op. Cit*., pp. 232 ff.).

3.3.2.2.3 "In the past teachers decided whether a child would go to the Hauptschule or to the Gymnasium or to the Realschule"

In 2012, the binding character of the primary school teachers' "recommendation" is abrogated in Baden Württemberg. The regional government justifies such a position according to a liberal view of education: "each child is individual" although parents are invited to consider in their decisions the "learning process" and "developmental potential" of the child, which is the object of the "primary school recommendation" expressed during the fourth grade[287]. The liberalization of the choice concerning the secondary school has challenged the function of teachers as "gatekeepers" and reduced their influence regarding the students' orientation. By extension, this loss of power also shapes teachers' apprehension of the issue of "*Schulverweigerung*".

As primary teachers have lost their prerogative regarding students' orientation, it is the parents who decide which track their child is going to follow. Consequently, they are also the first ones to be blamed for their children's failure:

> *"Parents can decide where the students go. The primary school recommendation was abolished. In the past, teachers decided whether a child would go to the Hauptschule or to the Gymnasium or to the Realschule. And it was a binding recommendation. Of course, there were certain possibilities for the parents to challenge this decision but mostly the teacher decided. This system was abolished, meaning that parents can decide freely where their children go. Then a lot of parents said, my child doesn't go to the Hauptschule, my child must go to the Gymnasium, my child must go to the Realschule. Because they believe that their child needs a good qualification. But they don't know how the child is going to succeed. Hence there are a lot of children who are in class and have serious difficulties (Schatzl, p. 13)*[288]

Schatzl criticises those parents who "absolutely want" to send their children to the school that will enable them to achieve the highest and socially most valued qualifications. Such a

[287] "Übergang in weiterführenden Schulen", official "Serviceportal Baden-Württemberg" [https://www.service-bw.de/lebenslage/-/sbw/bergang+in+weiterfuehrende+Schulen-5001333-lebenslage-0], 25/04/2019.

[288] Original quotation: "die Eltern können das mitbestimmen, wo die Schüler hingehen. Also die Grundschulempfehlung ist ja weggefallen. Also früher war es so, dass die Lehrer gesagt haben, ihr Kind kommt auf die Hauptschule oder aufs Gymnasium oder auf die Realschule. Und es war da verbindlich. Und es gab schon Möglichkeiten für die Eltern da mitzumischen aber hauptsächlich ging dies von Lehrer aus. Und dann ist dieses System abgeschafft worden. Das heißt, die Eltern können frei entscheiden, wo ihr Kind hingeht. Dann haben ganz viele Eltern gesagt, mein Kind kommt nicht auf die Hauptschule, mein Kind muss auf das Gymnasium, mein Kind muss auf die Reaschule. Weil sie immer im Hinterkopf haben, mein Kind braucht einen guten Abschluss. Aber wie das Kind dahin kommen soll, das wissen sie nicht. Das sorgt eben dafür, dass viele Kinder in der Klasse sind, die sich da schwer tun".

judgment is often associated with the lower socio-cultural-economic backgrounds of parents (like above), which educational expectations are perceived as too high compared to school demands in higher secondary school forms. This may trigger forms of *cooling-out* reactions, as "teachers either discourage students, despite their explicitly shown ambitions and learning motivation, arguing that for 'this type of student' vocational education is good enough, or they urge students to stay within vocational education in the student's best interest and not take the risk of failing in higher school forms" (Ule et al., 2016, p. 257).

Since the introduction of the "free choice" principle in 2012, parents compete for the "best education" for their children. The propagation of private schools, which not only speak to wealthy families but also to the middle class, especially at primary school level (Kraul, 2014)[289], contributes to the diversification of the educational landscape but also increased the competition between the social milieus, which undermines the idea that free choice would help to increase the equality of opportunities. The stronger the influence and social utility of the diplomas, the stronger the social inequalities and their reproduction (Dubet, Duru-Bellat, Vérétout, 2010, p. 155). In fact, educational trajectories in Deutschland remain quite predictable using students' social origins (BpB, 2018).

Kupfer, who analysed the transformation of the German dual vocational educational system, furthermore, points to the progressive exclusion of working-class families from this educational competition. She concludes that the increasing stratification and selection of the educational system in Germany "increasingly [shapes] social inequality [while] a significant number of people with and without school-leaving certificates are losing the struggle for a decreasing number of apprenticeships against candidates with higher school leaving certificates" (Knupfer, *op.cit*. 93-94). This helps to partly understand the reason why parents (especially) from lower social classes see new opportunities in the *GMS* while the access to the Gymnasium remains socially selective.

Stereotypes framed by the historical class-based construction of the educational system, but also alarming debates about massive and increasing aspirations to further studies and lacking workforce and trainees in non-academic domains (Nida-Rümelin, 2015) may play a role in teachers' perceptions of individual capacities depending on students socio-economic backgrounds (exemplified by the school principal's positioning analysed previously). Instead,

[289] The constitutionally rooted "*Sonderungsverbot*" should theoretically ensure that all children independently of their parents' financial situation have access to all available school types of the private and public sector. Some private schools offer different levels of school fees suited for the different income levels.

the role of educational and work market structures in parents' decisions, who mainly seek to secure their children's future and see for the *Abitur* as the rule and studies as the target objective, is scarcely put into perspective by teachers, while children from lower educational backgrounds would automatically be seen as better performing in technical and vocational domains. The selective nature of the educational system may challenge *warming-up* teachers' attitudes though: they [also] "want to save students from the experience of failure and secure a safe option for them" (*ibid*., p. 258). Despite the existing evidence of positive effects of heterogeneous classes on students' performance (Kerbel, 2015), heterogeneity is still experienced as a great difficulty for teachers. One year after my fieldwork at the *GMS*, I met with Rist who told me that they had reintroduced separate class streams.

3.3.2.2.4 "There are so many disruptions (…) that I don't know where to start"

Teachers feel overwhelmed by their changing "clientele" whose behaviours do not fit with school culture. The testimonies from teachers speak of numerous problems related to the lack of discipline, and class hours during which they struggle for attention and participation. The interpretation of these disruptions is sometimes interpreted in medical terms, referring to students' "massive behavioural disorders"[290] or "autism" for example (Rist, p. 6)[291]. Actually, dealing with students with mental disorders has traditionally been the job of "special teachers" (*Sonder- / Förderlehrer*). Now, these teachers are trained to work in regular schools although regular schools are not provided with equal resources. The following testimony illustrates the loss of certain prerogatives of the school staff to preserve some homogeneity in the classroom, which, of course, did ease the teaching activity; it also stresses the fact that teachers feel insufficiently supported:

> *"Before you could always say, the child doesn't fit in this school, please find another one. This is no longer possible. The child has a right to education, wherever it is. And if we don't even have the resources, then this becomes our problem (Rist, p. 6)*

[290] Original quotation: "Und heute kommen eben ganz viele Kinder mit massiven Verhaltensgsauffälligkeiten".
[291] Original quotation: "Also du hast… 'dieses sich Kümmern um ein Kind' hat zeitlich so zugenommen, weil eben alle Kinder individuelle Hilfe benötigen. Die kommen halt wirklich alle mit massiven Problemen, das heißtdass irgendwie ADHS diagnostiziert wurde oder wir haben hier auch Inklusionskinder; das heißt es kann auch sein, dass ich ein autistisches Kind in meiner Klasse habe.[…] früher könntest du immer sagen, dass Kind passt hier nicht zu dieser Schule, bitte suchen Sie sich eine andere Schule. Das geht nicht mehr. Das Kind hat das Recht auf eine Schule, egal wo. Und wenn wir eben keine Personalressourcen haben, dann ist es im Normalfall unser Problem" (Rist, p. 6)

Teachers may feel unfairly made responsible for students' issues at school while they do not feel provided with the adequate resources. This may increase their irritation.

The changing clientele leads Müller to affirm that the level of the *GMS* is "relatively low" as are the expectations most people hold vis-à-vis *GMS* students (Müller, p. 19)[292]. Adapting to this new public is interpreted in terms of having lower expectations, which may be questioned from the perspective of the famous "pygmailon effect" (or Rosenthal and Jacobson effect). This experience has shown that having high expectations towards students and believing in their success automatically lead to increase their chance of success and performance, especially compared with what could be theoretically expected from certain students because of their origins. Furthermore, Mr. Schatzl "agrees with the school principal" that "students are either not at all or badly educated" and that some of them "behave like animals" (Müller p. 13)[293].

Schatzl struggles with discipline and participation issues ("it is so difficult") [294]. At length, he spoke about all the strategies he implemented to impose calm and his authority, in vain. He kept expelling students from his class. Sometimes, he expelled up to ten people at the same time. Fighting is tiring and, despite the fact that he always wanted to be a teacher, he sometimes asks himself: "what the fuck?" (Schatzl, p. 8)[295].

The conclusion of Lavoie *et al*. (*op. cit*.) seems to apply to this case: "inclusion is a prescription experienced as an institutional injunction and not as a possible pedagogic answer to the challenge raised by the access of all students to knowledge in the ordinary conditions of the teaching function" (*op. cit*., p. 99).

3.3.3 Critical voices to the *"Gemeinschaftsschule"* reform

The previous development informs about perceptions of the phenomenon "*Schulverweigerug*", which attribute causes of "negative school participation" to students' familial and individual environments, teenage nature, unreasonable educational expectations.

---

[292] Original quotation: "Die GMS hat eher ... sehr niedrige Anforderungen an die Schüler..."

[293] Original quotation: "Und da gebe ich [dem Schulleiter] recht, dass bei der GMS, die Kinder die da kommen, da haben wir ein großes Problem, dass da viele Kinder völlig verwahrlost sind. […] ja… keine... unerzogen. Schlechte Erziehung oder gar keine Erziehung. Also die verhalten sich teilweise wie Tiere"

[294] Original quotation: "Ja, das ist ein riesiges Thema. Weil ich habe in meiner Klasse echt Probleme, also jetzt nicht mit den Schülern die schlecht sind, aber ich habe Probleme mit der Disziplin. Also, die sind laut, und die sind… also heute schon wieder …ganz schlimm. Die sind nicht leise, sie machen im Unterricht nicht mit …. Es ist so schwierig ja".

[295] Original quotation: "Manchmal sag ich mir: was soll der Scheiß?". Eventually, M. Schatzl quit his job despite the fact that he had signed a contract engaging him for five years at the school. The difficulties he experienced paried with a long commute, finally made him apply for an administrative job.

Representations and prejudice refer as well to structural domination orders, which have been historically institutionally shaped. Arguments partly uncover feelings of loss of symbolical authority, but also personal difficulties in dealing with changing demands, clientele and working conditions of the *GMS*. Of course, they mention lacking resources to deal with these new settings. This section should clarify this aspect.

3.3.3.1 "Students have the feeling that the school deprives them of their free time"

According to Rist's impression, the number of "*Schulverweigerer*", who do not necessarily skip school but still "do not have a positive attitude towards school" has increased over time and notably with the introduction of the *GMS* (Rist, p. 15)[296]. Rist observes that students believe that the *GMS* disadvantages them when compared to the *Gymnasium*. The *GMS* not only gathers all three tracks in one structure, it also increases the time spent at school through the principle of "*Ganztagsschule*" (all-day schooling). Before the introduction of all-day school, students used to finish school in the early afternoon. While the *Gymnasium* nearby still works on this basis, *GMS*-students have to stay longer at school, "so the students have the feeling that the school deprives them of their free time" (*ibid.*)[297]. So, students in the *GMS* and former *Realschule* may perceive all-day school as a "punishment" ending up with all those who have not succeeded to be or remain at the *Gymnasium*. This is actually a "bad message" sent by the educational and political authorities (Rauschenbach, 2015). Students' critical positioning towards the *GMS* has been highlighted by the German Report about "Spaces and Styles of Participation" (2018). The all-day school in turn affects youth work and the stigmatisation of particular groups. Indeed, in the context of cooperation that all-day schools are invited to forge with out-of-school institutions and organisations, "most youth work providers are getting involved in partnerships with schools and thus are bound to follow the logic of the education system. This also means that they increasingly have to legitimise their work with targeting particular groups or "problems" such as violence, crime, right-wing extremism, Islamism instead of regarding youth work as infrastructure for all young people" (Lütgens, Mengilli and al., 2015, pp. 21-22).

---

[296] Original quotation: "Doch ich glaub, dass [Schulverweigerung] mit der Zeit gewachsen ist. Würde ich schon so sehen. Die Haltung der Schule gegenüber, die nicht mehr positiv ist".

[297] Original quotation: "Und jetzt haben sie... sozusagen die GMS-Kinder empfinden das so, dass man ihnen ganz viel Freiziet wegnimmt". However, one can wonder whether a student going to the GMS and one going to the *Gymnasium* are really differently impacted by the school demands. Indeed, the pressure to perform well at the *Gymnasium* the leads students to work a lot at home.

Except the reference to the model of the *GMS*, which may let students think that they are less capable than their peers in the Gymnasium nearby, it is only at the end of the interview that the teacher Birgit Rist adopts a critical attitude not only towards the *GMS* but also towards the practices and discourses of the professionals who embody it:

> *"But if we focussed more on these "Schulverweigerung-children", who are somehow only physically attending the class… If we paid more attention to this … then it would mean, I think, looking at [Schulverweigerung] completely differently. How do we accompany them into adulthood? But we pretend as if they did not exist and we say, well, that one is lazy or that one doesn't care, well I don't know, he has so many other interests. But if we paid more attention to [this phenomenon], for example during "Learn Coaching"[298], one can really find out why a child… is so disinterested" (Rist, p. 20)[299].*

This statement nicely illustrates the fact that the issue of "*Schulverweigerung*" is institutionally not reflected while prejudice and stereotypes may have the function of ereasing its complexity as well as dissimulating the feeling of helpleness some teachers may have as regards their responsibility of adults to help children grow up and find their place in society. Reid's words (1999), remain relevant today: "Firstly, truancy is a multi-causal problem. Secondly, every truant is unique. Thirdly, many teachers have little understanding or training about truancy" (Reid, 1999, p. 5, quoted by Sälzer, *op. cit*., p. 33).

However, one can also wonder whether an educational project that seeks to "activate" everyone in class in the current setting is actually beneficial to the students. Indeed, some research shows that boredom and inner withdrawal are part of the construction of individuality, of the "autonomy of being", and can also lead to "productive creativity" (Leloup, 2000, pp. 43-44).

While teachers tend to make students responsible for their success or failure through their lack of "mobilisation" or "motivation", the setting in which they behave is highly constraining with scarcely room for pleasure and free choice (school obligation, obligation to attend many specific subjects, long hours). This is not attractive for teachers either who wish to teach

[298] A measure of individual support that takes the form of an interview between a teacher and a student. I developed this measure in Part 2, 3.2.2.

[299] Original quotation: "Aber wenn wir mehr den Blick für diese Schulverweigerungskinder, die innerlich irgendwie gar nicht mehr richtig präsent sind, hätten… Wenn wir da mehr darauf achten würde, dann wäre das glaube ich, nochmal ganz anders(the sentence does not say anything) . Wie wir Kinder begleiten ins Erwachsenenleben. Aber wir tun als ob es sie nicht gäbe und wir sagen halt der ist faul oder der kümmert sich nicht, keine Ahnung, er hat so viele andere Interessen. Aber wenn wir zum Beispiel beim Lern Coaching mehr darauf achten würden, man kann da sehr wohl rausfinden wieso ein Kind […] so desinteressiert ist".

individuals who are interested in the subject and freely and happily attending their right to education and access to the "Enlightments"; so could be interpreted Mr. Müller's words:

> *"Well … let's be honest! What relation should one have with this [place?] when one has to start at 7:30 in the morning? You have to be on time and you don't get paid for coming in and you must sit on a chair with thirty other people that you have not chosen; and then you are only allowed to speak if it's your turn. Can you imagine if this would be a job? What terrible working conditions … how do you expect students to establish a relation with school? How could they be attracted by school?" (Müller, p. 20)*[300].

If teachers share the same opinion as Mr. Müller in thinking that the institutional setting is not attractive, the "*Schulverweigerung*" issue raises the question of 1) the (critic of) global purpose of school as a political project 2) the practical possibilities for the professionals as well as for the students to re-think the purpose of school and its settings collectively in order to increase its legitimacy.

3.3.3.2 "I would put an end to the GMS right now and start thinking about how to actually establish a proper GMS" (Müller, p. 22)

"I was quite rebellious, it started when I was 13 or 14 years old. I was a guy that no one could control"[301]. That is how Friedrich Merz, former party leader of the CDU-CSU[302], business man and millionaire, presented himself in an interview he gave to the newspaper "Tagesspiegel" on the 3rd of December 2000. He continued: "We constantly disrupted class. My friends and I sat in the back row, where we played "Doppelkopf" [a popular card game], not during the break but during the class while we had our back turned to the teacher"[303]. Merz used to present himself in the media as a successful self-made man whose wealth is a symbol[304], and all this despite his behaviour at school not being the most exemplary. F. Merz grew up in a family of jurists and despite he has to change school, he went to the university

[300] Original quotation: **"**Also ... he ... seien wir mal ehrlich! Was für einen Bezug hat man zum [Laden?] [1:07:40] wenn man morgens um halb acht anfangen muss (betont), man muss pünktlich sein und kriegt kein Geld dafür und man muss mit 30 andern, die man sich nicht ausgesucht hat, auf dem Stuhl sitzen und dann nur reden, wenn man die Hand hochhebt und aufgerufen wird. Stell dir mal vor, das wäre ein Arbeitsplatz. … was für miese Arbeitsbedingungen dies wären. Also wie sollen die Schüler das gut finden?".

[301] Original quotation: "Ich war ziemlich aufsässig, das fing mit 13, 14 Jahren an. Ich war ein Typ, der sich nicht hat leiten lassen"

[302] Who runs for the presidency of this party again in December 2018.

[303] Original quotation: "Das waren schon schwerere disziplinarische Störungen. Meine Freunde und ich saßen in der letzten Reihe, dort haben wir immer einen sehr schönen Doppelkopf gespielt, nicht in den Pausen, sondern während des Unterrichts, dem Lehrer den Rücken zugekehrt."

[304] Although this was not an element in itself F. Merz stressed on, defining himself as belonging to the "upper middle class" ("Die Zeit", 18/11/2018).

and studied law. For the well-born, being undisciplined at school may not have tragic consequences. The former French Chancellor of the Exchequer and current President Emmanuel Macron, on a different note, "wants to give every young person the wish to become a billionaire" (as reported by the newspapers "Les Echos" the 6th, January 2015). These personalities do not only have in common to embody the permeability of both political and financial spheres at the highest levels. They see and want to present themselves as inspiring models for the young generations, in which school may play a secondary role besides willpower and personality while power and wealth become the most desiring achievments. In the context of changing configurations in wealth distribution and remuneration between capital and work in favour of the first one in Western societies (Picketty, 2014), parallel to the liberalisation of school choice and supply, the myth of education as legitimate instrument producing "fair" inequalities through the distribution of certificates according to individual merits and "competences" might become all the more contested. The *GMS* as new school form does not seem to convince teachers of their capacity to actually perform the ideal of "equal opportunities". Also, the instrumental role of education (learning to enhance one's capital to reach valued positions) may be far away from the image of a "pure" and elitist relation to knowledge inherited from the Antiquity and the Humanists to which teachers remain attached (McDowell *op. cit*., p. 187).

The following testimony can be interpreted as resulting as illustrating a desynchronisation between a political vision of education "perverted" by a "merchant" and liberal ideology more focused on "competences" and material success than on generalizing access to the "culture" (which used to be elitist) and Humanist beliefs about the role of knowledge in improving the human nature (Decréau, 2019):

> *[Sighs] "Well … to some extent it is the nature of things. Students are not at school on a voluntary basis and school did not choose them either. And … they are not rewarded for being here. They don't receive money. We live in a capitalist society. Even if teachers and humanists say something else; but politicians and [? Incomprehensible]: finally, everything just revolves around money. So school is shitty, as one does not receive any money" (Müller, p. 24)*[305].

[305] Original quotation: "[seufzt] ach... ein Stück weit liegt es in der Natur der Sache. Schüler sind nicht freiwillig in der Schule und die Schule hat sich sie auch nicht ausgesucht. Und... sie kriegen auch nichts dafür, dass sie da sind. Sie kriegen kein Geld. Wir leben in einer kapitalistische Gesellschaft. Auch wenn die Lehrer was anderes sagen, und die Humanisten, aber die Politiker und die [Gelder?1:25:46] es dreht sich doch nur um das Geld. Also Schule ist scheiße, man kriegt kein Geld."

Investigating the links between the capitalist "nature of things" and students' commitment at school could be the object of more research[306]. The fact however that this teacher thinks that students need to be paid to go to school shows a low consideration of his job in which the non-materialistic purpose has lost against the give-and-take ideology. Mr. Müller does not believe in students' "gratuitous interest" in knowledge in a world where the configuration of current structures and discourses emphasises the economic and instrumentalist aspects of education (McDowell op. cit., p. 186, see part 1).

GMS field protocol #23 04/05/2017, Extract. "Maybe, it would be different if school cost something". This extract may put teachers' perceptions into debate, as it informs about the internalisation of students of above-mentioned pattern of thought.

This day, at the end of the class I organised a discussion in 10th grade a debate about "*Schulverweigerung*". Students did not seem really enthusiastic about the idea. It was the last hour, they were probably all thinking about going home. Some students express this louder than others: "no education", "compulsory schooling", "Hartz IV!". Others speak with a low voice, as if they did not want me or the whole class to hear. I told them that before the class I was told that many of them would probably skip class today: "Yes, because we did not feel like coming" / "we went drinking yesterday" (they just went through a period of exams). […] A student who I knew from the previous year and who had missed school for several months because of mental health issues (and as a result had to repeat the year) suddenly spoke aloud, losing his temper. He says that the majority did not know how lucky they were to be able to go to school: "school is shitty, school nerves: we hear this everywhere". He triggers mocking reactions; some students roll their eyes. A student who was famous for playing truant answers that "there (in Africa), it won't be any better, if students say here that it is bad". […] the same girl says that sometimes, "stress, fear make you unable to come to school". Another girl comments that "this is something different": in that case one would be "sick somehow". Another student says that "teachers should be more severe". Some of them "did not not report absences systematically", they "do not care". […] At the end of the class, I noticed a boy, whose parents, I knew, did not have German nationality, taking his time to put his things

[306] Max Weber argues that capitalism should not be confused with the lure of money, which existed in all times, sorts and conditions of men (Weber, 2018, pp. 85 ff.). By capitalism, Weber understands a social "cosmos" based on norms that "make individuals dependent on profit which becomes the finality of an entire life"; a profit that results from and illustrates people's assiduity in their job (*Beruf*) and thereby their moral virtue. If we consider being student as an investment for a future profitable job, this would imply also questioning the moral purpose of diligence at school.

away. Passing by in the direction of the door, he tells me that "maybe, it would be different if school cost something".

In Germany, between the end of the 1940s and 1961, the Länder abolished school fees for secondary schools. Other measures in the name of equal opportunities were taken, such as enforcing the supply of school material with no cost to the families ("*Lernmittelfreiheit*") or the responsibility for the state to provide families with certain supply of secondary schools regionally, so that families would not be disadvantaged by there being too great a distance between school and home (Edelstein & Hopf, 2018). Mr. Müller think that students "need to be paid" while this student thinks that "students should pay" to (better) appreciate the value of school. This is an example how representations would need to be collectively debated and increase the mutual comprehension of each other's perception of the reality.

Notwithstanding his disillusion, Mr. Müller is part of the "*Steuergruppe*" in the *GMS*, which aims at giving this new school type a politically meaningful outlook. However, this does raise some tensions among the teaching staff, who are afraid of having even more work.

For instance, Mrs. Rist reported once that Mr. Müller reproached teachers by saying that they refused to get politically and collectively involved in the development of the *GMS*-project and that they only focussed on their classes[307]. She was upset, telling me that she had been engaging in non-teaching activities on a voluntary basis. However, she did not have "the energy" to get involved in conceptualising the *GMS* while the framework for educational planning kept "constantly changing". She mentioned this issue again a couple of weeks later. She admitted that teachers would "need" to start preparing the academic years at least two weeks before the school starts in September so that they can collectively "plan the year": This is the "only […] way school could change". But she was also aware that "no teacher would be willing to sacrifice two weeks of holidays" and no teacher "would dare suggesting" such an idea (field protocols GMS #26 29/05/17 and #29 21/06/2017).

The *GMS* does not seem to provide teachers with a positive and meaningful horizon for their work, while in the original idea, individual schools have been made responsible for conceptualising their own *GMS* (*profiling*) (Rauschenbach, 2015). During my research, I was mostly confronted with negative perceptions regarding the reform. Teachers complained that the reform did not provide resources or settings to reflect on and cope with educational

[307] Working full-time at a GMS amount to 27hours per week. .

difficulties and challenges resulting from this new type of school. Critics towards the *GMS* are diverse: some point to the increased workload due to differentiated approaches to teaching, individual coaching, permanent relations with parents, and a multiplication of meetings and assessments. Others stress the lack of discipline and a lack of support in dealing with difficult children in the classroom.

Rist is exhausted from the supplementary meetings and intensive individual supervision of students due to the changing educational settings introduced in the *GMS*. It makes it difficult to still be creative in the evening when preparing the next day's class. According to Rist this feeling is shared by her colleagues.

> *"There are lots of meetings on the future of the GMS. We have additional meetings, round tables and other time-consuming events; this is when I realise, I am too tired to deal with the essential things. I cannot concentrate on preparing a good class at 6 or 7 p.m. And a lot of colleagues share this feeling; in the evening one cannot … be creative anymore. It's quite a … disappointment" (Rist, p. 19)*[308].

After having talked at length about problems of discipline and lack of student commitment, Mr. Schatzl admitted that he is "annoyed by the fact that the *GMS* requires a lot of additional work" while "it does not work how it is supposed to" and even if he still "likes to go to school", he "fights it out" (Schatzl, p. 14)[309]. Müller "would immediately stop the *GMS*" and "reconsider it" because it does not make school better, but creates "resentment", "worse teaching", "worse school", "dissatisfied teachers", and "sick teachers" (Müller, p. 22)[310].
The context is not much different in France, where many teachers agree with the principles of the "*réforme du collège*" but do not see how their statute or the decreasing resources allocated to the school will allow them to implement the pedagogic changes. One ponders the effects of such a tense climate on students' school experience.

---

[308] Original quotation: "Da waren extrem viele Termine, auch wie es mit dem GMS weitergeht. Wir haben zusätzliche Gespräche, Besprechungen oder was auch immer wo ich dann einfach merke, ich habe da für das Wesentliche gar keinen Kopf mehr. Ich kann mich nicht mehr abends um 6 oder sieben auf einen guten Unterricht konzentrieren. Und das sagen viele Kollegen, dass man abends nicht mehr ... groß kreativ sein. […] Also das ist schon...ja eine….Spur Misserfolg, ja."
[309] Original quotation: "ach ne, weißt du, mir geht's da gut eigentlich… also ich bin genervt, weil die GMS ultra viel Arbeit ist und das es auch nicht so läuft, wie es eigentlich gedacht ist… aber ... ich gehe gerne in die Schule. Also ... ich beiße mich durch [lächelt]"
[310] Original quotation: "Ich würde die GMS sofort stoppen und würde drüber nachdenken wie man eine GMS machen kann. Was hier in der GMS abläuft ist kompletter Blödsinn, das schafft ganz viel Unmut, und schlechten Unterricht, schlechte Schule, unzufriedene Lehrer, kranke Lehrer und… macht Schule überhaupt nicht besser".

3.4 Teachers and "*décrochage scolaire*" in La Balikan

The year I began my field work at the *Collège La Balikan* (2015-2016), the principal Mrs. Madec had nominated the Principal Councillor of Education (CPE) as "advisor for dropouts."[311] During my first day, I was introduced to the teachers in the teachers' room by Mr. Jardin, the teacher who helped me to get into the school. He told his colleagues that I was doing some research about "*décrochage scolaire*" and that I was going to be "around" for a couple of months. I heard someone saying: "oh, you should visit my class! [laugh]" (08/01/2016 fieldwork note). Contrary to the Geschwister Scholl *GMS*, I seemed to be in the "right place". Why?

During the research, "*décrochage scolaire*" has appeared to be an expression that speaks to teachers' daily experience. Contrary to their German counterparts, it did not only concern the higher grades, even if lots of voices suggested that dropouts and "dropout behaviours" increased from the 4th grade onwards (which equals 8th grade in Germany), shortly before being "orientated" in the "general" or "vocational" paths. Similar to their German counterparts though, French teachers refer to "deficient" environments that constitute a "handicap" and impede students in their learning. This attitude reflects the (old and controversial) paradigm of the "sociocultural handicap", which consists of blaming school inequality on individual properties or students' social and community environments (Forquin, 1979, p. 92 ff.). Teachers' testimonies do highlight a socio-territorial *ethnicisation* (othering) based on students' and families' assumed migration backgrounds living in the surrounding *quartier*[312].

In the present research, blaming students' environments for their failure at school could be interpreted as a defensive mechanism that teachers apply in order to avoid a feeling a powerlessness in light of some of the students' social and familial distress. Moreover,

---

[311] "Le referent décrochage scolaire" is a "new position " created by the Ministry of Education in 2013 in the frame of the programme against "décrochage scolaire". Those advisors are nominated in schools with "high rates of dropouts" and are in charge "of coordinating prevention" for students showing forewarning signs of dropping out"official website: [http://eduscol.education.fr/cid55119/prevention-du-decrochage-scolaire.html#lien1], 11/09/18.

[312] I use the French term "*quartier prioritaire*" (German *Brennpunktviertel*; English: priority suburban area) because it is the word used by the actors. Furthermore, I could not find a proper English translation for such a concept, which has a strongly negative connotation: "This concept represents a place identifiable by its social issues and leads to the stigmatization of its inhabitants, particularly in a security context as these are less apprehended as inhabitants in difficulty than dangerous" (C. Avenel, 2006, quotation by Vubeau in Kirszbaum, 2015, p. 12). Mrs. Lejeune told me about the attempt to change the name of the school to restore the prestige that had been lost with the "ghettoisation" of the *quartier*. However, students were attached to the school name, which they considered as part of their "identity" (Lejeune, p. 17).

considering students' issues, which are not only scholastic introduces a bias in the traditional learner/teacher relationship focused on knowledge transmission und "objective" assessment of students' progress and difficulties. Eventually, the way the problem "*décrochage scolaire*" is addressed as defined by the principal excludes a systemic reflection and vision of it, including teachers. However, many teachers interviewed are also able to identify school-related issues that might play a role in students' dropout behaviours. Still, I was able to identify institutional and organisational elements, which prevent teachers' isolated reflections and actions to fertilize. The following development highlights the tensions of the language as it is collected in the framework of interviews: certain points of views, stereotypes and prejudice distinguish asymmetric power and class positions in the social order (teachers as "agents") while in the same time, the actors are able to reflect on such structural and institutional orders they may be able or unable to change (Dubar, 2007).

Teachers mentioned

Teachers / age **/** in their Xth year in Collège La Balikan in "priority education" / status/ date of the interview if appropriate
Mr. Touba (Spanish), 25, 1st year/contract worker/26 & 27-01-2016
Mrs. Dubuy (German, French as second language), 47, 2nd year/contract worker
Mrs. Vaudrel (sport), 36, 4th year/civil servant/19-04-2016
Mrs. Louvard (French), 35, 8th year/civil servant/27-01-2016
Mr. Jardin (French, French as a second language), 36, 8th year/civil servant/01-02-2016
Mrs. Lejeune (sport), 37, 10th year/civil servant/25-02-2016
Mr. Ferdinand (maths), 45, 10th year/civil servant/04-02-2016

In a first subsection, I will clarify the theoretical background that guides the analysis of teachers' "ethnicising" apprehensions of the issue "*décrochage scolaire*" in La Balikan. Then, I will confront these perceptions with the ones of a young teacher, who shares a series of biographical points with the students at the school. In so doing, I will show how the perceptions of the first group of teachers, who tend to see "improvement" of socio-ethnic recruitment as the essential solution to the problems affecting the school, highlight an "ethnic issue" in the understanding of educational issues. It questions the representativness of the teacher body as well and with whom students can identify; as well as the capacity of the current teachers to understand the world of their students.

3.4.1 "Territorial ethnicity" and "décrochage scolaire"

Lorcerie's analysis in her 2003 book "School and the ethnic challenge" remains as pertinent as ever as regards tackling and understanding of school negative participation. In this respect, the ethnicising of school issues participate in the reproduction of social and ethnic domination orders; they may be obstacles to the realisation of the narrative framing the political action in terms of "equal opportunities".

3.4.1.1 The "ethnic" issue: a challenge still not addressed

In La Balikan, the "deficit" approach (see above) is reformulated in socio-cultural and ethnic terms. According to a "neo-assimilationist" perspective[313], students' educational disadvantages are explained by their migrant background, their lack of language skills and inability to culturally adapt and conform (Pohl, 2015, p. 18). La Balikan is a "priority" lower secondary school situated in the outskirts of a rich city centre, characterised by a population belonging to lower strata of society, often with ("visible") migration backgrounds (see introduction). This local context, which influences the socio-ethnic composition of the students, may also frame teachers' understanding of the issue "*décrochage scolaire*". In this respect, the concept of "territorial ethnicity" (Lorcerie, 2009) is used to understand the way real or assumed social origins of students and their families have an impact on the formulation of teachers' arguments and in their interactions with them. The term "territorial" refers to the local urban structures producing segregated places, that is, materialising the spatial distance between "natives" and populations "seen as having different origins" (*ibid*., p. 64).

As my research focuses on school-level, I refer to literature informing on the role of school in the production and dissemination of differentiated treatments in that matter. As underlined by Dijk, in his research on the complex process of the reproduction of racism in Western societies, "educational systems are a context for the acquisition and confirmation of ethnic and racial beliefs of the white child about minorities or Third World peoples in general (Jackman & Muha, 1984, quoted by Dijk, 1993, p. 198). […] The discourses involved in this educational context range from formal and informal instruction, such as lessons and conversations with teachers and school peers, to textbooks and other learning materials" (*ibid*.). Because of the increasing cultural and national diversity of Western societies and to

[313] In sociology, the concept of *assimilation* refers to the construction of the identity and to the assimilation of external elements to pre-existing structures of social identity. By assimilationist approaches of integration, one implies that immigrants, or rather ethnic minorities [should] lose their cultural specificity and acquire the language and ways of living of the country they live in. See (King & Müller, 2013, pp. 23-25).

face the current and future challenges of migration, it is of great interest to uncover racist discourses based on "natio-ethno-cultural" differentiating judgements, which have an impact on students' dropout attitudes from school (Castel, 2007). In fact, more recently, T.A. Dijk condemns the weakening of the anti-racist and anti-discriminatory norm[314] in European countries, resulting from the ambivalent role of the media as regards the covering of terrorist attacks committed by radical Islamists, the banalisation of racist discourses conveyed by certain media outlets as well as political (non-only right-wing) parties. T. A. Dijk points to the role of the political and scientific "elites" and dominant parties, whose historic role in the dissemination of racist representations of the world is often kept quiet (justification of slavery, colonisation, Nazism….). Current anti-migration policies and discourses hold at the highest level of the political decision in France may be taken into account as shaping interactions and experiences at the school level because it impacts the notion of citizenship. In fact, the relation to school as an institution is impacted by problems that are actually deeply social and structural: equal access and equality to work, to school, to the police, to justice, to housing, to live (or not) one's religion in peace" (Bréville, 02/2018).

In turn, the role of education, and notably the part teachers can play in promoting anti-racist and multicultural principles can be undermined by a context of "social", "ethnic" and "academic" segregation that prevails in many schools (Durut-Bella & van Zanten, pp. 83 ff., Ben Ayed, 2015; Merle, 2012). Schools that are particularly affected by segregation and where the majority of students come from ethnic minorities and lower socio-economic backgrounds, working conditions tend to be difficult as well (high levels of violence, absenteeism, inexperienced teachers and lack of teachers, large classes, …). These schools constitute a fertile ground for a translation by teachers of their difficulties in ethnic terms (Dubet, 2002, p. 162; van Zanten, 2001, pp. 333-338), which may generate by their many students feelings of their difference or even disqualification. As for the teachers who have been trained to realise "equal opportunties", their emancipating ideal is associated with "feeling of failure, frustration and powerlessness" (Lorcerie, op. cit., p. 130). Many studies account for the banalisation of racist categories in schools used by school professionals. A report published by the Agency for the development of intercultural relations on racial discrimination (2000)[315] (quoted by Ben Ayed, *op.cit*. § 11) shows how discriminatory

[314] Disseminated by dominant international conventions and national constitutions.
[315] "Les discriminations raciales à l'école. Situation française en 2000. Initiative Raxen 2, Rapport thématique, ADRI. The report is the result of journalistic sources and academic research".

practices and discourses have increased in the educational system. These are exemplified by recurrent debates about *The French "secularism" (laicité)*, the use of stereotypes and the use of pejorative terms such as “beurs”[316] or “Africans” in order to designate specific minorities. At the structural level the over-representation of foreign students in low-prestige tracks and discriminatory admission practices add a further layer to the banalisation of racism.

Uncovering discursive structures that highlight a “differentialist” racism does not mean accusing some teachers of being racist. Most teachers might not even be aware that they are affected by and perpetuate certain structures, which are at the origin of “institutional racism” or “institutional discrimination” (Stauber and al., 2016, p. 105) and which affect students’ school experience. According to Lorcerie, this phenomenon is poorly analysed in France whereas it has been politically and officially acknowledged in Great Britain (cf. McPherson Report, 1999, quoted by Lorcerie, 2009, p. 70). Actually, many teachers in La Balikan say that they love working there. The majority of the teachers I interviewed have worked in this school for over three years, many of them more than eight years and do not consider working in other schools than “priority” ones. They say, they “feel useful”. To some extent, their perception of teaching a public “with deficits” is rewarding and puts them in the role of moral and cultural gatekeepers and highlights their dominant positions.[317] As analysed by van Zanten as well, their discourses that sometimes sound very expert often support a “professional rhetoric” that values their experience of the place and the students (van Zanten, 2001, p. 334).

3.4.1.2 The relation between discourses and practices, institutionalisation of differentiation and reproduction of dominant orders

School has been the place of the production and the transmission of a national culture, itself carrying a part of symbolism and ethnicity characterised by the process of putting historical happenings into certain narratives. These narratives were narratives of White and European domination, colonisation and exploitation of the world and non-European populations. They were characterised by a strong European ethnocentrism regarding the interpretation of

[316] Pejorative term, designing the second-generation French citizens of North-African descent.

[317] One teacher told an anecdote, which happened in a privileged school in the city centre. The anecdote was meant to illustrate why he prefers to work in a “priority school”. The student, who had just been reprimanded, looked at the teacher and said that he “does not care” because “his mum will pay for private lessons”. In this particular situation, the teacher‘s authority and usefulness were challenged insofar as the student can do “without him”. For underprivileged students, education is often seen as the only way to rise. In addition, they often cannot afford external support like private lessons.

historical facts (Bentouhami-Molino, 2015). From the perspective of the intersectional approach, social issues involving minorities (of colour) and concepts of "national identity" or "integration" should be considered against the backdrop of this specific historical context of domination. In this regard, minorities are "a group that has been the object of vexations and dispossession and which continues to endure the consequences dispossession owing to its vulnerability inherited from a long series of those" (*ibid*., p. 166). Actually, social structures continue to perpetuate these dominant orders of natives over immigrants while immigrants are much more likely to be poor[318] and students with migrant backgrounds continue to be disadvantaged even if their performances are equal to their "native" peers.

The National Council of Assessment of Education Policies reports that since 2000, "the gap in school performances between students with migrant backgrounds and natives has increased as have the social inequality at school. Along with Italy, France is among the OECD countries where those gaps have increased the most. With the same economic and social background, the gap in school performances between students with migrant background and natives is, in France, higher than the OECD average", (CNESCO, 2016, pp. 25 ff). Hence these issues are well-known by the French government.[319] However, they are given little attention as such.

The experience of a negative democratisation of education especially by young people with migrant backgrounds is well documented (King, Müller (ed.), 2013; Groh-Samberg, Jossin, Keller, Tucci, 2013; Castel, 2007; Lorcerie, 2003; Dubet, 1988)[320]. A recent study carried out by the United Nations Children's Fund (2016) finds that young people in the age range 6-18 living in "priority" areas "very early have the feeling that they are not entitled to the same rights as the others who do not" (Serge Paugam *in* Fache, 2016). Serge Paugam (2013), who coordinated the study, noticed that "children often mention the school system, in which they feel discriminated. Generally, they also testify that they fear adults more frequently than is the case in privileged areas. The answers given in this report also show that students particularly fear underperforming at school and experience a lack of self-esteem, a feeling that mirrors the

---

[318] Cf. the recent publication of the French independent agency for the observation of inequalities (*Obervatoire des inégalités*) on the 19th of July 2018 [https://www.inegalites.fr/Les-immigres-frappes-par-la-pauvrete-et-les-bas-revenus] 13/09/2018

[319]The National Council for the evaluation of the school system [Conseil national d'évaluation du système scolaire (Cnesco)] is an independent organisation created in 2013 by the French Government.

[320] King et *al*. summarise the different French and German attitudes towards youth with "migrant background" in the context of education: "*Zusammengefasst wird das Bild Jugendlicher mit Migrationshintergrund als defizitäre Andere in der deutschen Debatte vorwiegend mit einer kulturellen Andersartigkeit, in Frankreich hingegen mit einem Gefahren- und Gewaltpotenzial begründet. Die öffentliche Thematisierung erfolgt in Deutschland auf eher subtile Weise, in Frankreich hingegen wird Differenzen und Ablehnung gegenüber Einwanderer deutlicher formuliert*" (p. 100).

negative image of the *quartier* they live in[321]. Since the school La Balikan is located in a "priority area", negative ascriptions in teachers' discourses explaining "dropout issues" and related to the fact that students live in the *quartier* may be reflected from the potential negative effects they have on students' relation to school.

The segregated nature of numerous French schools is the result of political decisions, or rather, in the words of C. Ben Ayed of a "non-public policy". According to this author, "the rhetoric of the 'school mix' (*mixité scolaire*) has favoured the normalisation of a compassionate and pitiful discourse about underprivileged schools and imposed a liberal vision of school regulations" (Ben Ayed, 2009). This needs remembering when many teachers refer to the lack of school mix to justify their powerlessness towards the difficulty they meet with with the students. Some discourses naturalise these difficulties in terms of "communitarianism", which belief prevents them from considering students and their families as potential resources, providing critical feedback likely to improve the institution and capacity to be involved in institutional life (Charmes & Bacqué (ed.), 2016).

According to Dijk, the "racist discourse" is characterised by a "general strategy of representing oneself positively and the other negatively". It stresses difference, deviance and threat. By "ethnicising the social","ethnic arguments" substitute the social class and socio-professional categories to explain social phenomena (Alpe and al. (*op. cit*., p. 138), in this case the "*décrochage scolaire*". Moreover, subjects words, metaphors, hyperboles, euphemisms, refutation ("I am not a racist, but…."), and many other discursive and grammatical properties can amplify negative or positive opinions about "us" and "them" (Dijk, 2005, pp. 48-49; see also Dijk, 1993). G. Felouzis, who seeks to build an "objective measure" of "ethnic segregation" in French lower secondary schools, notes that "while the ethnic variable has become a category in its own right as regards the perception of education and of schools, it is not being analysed as such. Indeed, it does not pertain to the French conception of the citizenship, nor *a fortiori*, to available statistical categories" (Felouzis, 2003, p. 415). Yet, the reactivation of domination structures in representations, measures and daily routines is a crucial challenge in a place dominated by the meritocratic ideology according to which actors of the school ought to believe that "everything is possible". In his

[321] Original quotation: "Oui, les enfants interrogés dans ces quartiers se sentent plus souvent discriminés, harcelés parfois, et sont particulièrement angoissés à l'idée de ne pas réussir à l'école. Ils semblent enfermés dans une représentation négative d'eux-mêmes, qui résulte de l'image de ces territoires. […] Les enfants évoquent souvent le système scolaire, au sein duquel ils se sentent discriminés, infériorisés. Plus généralement, ils confient aussi avoir peur des adultes, plus en tout cas que dans les quartiers favorisés".

research on underprivileged higher secondary schools dominated by lower social milieus and and students with migrant backgrounds from North- and sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Portugal, Spain and Eastern Europe, Truong notes that students often refer to their "ethnic origins" and "otherness" as regards their place in the institution and the way they are considered and treated—"we are not like them"—(Truong, 2010, p. 73). Hence, a serious "ethnic challenge" continues to exist. This challenge has become particularly relevant as it links the "social and the racial questions"(*op. cit.*).

The ambivalence of teachers' testimonies is rooted in the fact that they are particularly aware of students' social and economic circumstances, as well as of the negative influence that the school segregation can have on their "mobilisation" at school.

From a different point of view, one could think about the impact of prejudice and discrimination in relation to the issue of "*décrochage scolaire*". Such a take would question teachers' individual and collective awareness of their positions as representatives of the dominant order. It would also invite teachers to interrogate themselves whether they are performing "symbolic violence". This, of course, is easier to say than to implement. Nevertheless, as Truong concludes about his experience to "teach Bourdieu" in a priority school located in a Parisian suburban area, initiatives enabling young people to understand how social domination works "participate in the dissemination of a shared knowledge that triggers interactions, unprecedented questions and answers and an indescribable complicity between the teacher and students, which may resemble the one shared by those who are said to be defeated but are conscious that they are still standing" (*op. cit.*, p. 77).

With the help of this theoretical background related to the concept of "ethnicity", I now analyse teachers' interpretations and representations of the concept "*décrochage scolaire*". The majority of teachers explain this issue with reference to students' "poor living conditions" and "cultural incompatibility". In a second step, the juxtaposition of these these representations with the perspective of a teacher who shares common biographical points with the students, allows me to identify old fears and misunderstanding hidden behind the discourses and practices of other teachers.

3.4.2 "Décrochage scolaire": the result of "poor living conditions" and "cultural incompatibility"

Working class students' ruptures "can only be understood from a systematic combination of familial, school and juvenile dimensions" (Millet & Thin, 2005, p. 17) as well as the role the

quartier plays in their upbringing (van Zanten, 2001). Often, however, the complex interaction between these different factors is difficult to grasp for teachers. This is illustrated by their ambivalent discourses on the phenomenon of "*décrochage scolaire*". These discourses combine arguments related to objective conditions such as the living conditions of families, which indeed play a negative role in the "realisation of the *skholè*" (Millet & Thin, *op. cit*.)[322] and subjective perceptions that reveal an "ethnicization" of the problem.

3.4.2.1 "I would say [thinks], I would say 20% of students have a comfortable life and 80% have a complicated life"

Millet and Thin (*op. cit*.) dedicate the first part of their book on "school ruptures" to families in working class urban areas. They set up three different categories, all of which are "affected by the social question" (reference to R. Castel, 1995). They point to the consequences of exile, the stigmatisation of the neighbourhood, the impact of professional and private insecurity and incidents (joblessness, professional devaluation, divorce, health issues), low (competent) network capital, and explain how these factors not only affect the parents' self-esteem but also how they are reflected in students' attitudes towards school. In addition these objective conditions undermine their capacity to provide their children with the support they need to cope with school duties, one may mention the influence of some parents' negative experience of school, which lead some of them to identify with their children (2005, p. 42). Millet & Thin mention the strained relations with other institutions (welfare, juridical, educational...) and how they influence the families' relations to the school (2005, p. 68).

Many teachers are aware of these conditions, although they are unable to grasp the complex interplay between the various factors and how they could possibly find a solution without being obliged to become personally involved (I developed this point hereinafter).

For instance, Mrs. Vaudrel interprets the phenomenon "*décrochage scolaire*" mostly as a result of missing support "at home". She argues that dropouts are heavily shaped by incidents and tragedies that happen in the family and are largely independent from the school itself or the families' social origins. This is confirmed by the research and refers to the contingency of

[322] In Ancient Greek, *skholè* means time-off, a temporal suspension versus *a-skholia*, which refers to material and daily necessity. This distinction is at the origin of a hierarchisation of the activity of "thinking" over the activity of "doing", especially as regards the hierarchization of school subjects but also regarding the orientation of underperforming students in the vocational track (Troger & Ruano-Borbelan, 2009; Decreau, 2019). Education in this context necessitates certain freedom, meaning *being cut off from real (economic) issues: of giving oneself time andputting temporal and practical urgency on hold* (Millet & Thin, 2005, p. 38, referring to Bourdieu, Médiations pascaliennes, 1997).

biographical incidents (Millet & Thin, op. cit., p. 17):

> *"You can have lots of qualities as well, great competences, be very studious and then something bad happens at home and you start to drop out," (Vaudrel, p. 15)*

Vaudrel refutes the interpretation in terms of "socio-professional categories", ignoring that school curricula contain a "pedagogic arbitrary" ("well, socio-professional categories…. I don't know how to say … […] someone who has no difficulty in understanding the material, who does not need help with their tasks, for someone like this things will work out, regardless of the milieu the person emanates from"). According to Vaudrel, everyone is "able to succeed", which is the myth that every teacher needs to believe in; sometimes children just need a "helping hand". However, Vaudrel also admits that "the school system is still difficult for someone who does not benefit from any support at home; and the fact is, in "underprivileged categories, problems are adding up" (Vaudrel, pp. 15-16) [323].

After a first meeting with the parents Mr. Jardin is able to "know" that is not "easy at home for the parents" and thus "for the children": "I would say [thinks], I would say 20% of students have a comfortable life and 80% have a complicated life" (Jardin, 2016, pp. 6-7)[324].

Mrs. Lejeune who is involved in the school commission dealing with financial support and scholarships is fully aware of the importance of poverty in the area, which, as showed by a recent official report, has a crucial impact on students' schooling and dropout trajectories (Delaye, 2015). In La Balikan, there are "more than 50% of students with needs-based scholarships, I even believe that we've passed the 60% mark. These are students who have huge difficulties at school, in addition to the difficulties they face at home. The families are often very large, and the kids don't have the chance to study in peace. It's true that we've got

[323] Original quotation: " Bah les catégories socio-professionnelles… Quand tu ...bah je sais pas, je sais pas comment dire...Quand à la maison, on peut pas t'aider, le système scolaire est quand même difficile. En fait, quelqu'un qui n'a aucune difficulté, qui pige tout, qui capte tout, qui n'a pas besoin d'aide, quel que soit le milieu ça va bien se passer. Mais il suffit que t'aies un petit peu de difficultés de compréhension, que t'es un petit moins scolaire, eh bah si à la maison on peut pas t'aider, on peut pas te soutenir, eh bah voilà rien que ça ça va être compliqué. Après, le décrochage scolaire, tu peux très bien aussi avoir de grandes qualités, de grandes compétences, être très scolaire et puis à la maison il y a quelque chose qui se passe et puis voilà, tu décroches. Et c'est pas pour autant que t'es pas capable de réussir. En fait il y a des gens qui ne réussissent pas parce qu'ils ne sont pas capables, parce qu'ils auraient besoin de plus de soutien, d'aide. T'as des gens qui décrochent parce qu'ils ont d'autres soucis à ce moment-là aussi quoi "

[324] Original quotation: "pas tous mais il y en a qui ont des conditions de vie qui sont quand même assez difficiles [...] je dirais… *[pense]*, je dirais que 20% des élèves ont une vie confortable et 80% qui ont une vie compliquée […] puis, après tu vois les parents, et tu sens que ce n'est pas facile à la maison. Et c'est des enfants… si tu vois sur les parents que c'est pas facile à la maison, tu sais que pour les gamins c'est pas facile."

serious cases here, families who are overly indebted and who've maybe 50€ per family member from which they live for a month (Lejeune, 2016, p. 1)[325].

Even Mr. Ferdinand must admit that, if he "does not know" (or rather, does not want to know, see 2.2.3) why students are "often" and "increasingly" absent, it is well known that sometimes students are asked to support their parents in domestic tasks or to look after their siblings (Ferdinand, p. 8).

In fact, Mr. Touba recalls a discussion in the teachers' room, which confirms that teachers are aware of the unfavourable learning conditions that many students face at home:

> *"We talked about this issue with some teachers, notably class teachers. And well, what they said confirmed this. Given that they have the information about students' families and everything, they told me that there are some students who must go home and who cannot learn because they have to look after the family, after their brothers and sisters, and hence they cannot work. The only place where they can work is here" (Touba, 2016, p. 2)*[326]

Aware of the precarious situations of their students, teachers immediately realise that the meritocratic ideology they believe in is hard to implement, because "equal opportunities" simply do not exist, especially in underprivileged areas (Duru-Bellat, 2009, 2006). This led to some teachers redefining their role, neglecting the aspect of social promotion through education and instead focussing on the integrative function of school (the transmission of norms and values):

> *"And succeeding does not mean taking A.*[327] *to Normale Sup*[328]*. For me that doesn't mean success. There is this question of success that we should interrogate. Succeeding, for me, is to provide these kids with social skills, to make them feel good when interacting with each other. I succeeded, if I make these kids feel comfortable in society and achieve that they respect each other,*

[325] Original quotation: "" Alors que ici on a plus de 50% de boursiers, je crois même maintenant qu'on dépasse les 60% de boursiers. Et donc des élèves en grosses difficultés scolaires, et puis difficultés familiales avec souvent des familles assez nombreuses, des gamins qui n'ont pas toutes les possibilités pour travailler sereinement […] c'est vrai qu'on a des situations super difficiles, avec des familles qui sont en surendettement total, et à qui il reste 50€ par personne pour vivre par mois".

[326] Original quotation: "on en parlait avec certains autres profs notamment des PP –des profs principaux. Et eux, eux ils disaient ça ouais. Vu que eux ils ont les informations sur les familles des élèves et tout, donc ils me disaient qu'il y en a qui par exemple, qui doivent rentrer à la maison qui ne peuvent pas travailler puisqu'ils doivent s'occuper de la famille, des frères des sœurs et du coup ils peuvent pas travailler. Donc le seul endroit c'est ici."

[327] A student with North-African background who is regularly absent and is underperforming.

[328] This elite university in Paris is one of the most prestigious and selective universities in France.

learn to live together and are sufficiently open-minded to do it. In that case, I consider I have successfully achieved my targets" (Jardin, p. 11)[329]

Indeed, there are good reasons to question the commonly applied notion of success, which limits itself to the successful completion of a prestigious education. Such a belief is the basic assumption of the so-called meritocratic ideology, which suggests that, at the beginning, "everyone has the same objectives". However, inspirations and thus objectives, are context-dependent and "not everyone dreams the same dream" (Duru-Bellat, 2014)[330]. At the same time, whilst well-intended and justified (is achievement of school titles everything in life?), Jardin's approach is based on another, potentially dangerous assumption (for his students, the achievement of "noble titles" is secondary to the transmission of "social skills") which may confine the students in their situations as certification is still very crucial for people's future. On the other hand, the decision to opt for the transmission of social skills and teaching methods that focus on group cohesion is also influenced by the context, such as "micro-violence" and "incivilities", which are more common phenomena in schools where the concentration of lower social milieus and migration is high. Nevertheless, studies investigating violence in schools invite to think of this phenomenon in relation to students' experiences of discrimination, the hopes they place in education and their experience of competition and selection ("love-hate relationship") as well as the role of the local environment in the construction of students' experience of education (Duru-Bellat & van Zanten, pp. 103-105). "Open-mindedness" as Jardin's objective to achieve with his students is a question of perspective; making his students "feeling comfortable to live in society" may require giving them the tools to be able to understand and express the reasons of their "negative participation".

Some teachers are resigned to the idea that their students have "internalised" failure and accepted it as a normal aspect of life.

"I think they are students who have been underperforming for some years…. […] and they got used to it, they don't want to see it either […] something that I can really understand. I don't know, I think they just drown. They get lost in the

[329] Original quotation: " Et réussir, c'est pas emmener Abdel Malik à normale sup. C'est pas ça pour moi réussir. Y a cette question de la réussite aussi pour moi qu'il faut réinterroger. Réussir, pour moi c'est se sentir bien avec les autres. Si j'ai réussi à ce que les gamins se sentent bien avec les autres, qu'ils se respectent, qu'ils apprennent à vivre ensemble et qu'ils arrivent à vivre ensemble et qu'ils soient suffisamment ouverts d'esperit pour pouvoir le faire, bah ça y a est j'aurai réussi mon boulot. [..] "

[330] Conference proceedings Marie Duru-Bellat, presentation entitled the "ecological paradox" ("Le Paradoxe écologique", 14/04/2014).

system and are overwhelmed by what is expected from them and this has been lasting for such a long time that school in itself makes no sense. I think that…. You see it makes no sense and for some life is rather fatalistic […] in our families we've got … well, I'll be a bricklayer as well. I wonder whether there is not some kind of a social determinism for some of them leading to think that anyway, what good will it do?" (Louvard, p. 6)[331].

Paradoxically, I will show below that teachers whose positioning is such ambivalent as it makes us believe that they have resigned with their students actually involve in trying to make school better for the students and for them. In the last chapter, I will also show how institutional and organisational conditions are more or less favourable to their initiatives and make them believe that the institution is changeable. In Mrs. Louvard's testimony as well there would be matters to debate on what is interpreted as a consequence of determinism: what is this thing that students "don't want to see" and why? Why do they apparently "give up"?

Students' social origins should not be overestimated, despite considerable inequalities between children from different socio-economic classes at the point they enter lower secondary education. In fact, the role of teachers, the school and the classroom environment are as relevant as the socio-economic background in explaining the different trajectories (Duru-Bellat & van Zanten, 2010, p. 46), or rather mitigating or amplifying inequality in education. The ways professionals interpret school issues, for example in mobilising ascriptions referring to migrant background, lower educational level of parents or the local area (*othering*, see above) may contribute to imperceptibly turning initial differences into social inequalities and their reproduction. Stauber et al. argue that "the fact that so many problems are not solved by social policy but have to be handled in schools is one reason why 'othering' could turn out as a (shortcut) problem analysis and coping strategy" (Stauber and al., 2016, p. 109).

[331] Original quotation: " Je pense que c'est des gamins qui sont un peu en échec depuis quelques années... en échec scolaire [...] c'est quelque chose comme une habitude et du coup on veut presque plus voir [...] ce qui pour moi est hyper compréhensible quoi. Je sais pas, je pense qu'ils se noient quoi. Ils se noient dans tout ça, dans le système, dans ce qu'on attend d'eux, ils donnent pas de sens à ce qu'on attend et depuis tellement longtemps que l'école en elle-même tout ça n'a aucun sens. Je pense que... tu vois y a aucun sens et une certaine fatalité aussi pour certains [...] Dans nos familles qu'on a... bah je serai maçon, machin. Je me demande s'il n'y a pas inconsciemment un déterminisme social chez certains qui fait que de toute façon à quoi ça sert ".

3.4.2.2 "I think it is the influence of culture and religion that prevents school from playing its role" (Lejeune, p. 11)

Beyond difficult family and economic issues, a majority of teachers refer to the irreconcilable attitudes and values of the parents on the one side and the school on the other. The *quartier* has become the "spatial visibility" of social and especially ethnic otherness" (Kirszbaum (eds.), 2015, p. 11). It is often described in negative terms underlining the differences, the deficiency, the incompatibility, the resistance. According to the teachers, the *quartier* symbolises the distance (and maybe even a rivalry) between the representatives of the school and the students and their families. This scheme reflects the famous pattern of "us and them" (Dijk, *op. cit*.). Social and economic precariousness associated with the lack of linguistic skills, religious and cultural "incompatibility" between institutional and family norms illustrate what Bentouhami-Molino calls the othering of precariousness ("*altérisation de la précarité*") (Bentouhami-Molino, 2015, p. 7).

Some testimonies inhere forms of "differentialist racism", which expresses the idea of "cultures" being fixed and incompatible (*ibid*., pp. 151-152)[332]. The cultural argument comes in when teachers refer to students' family "culture" to explain underperformance. Statements like, it is not in "their culture" to do homework showcase this specific form of racism (see below). To be clear, the argument here is not about accusing teachers of racism but seeks to highlight unconscious patterns in our daily discourses that are influenced by a race-related mindset. In this respect, certain "cultures" (which are often associated with specific nationalities, origins, skin colour, religions…) are discursively associated with assumingly typical behaviours, which are more or less compatible with school norms. Instead, an anti-racist approach would consist in seeing in "culture" nothing natural but something that is acquired and thus transformable. Yet, some teachers seem to have succumbed to racial argument in light of the difficulties they face in their daily interactions with students. The next example drawing on a French-German comparative research shows how the institutional settings and dominant cultural norms influence the way individual teachers imagine solutions that do not discriminate (female) students with Muslim background.

In the lower secondary school La Balikan Mrs. Lejeune and other PE teachers regularly witness that increasingly young girls are excused from sport lessons because of religious and

[332]" Le racisme différentialiste désigne l'irréductibilité des cultures entre elles et prend pour point d'appui la culture des immigrés […] le racisme différentialiste est un racisme qui s'ignore […] " ; plus loin : " la race est reconduite sous d'autres formes, celles de la composition identitaire fondée sur le clivage entre le 'nous' –ayant telle culture, telle tradition, telle religion, telle histoire d'émancipation- et le 'eux' avec leur culture […] " (Bentouhami-Molino. pp. 153-154)

cultural reasons. The conditions and formulations of the exemptions are "suspicious" insofar as "health issues" suddenly appear when young "Turkish" girls have reached puberty. Lejeune mentions the example of a young girl student of hers who asked her before the holiday, anticipating the forthcoming swimming classes, "whether it was possible to swim in swim shorts". After Lejeune answered negatively, saying that swim shorts were not even allowed for boys for hygiene reasons[333], the student brought an excuse note for the swimming lessons after the holiday (Lejeune, p. 11)[334]. The teacher mentions another similar case, in which she tried to convince the student that this behaviour might "disadvantage her in the future". In light of these anecdotes Lejeune has become convinced that "the ascendancy of culture and religion prevents the school from doing its job":

> *"You see for example, we are about to start the swimming season, and there is a student who brought me an excuse note that would exempt her from swimming lessons for the whole year. And well, I talked a bit with her and, I've clearly understood that … you see, I asked here what prevented her from coming to class and she told me: "I don't know." I told her: "Well, you know sometimes it can be a chlorine allergy, or problems with the ears [….]" And she told me: "I don't, I'm in good health." So I told her: 'Still, the doctor excused you from swimming for the whole year…"/"I don't know, Mum talked with the doctor and I was not allowed to listen. After their discussion I was told that I was not allowed to go to the swimming pool." And there was her friend standing nearby who said: "And yet you have been learning to swim for five years." And the girl can swim relatively well, she is not completely at ease, but she had been taking swimming classes. And I think that now as she is entering the lower secondary school, she is a little Turkish girl, she has reached puberty, she starts to develop a female shape, and therefore she is no longer allowed to go to the swimming pool. … The school may well say that knowing how to swim is an obligation for obtaining the leaving certificate for example, it belongs to the necessary competences in life, which to me seems quite essential. So I told her… I explained to her: "You see, later with your friends, on holiday, when you are a mother, and even when you are having a walk, you can save, save someone, teach people*

[333] In public pools in France only briefs and swimsuits are allowed. This is not the case in many other countries including Germany

[334] Original quotation: "Moi j'ai deux cas comme ça. Alors parce qu'il y en a une en fait elle m'a ramené et c'est marqué "allergique au chlore", mais c'est pareil c'est une petite turque qui avant de venir en fait quand j'ai donné les papiers pour aller à la piscine elle m'a demandé si c'était possible qu'elle ait en plus du maillot de bain une espèce de robe qui cache un peu les cuisses. Je lui dis "bah écoute ça me paraît ouais tu sais à la piscine c'est assez stricte, les garçons c'est un slip de bain. Ils n'ont pas le droit de short/slip caleçon et tout, donc pour les filles je ne suis pas sûre que ... Et donc elle m'avait posé cette question-là avant les vacances et là elle m'a apporté un certificat comme quoi elle est allergique au chlore. Donc là encore le médecin a mis quelque chose. Parce que dans l'autre c'est carrément "dispensée de natation", sans précision. Et là ce matin je suis allée à la piscine avec une autre classe, et c'est pareil là avec Estelle, ma collègue d'EPS et tous ses stagiaires là, et elle disait aussi qu'elle avait beaucoup d'absents déjà, elle en avait 5 d'absents je crois; et elle avait déjà une dispense aussi qui paraissait un petit peu, enfin qui paraissait pas très nette aussi donc euh… ".

how to swim, it's a great thing!." And she tells me "It's not my fault" and I say. "Yes yes I know, I just wanted to explain the importance of swimming." And she understands everything but in the end, there is the dominant role of culture and religion, which prevents school from doing its job" (Lejeune, pp. 10-11[335]).

For Lejeune, the reason for the exemption lies in the fact that the young Turkish girl is developing into a woman and thus was told by her family to abandon swimming lessons. The girl, aware of her situation, tried to avoid her teacher's questioning: "Well, I don't know, Mum spoke with the doctor. I was not allowed to listen. I'm not allowed to go the swimming lessons." She is stuck between two opposite authorities, the authority of the school and the authority of her parents and family. As an underage student, she cannot do anything against her family's agenda/will (and no one can challenge the doctor's signature). At the same time, the girl has to face the discontent and mistrust of her teacher, as well as the incomprehension of her friend ("And yet, you have already been swimming for five years?"). Lejeune has the feeling that "cultural and religious" forces prevent teachers from "doing their job" while the institutional authority is challenged by familial manoeuvres supported by a high representative of medical authority.

In the light of a German comparison addressing the same thematic, one is able to identify how this positioning is embedded in French nation-cultural and institutional frames.

Romaine Didierjean has written her PhD thesis on young Turkish girls in France (Alsace) and Germany (Baden-Württemberg) and their practices in physical and sports activities. In another article, she underlines the lack of French research and research tools in this field when compared to Germany. Her contribution firstly discusses the idea and prejudice according to which the Turkish "community" would be as homogeneous as often assumed. A similar

[335] Original quotation :" Tu vois par exemple là on commence les cycles de natation, et il y a une élève là qui est venue m'apporter une dispense à l'année de natation. Et donc en discutant un petit peu avec elle, eh bah ouais j'ai clairement compris que...tu vois ouais je lui demande quelles sont les contre-indications, elle me dit "bah je sais pas". Je lui dis "bah tu sais des fois tu peux être allergique au chlore, ou avoir des gros problèmes d'oreilles […]". Et elle me dit "bah non je suis en très bonne santé". Donc je dis "bah du coup le médecin il t'a donné une dispense mais... / "oh bah j'sais pas c'est maman à la fin elle a discuté avec le médecin, moi j'avais pas le droit d'écouter bon bah voilà, j'ai pas le droit d'aller à la piscine". Et il y avait sa copine à côté qui dit: "bah oui pourtant t'en as fait cinq ans de piscine et tout". Et donc la gamine elle sait relativement bien nager, elle est pas encore complètement bien à l'aise mais elle a fait pas mal de natation. Et je pense que maintenant elle rentre en 6ème, c'est une petite turque elle devient pubère et c'est vrai qu'elle est assez grande, elle commence à avoir des formes et tout: interdiction d'aller à la piscine. Et donc c'est vrai que bah ce genre de truc-là l'école a beau dire que savoir nager c'est obligatoire pour avoir son brevet par exemple, ça fait partie voilà des compétences pour la vie future d'adulte qui me paraissent un peu essentielles quoi. Donc c'est ce que je lui disais, je lui expliquais: "bah tu vois toi plus tard avec tes copines, tes copains en vacances, quand tu seras maman, quand même tu te balades, tu peux te sauver, sauver quelqu'un, apprendre à nager à des gens c'est quelque chose qui est super quoi". Et puis elle me dit "ah bah c'est pas de ma faute", et puis je lui dis "ouais ouais bah je sais, hein je t'explique juste les choses et tout". Et elle comprend les choses la gamine mais voilà, je pense qu'il y a l'emprise de la culture et de la religion qui fait que là l'école peut pas jouer son rôle".

simplistic discourse prevailed at La Balikan and was perpetuated not only by (White) professionals but also by parents, students or school staff migrant backgrounds. She stresses the fact that in France like in Germany discourses accusing a fictive[336] Turkish "community" of "communitarianism" and "unwillingness to integrate", notably by refusing to learn the language, are legion. They target Turkish men as well as women (Didierjean, 2015, p. 105). In her work, she highlights national and local differences between both countries and how they affect the way people look at and deal with the practice of physical activity at school. These differences impact the way young "Turkish" girls and their families elaborate their relations to sport teaching at school. Didierjean reminds the reader of the differences in the conception of PE classes in France and Baden-Württemberg: while in France the Republican school approach tends to value mixed education, in Baden-Württemberg single-sex sports classes dominate. In Baden-Württemberg moreover, young girls are allowed to wear headscarves at school while in France, they are not (*ibid*., pp. 112-113).[337] Generally, the position teachers take with regard to mixed or single-sex sports classes mirrors the national regulations and norms: French teachers tend to disapprove single-sex classes while German teachers find it pedagogically relevant to separate boys and girls during puberty. Didierjean quotes a German teacher from Stuttgart who finds mixed-swimming lessons to be detrimental for the participation of girls in general, and specifically young Turkish girls. While the above mentioned French PE teacher Lejeune feels helpless about the situation of her student but does not see other potential solutions, Didierjean reports a German teacher who cannot understand how one would prefer the enforcement of "Republican values" (mixed swimming class) to the teaching of such an "essential" competence like swimming (*ibid*., pp. 114-116). Didierjean describes in her research occasional (successful) initiatives of French PE teachers who negotiate with the municipality's official regulations on swimming classes in order to reduce the amount of "fake" excuse notes and facilitate the participation of young Muslim girls. To conclude, and notwithstanding these isolated French initiatives which go against the norm of mixed sport classes, Didierjean provides evidence of the role of the institution and the national model of integration in the way which sports teachers look at "Turkish" girls in the context of the national school system and deal with it. French teachers' positions tend to be dominated by the official discourse driven by the concept of a *Republican integration*, which emphasises the equality of all citizens before the state. Such a conception, however,

[336] In reality, the Turkish community is a very heterogeneous group, having as their only communality "a lived or inherited migration" (Didierjean, p. 107).
[337] This rule does not apply to teachers.

ignores the social and cultural differences and their consequences as regards equal opportunities to participate in the society (*Teilhabechancen*) (King & Müller *op. cit*., p. 19)[338].

The assumption that cultural and religious forces are challenging the institutional authority can be put into perspective with the increasing time students spend at school. As T. A. Dijk writes, "for children, the role of schooling in societal reproduction is forceful because of a relative lack of alternative modes of influence, at least in some domains. True, initial socialisation in the family, interaction with peers, children's books, and especially television - today one would add the role of the internet and social networks - are also important sources of social knowledge and beliefs" (op. cit., p. 197). However, the time spent at school, or rather the time that is organised by the school, including mandatory classes and non-mandatory activities (private classes, excursions….)[339], has been increasing over the years. The time spent by French students at school is among the highest in the OECD[340]. Despite this, the symbolic competition between school and students' "community" is, in the eyes of many teachers, unfavourable to the school. Many are convinced that the relevance of (formal) education is losing ground. This happens at the children's expenses, "who are not able to understand, at their age", "who are not studious", whose "parents don't tell them that school is important" or if they do, "with a slap" (Jardin, p. 7)[341]. If parental expectations and educational styles may be, indeed, at the origins of differences in students' performances and ability to conform to the expectations and norms set by the school[342], it does not lead to question how this experience of the "importance of school" is constructed by the students.

---

[338] On the contrary, the authors argue that the German discourse understands integration more as a struggle for social and cultural opportunities to participate (*Teilhabechancen*). Doing so, however, it tends to understand integration as adjustment of social and cultural norms instead of a question of civic rights (*ibid*.).

[339] The "open school" (*école ouverte*) addresses people in "disadvantaged" areas who do not or rarely go on holiday. According to the official discourse, the project aims to promote their "social and school integration" and thus create "equal opportunities". It also aims to improve the image of the school and "create different relations between students, school staff and families." It can lead to "a change in pedagogical relations" and "make students incite to learn" [http://eduscol.education.fr/cid111985/l-operation-ecole-ouverte.html] 17/09/2017.

[340] "Regard sur l`éducation 2017", OCDE, pp. 350 ff.

[341] Original quotation : " Parce qu'ils ne sont pas capables de comprendre encore, à leur âge, et c'est normal, à leur âge j'étais pas non plus… ils ne sont pas scolaires, ils n'ont pas de parents à la maison qui leur disent l'école c'est important, l'école c'est important, l'école c'est important. Ou ils leur disent ça comme ça, une claque et puis voilà c'est fini. Et donc du coup, ça ça suffit pas ."

[342] There have been attempts to analyse educational inequality through parental educational styles (Durut-Bellat and van Zanten, *op.cit*. pp. 157 ff.) and more particularly, by looking at the ways parents are punishing their kids (with regards to school matters). Kohn (1959) mentions "two different educational philosophies, two different models of socialization irreducible to each other, which impact, however, the capacity to adapt and conform to school norms." This approach in terms of different socialisation modes based on different linguistic codes in upper and lower social classes has been developed by Basil Bernstein and the sociologists of London University in the 1970s; for a review of these works and their critics, see Forquin, 1979, p. 90 ff. (French).

Contrary to Jardin's assertion, research shows that students are generally aware of the importance of education and particularly its instrumental aspects. However, they, of course, might not have well defined professional projects yet. Some teachers gave me the opportunity to ask students what meaning school had for them. I can recall here a discussion in the German class of Mrs. Dubuy (4th grade, 13-14 year-old students). Before the discussion I made sure that the participants understood the purpose of my research, that there were no "good" or "bad" answers, and that Mrs. Dubuy and I were not going to judge them. Despite the presence of the teacher, some students came up with quite timid but "frank" remarks,. Some kids answered as follows: School serves to "earn money"; "find a job"; "become a hairdresser". Others said, "I'm afraid of speaking to the teacher"[343] or "it is possible to not like school but like going to school". These students also participated in a school exchange with Germany. As we organised a discussion about similarities and differences, French students emphasised the looming threats of punishment and the strict discipline at La Balikan, contrary to the German school, where they had the feeling that students were "free" and more "autonomous", and that "teachers did not constantly reprimand them". Having said this, students maintained that in France the atmosphere "depends on the teacher" as well (fieldwork notes, 08/02/2016).

A recent study that aims to analyse the expectations and values of students in lower secondary schools has produced similar results. The instrumental vision of school comes first while values and expectations as regards the socialising role of school are ranked second (Safont-Mottay, Oubrayrie-Roussel & Prêteur, 2010). The authors consider the role of gender, peers and teachers more important than the impact parents may have on the students' relations to formal education and to school as a place where identities are processed and negotiated[344].

---

[343] In the light of Bourdieu's theory of the language as conveyor of a "symbolical violence" which distinguishes individuals from a class and domination perspective, it is noteworthy that this student said: "j'ai peur de m'exprimer au professeur", which is grammatically incorrect.

[344] For a more detailed analysis of the subjective relevance of school and formal education in underprivileged suburban schools (*Brennpunktsschule*), see Rohlfs (YEAR). In these schools, attitudes towards education are characterised by a "strong heterogeneity". However, a significant majority of students attending these schools are "aware of the key function of school performance and corresponding qualifications for the opening of future professional perspectives. In his research, Rohlfs also notices a gender variance, particularly between boys and girls with migrant backgrounds, see (Tucci, 2014).

3.4.2.3 "Things have changed a lot within 13 years […] to the negative […] well now, when you look at the classrooms, it's not the same kind of faces…"

This section illustrates how educational issues are "ethnicised" along with the process of segregation. The language symbolises the symbolic tensions between both school and the *quartier* perceived as rival authorities ("especially the Turkish families"). This "issue" is connected to the historical construction of the French "Ecole de la République" in the 19th and 20th. Local languages and dialects illustrated the existing tensions between the French National Community and Regional identities, between the Church and the State, and between the promoters of schools reserved for the elite and the ones in favour of the democratisation of education (Bouton, 1999). The difference between these historical battles and todays linguistic struggles is minor. Some teachers tend to distrust students communicating in Arabic or Turkish, as teachers in the past used to distrust students communicating in their local vernacular. They consider the languages spoken by the Muslim community as threat to "national values", which the school is meant to convey in French.

However, discourses are also ambivalent in which many teachers are aware that the institutional language triggers many students' dropout.

> *"… it's very cosmopolite, yes, and there are often large families, families where the language spoken at home is not always French, hence, kids when they arrive at school, it's not easy, because the norms and social codes at home and at school differ from each other, and especially the Turkish community, there is still an increasing communitarianism in the quartier, and it is true that I hear a lot of students who speak Turkish between themselves in the schoolyard, and it is also true that we ask them to work the whole day in French, to think in French. So it is not always easy for them (Lejeune, p. 2)*[345].

The interviews that I conducted as part of this study show different apprehensions of "communitarianism" –understood as a pejorative term referring to the homogenous and autonomous character of "communities" based on their assumed or real nation-cultural belonging or religion. To some, like Mrs. Lejeune and Mr. Ferdinand (p. 5), communitarianism at school has "increased", to others, like Mr. Jardin ("maybe because of

[345] Original quotation: **"** Oui voilà c'est très cosmopolite, ouais et puis des familles souvent assez- ouais familles nombreuses, des familles où la langue parlée à la maison n'est pas tout le temps le français, donc, du coup, c'est vrai que c'est des gamins quand ils arrivent à l'école des fois c'est pas évident, parce que c'est pas les mêmes codes, et surtout la communauté turque il y a quand même une montée dans le quartier du communautarisme, et c'est vrai que moi j'entends beaucoup d'élèves qui parlent turc entre eux dans la cour, donc c'est vrai qu'après nous on leur demande de travailler toute la journée dans la langue française, de réfléchir en langue française. Donc c'est pas toujours facile pour eux."

football), it has declined[346]. The absence of real consensus on this question, and because, again, of the prejudice and interactive components it entails, speaks for its necessary debate on the backdrop of knowledge provided by the social sciences. Providing the actors with elements likely to uncover and graps the complexity and potentially dangerous effects of common terms such as "communitarianism" or "identity" is needed to realise the responsibility and capacity of institutions to "affiliate" or "disaffiliate" certain groups (Castel, 2009, 2007). It would help to understand deeper reasons of "community withdrawing" related to history and conditions trigerring by certain population "humiliation and disregard" while they aspire to being considered equal and have similar chances of ascension, integration, social and self-realization than anyone else whatever origins, religion and place of residence (Lorcerie, *op. cit*.).

In La Balikan, students speaking their native language in school is sometimes seen as a sign of institutional defeat, sometimes teachers consider as an institutional mistake to treat students equally who, however, do not have the same mastery of French. The discourses seem to distinguish, however, between the "legitimate" victims of the system (the newcomers) and the students who have been living on the *quartier* for many years and "defy" the school's authority.

Mrs. Louvard, for instance, is an advocate of the Freinet pedagogy, which refrains from attributing grades to students. She blames a system of assessments that disregard the fact that some students just arrived from abroad and are still learning French when they are placed in an ordinary class. Although some kids learn very quickly, the system of assessments can be very discouraging for many of them (who sometimes used to be good students in their country of origin): "Generally, they receive bad marks, since they do not master the language. So can you imagine this? You get marks like 3/20, 4/20, it's very humiliating!" (Louvard, p. 7)[347]

---

[346]Contrary to Mr. Ferdinand, Mr. Jardin observes a decline of communitarianism: "[…] il n'y a plus de communautarisme. Et quand je suis arrivé il y avait des communautarismes. Du communautarisme entre les élèves, par exemple les élèves pouvaient se prendre la tête sur Israël et la Palestine, sur les Juifs, et il y avait un discours raciste d'une communauté à une autre (notamment la communauté turque qui était en dehors des autres communautés, etc.). Et Aujourd'hui, c'est hyper bien accepté. J'ai un peu peur de dire ça je vais dire c'est à cause du football, j'en sais rien; mais y a plus de... c'est hyper accepté quoi. Je crois que les élèves se considèrent comme des élèves Français quoi, vraiment. Chose que j'ai l'impression qu'il y a huit ans il n'y avait pas ça " (Jardin, p. 4).

[347] Original quotation: "On a des élèves qui arrivent en France à 11 ans qui parlent pas français. On parle pas français à la maison. A 11 ils sont capables … on en a vu des gamins primo-arrivants qui à 11 ans... Ça dépend de leur langue d'origine, on sait bien que suivant les transferts de langues certains sont plus compliqués que d'autres... bah forcément ils maitrisent pas la langue française. Bah ils se tapent quoi comme notes? Bah les mauvaises notes puisqu'ils maitrisent pas la langue. Bah t'imagines t'as des trois, des quatre c'est hyper humiliant".

The most ambivalent figure is perhaps Mr. Ferdinand, who describes a constantly worsening situation at La Balikan for the past 13 years. This is characterised by the "decrease of the level of performance", "increasing absenteeism" and "turbulent" misbehaviour. At the origin of this evolution, there is the "ghettoisation"[348] of local schools, which seem to have been invaded by practicing Muslims. Ferdinand, however, insists: he "does not say this because he is a racist" but because "it is fact". Although Ferdinand might "not be a racist", his argumentation follows the typical discursive structure of "a racism ignoring itself" (Bentouhami-Molino, *op. cit.*) or underlying racism. This means that the coherence of his discourse is based on the incrimination of students' ethnic characteristics, which he blames for the negative evolution of life at school. He does not evoke the responsibility of policy makers, privileged parents' strategies avoiding the school, or specific school structural and organisational settings in the production of situations and judgements according to which students might feel discredited:

> *"Yes, the situation has changed a lot within the last 13 years [….]. But, of course, to the negative. At the time, the students' level of performance was better. Some sort of ghettoisation has implemented itself at the school. This is clear. The population has changed at the schools. It was very obvious this year, during the Eid celebration. This was in October or September, I believe. …, per class, I was left with more or less an average of five students, meaning that there were about twenty students who were celebrating the Eid. When I arrived here, it was on average five students who were absent. Already in this regard things have changed a lot. When I arrived here I observed a blending of cultures in all classes. That is to say, half of the kids were white, almost a quarter of North-African decent, another quarter of Turkish decent and the rest was were students with African origins. Today, this is no longer the case. You've got one third of Black students, a big third of Turks, it changed a lot. It's not because I'm racist that I'm saying this, not at all, it's really things I can observe, and I find that it's much more disruptive than before " (Ferdinand, p. 4)*[349]

[348] Duru-Bellat & Van Zanten (*op. cit*., pp. 96-97), provide two "extreme configurations of schools of a scale on which secondary schools can be situated according to their typical feature: top-ranking schools (établissement d'excellence) and the working-class ghettos". However, certain authors, like L. Wacquant, refuse to qualify French post-industrial and "priority" areas (in which these schools are located) as "ghettos" compared to the North-American situation and given to their historical functions and current characteristics (Wacquant, 2007).

[349] Original quotation: " Et oui ça a beaucoup changé, en 13 ans, j'en parlais encore en début d'année là. Ca a énormément changé. Mais bien sûr, en négatif quoi. Déjà le niveau des élèves était meilleur, à l'époque. Et il y a une certaine forme de ghettoïsation qui s'est installée ici. C'est clair. La population a changé, dans les collèges. Là où ça a été flagrant, quand il y a eu l'Aïd, cette année. Je ne sais plus quand c'était, c'était au moins d'Octobre ou Septembre enfin bref, euh par classe il me restait grosso modo en moyenne cinq élèves. C'est-à-dire qu'il y en avait pratiquement une vingtaine qui fêtait l'Aïd. Quand je suis arrivé ici, c'était en moyenne cinq élèves d'absents. Donc t'as vu, rien que ça ça a énormément changé. Quand je suis arrivé ici il y avait un mélange, je dirais, culturel, dans toutes les classes. C'est-à-dire qu'il y avait la moitié des élèves qui étaient Blancs, t'avais un petit quart qui était d'origine magrébine, après t'avais encore un petit quart qui était turc et puis des élèves d'origine africaine. Là maintenant quand tu regardes les classes ah bah c'est plus du tout les

This negative evolution is directly linked with the skin colour of students in the classroom and an assumed domination of Islam[350]. Beside this, Mr. Ferdinand is alarmed by the "increasing number of students" who arrive at La Balikan and "do not master the French language at all, or very badly". "They are directly thrown in here" and, "inevitably, the level drops" –which may refer to a critic to upper authorities responsible for the distribution of newcomers. He seems irritated by students, who need extra time to learn and understand French as they prevent the teacher from paying attention to the rest of the class (Ferdinand, p. 5)[351]. For Ferdinand, there was a golden age of multiculturalism at school though ("at that time, students really hung out together, even if they were teasing each other. I remember Turkish and North African kids calling each other 'couscous' and 'kebab' and it remained good-natured"). Contrary to Mr. Jardin (see above), Mr. Ferdinand is now alarmed by he considers as "voluntary" segregation along community lines (to understand: no racist jokes anymore between students ?). Today students form ethnic groups ("especially the Turkish kids") and emphasise differences "by staying among themselves and speaking their mother tongue" (Ferdinand, 2016, p. 5)[352]. Later in the interview, he qualifies the diversity of students' origins as "a wonderful thing" ("four years ago my class was the most diverse ever; 25 students, 25 different nationalities. It was great", Ferdinand, p. 10)[353]. He also passionately explains how he likes to digress, during math classes, about Thales and other famous Ancient scholars. He

---

mêmes faciès. Allez t'as un bon tiers d'élèves Black quand même, t'as un bon tiers d'élèves Turcs, ça a beaucoup changé. Et c'est pas par racisme, que je dis ça, du tout c'est vraiment une observation que je fais, et je trouve que c'est beaucoup plus turbulent qu'avant, ça c'est clair."

[350] Interestingly, during this period of the Eid, the educational assistants often told me that the students who were properly fasting came to school despite being exhausted. At the same time, they told about students who pretended to fast during Ramadan in order to skip school, or at least to skip certain classes. Generally, the parents were not aware of these attitudes, which they disapproved. The Ramadan was used like any other kind of secular motives for playing truant (faire ,l'*école buissonière*), a practice as old as compulsory schooling (Douat, 2010).

[351] Original quotation: "Plus le niveau scolaire qui a beaucoup baissé, parce que le niveau scolaire quand même on a beaucoup d'élèves qui arrivent aussi de leur pays, qui sont directement balancés ici, et qui ne maîtrisent pas la langue française. Ou très mal. Très mal. Donc forcément, ça on en a de plus en plus. Et forcément bah le niveau scolaire c'est forcément catastrophe quoi. Et encore j'en ai une dans la classe dont je suis prof principal, elle arrive du Burkina Faso quoi, elle est arrivée chez moi…bah elle a du mal à parler quoi ; enfin si, elle parle, mais elle comprend pas bien les textes quoi. Elle va lire les textes mais elle va rien comprendre quoi."

[352] Original quotation: "Les élèves maintenant ils ne se mélangent plus, ils restent vraiment dans leur communauté. A l'époque, ça se mélangeait vraiment. Même si ça se chambrait ; je m'en rappelle bon les Turcs et les Magrébins se traitaient de " couscous " et les autres de " kébab " et c'était … voilà, ça restait bon enfant quand même. Maintenant les Turcs ils restent entre eux, et chose que j'ai remarquée cette année encore en plus, c'est qu'ils parlent entre eux, dans l'établissement scolaire, dans leur langue maternelle. Avant ça, ça ne se faisait pas. Sans arrêt je suis obligé de dire aux élèves: "non, non les gars, on est au collège, on parle en français".

[353] Original quotation: **"**je trouve ça riche quand il y a vraiment de la mixité, je trouve ça vraiment très très chouette. J'avais une classe il y a 4 ans, c'était génial, je crois que c'est la classe où il y a le plus de mixité dans ma carrière. 25 élèves, 25 nationalités différentes. C'était génial. Bon avec quand même beaucoup d'Africains, beaucoup de gens d'origine africaine mais aucun du même pays, et ça c'était génial."

likes to observe students' surprise when they realise on the map that these people come from the same territory that is nowadays Turkey. What happened between a time percepted as a "golden age" of multiculturalism and today? In fact, between 2012 and 2016 (referring here to above-mentioned "four years ago"), Mr. Ferdinand experienced and was shaped by a series of attacks committed by radical Islamists in and around Paris. He has also experienced the effects of ever stricter security policies, the state of emergency, the rise of anti-Islam and anti-immigration discourses (Dijk, *op. cit.*), and discourses defending a (French) "national identity". The allusion of Mrs. . Dubuy laden with implicit to "linguistic issues" may be understood with regard to these evolution: "there is an integration issue [...] there is something that we don't get here [...] we are in the *laicité*, in all these things"[354] (fieldwork notes, 10/06/2016).

Mr. Jardin, who helped to introduce the above-mentioned special class "French as a second language"[355], notices "a big linguistic problem". Although he considers this to be a "general problem" (apparently one that concerns also French-speaking students), he stresses the school's particularities that are rooted in the fact of the school being embedded in a priority education area and underprivileged suburb, which is home to underprivileged social classes with migrant backgrounds. In our school "there are students who are not bilingual" (Jardin, p. 1)[356].

"Linguistic issues" or deficits are associated by many teachers with "cultural" incompatibility and the refusal to adapt to school norms.

> *"True, we always have students,… in the third grade…who still have difficulties with the French language, some have learning issues… working and doing their homework is not among the values taught at home… these are not their values" (Lejeune, pp. 25-26)*[357]

"Doing homework is constraining", "they don't feel like working, it's not really motivating". Ferdinand compares his own education with his students' who are "left to their own devices".

---

[354]" problème d'intégration ," " il y a quelque chose qui nous échappe ", "on est dans la laïcité, dans toutes ces choses là "

[355] Symbolising the contradictions of the institution, i.e. measures taking into account individual issues in a setting that actually aims to promote equal treatment in order to avoid stigmatisation, this measure has been criticised by a school inspector because of the imprecise categorisations it created.

[356] Original quotation: "Concrètement voilà quand je suis arrivé ici j'ai constaté qu'il y avait un grand problème de maitrise de la langue de la part des élèves qui étaient dans le collège mais qui est un problème général - mais qui ici est plus accentué puisqu'on est dans un établissement REP, qu'il y a des élèves qui sont dans un bilinguisme non maitrisé [..]"

[357] Original quotation: " c'est vrai qu'ici on a toujours eu des élèves ouais là bah tu vois je t'ai dit en 3ème, difficultés avec la langue française, difficultés un peu d'apprentissage et puis voilà, travailler, faire les devoirs c'est pas les valeurs de la maison, c'est pas leur culture et tout donc ".

They "prefer" "hanging out in the *quartier* until way too late at night" rather than studying or "going to the homework assistance", which is offered by the school (Ferdinand, pp. 8-9)[358]. Discourses mix behaviours non-conform to school culture, familial "values" and negative judgments of many aspects of parental education in terms of lifestyle (eating, sleeping habits) over which, however, they have no control ("there are other things…at home they don't work … … they don't sleep […] Ask the kids when you'll see them, what they eat, how long they sleep. You'll see, it's incredible", (Jardin, p. 7)[359]. Underperformance develops into a vicious circle. Since students are lagging behind in school, they prefer to not go at all and instead to stay at home rather than "being confronted with their own failure" (Lejeune, p. 19)[360].

3.4.2.4 "It's rare that [parents] answer an injunction, well I mean to say an invitation by the teacher" (Jardin, p. 9)

Linguistic issues and the "cultural attitudes" that are associated with them are not only perceived as a reason of students' nonconformist behaviour but also seen as an obstacle impeding the communication between teachers and parents. Parents do not want to come in because "they do not feel like doing so", because "they have to look after little brothers and sisters" or because "they do not speak French […] especially the Turkish women. […] and the "fathers are never available". According to Mr. Ferdinand the school does "a lot" to improve communication with the parents. When he failed to specify what exactly the school was

---

[358] Original quotation: "Et puis le fait de devoir travailler c'est pas très motivant pour eux, ils n'ont pas envie. Faire des devoirs à la maison aussi, c'est contraignant. Apprendre des leçons, c'est contraignant. Faut bien voir que quand j'étais ici, moi aussi quand j'étais au collège surtout, si je finissais à 5h, à 5h30 j'avais intérêt d'être à la maison, à faire mes devoirs. Eux ici ils sont livrés à eux-mêmes quoi. Tu les vois ils vont zoner dans le quartier jusqu'à pas d'heure quoi. Donc voilà ils rentrent pas chez eux faire leurs devoirs donc après, ça s'accumule ça s'accumule et puis au bout d'un moment ils n'ont plus du tout envie quoi. Alors en 6ème ça va encore, c'est à partir de la 5ème qu'on voit le décrochage vraiment s'installer quoi. Parce qu'à partir de la 5ème là faut vraiment faire l'apprentissage de leçons à la maison, vraiment faire son travail à la maison pour pouvoir réussir et c'est là que ça décroche quoi "/" Ah ouais et là aussi c'est contraignant. Les aide-aux-devoirs le soir par exemple. Faut rester au collège, du coup ils ne sortent pas avec leurs copains, donc euh non. " (Ferdinand, pp. 8-9)

[359] Original quotation: "Après c'est d'autres choses quoi, comme à la maison y a pas de travail… bah pour fixer les savoirs... comme ils dorment pas. […]J'ai écouté une conférence qu'est géniale là, au collège de France, de je ne sais plus comment il s'appelle le mec qui fait ça, c'était un neuro-psychologue, qui démontre qu'en fait, là ils ont des preuves assez concrètes là-dessus, que le sommeil est l'un des éléments les plus importants pour la fixation des savoirs […] Demande-leur aux gamins quand tu vas les voir, qu'est ce qu'ils mangent, combien de temps ils dorment. Tu vas voir c'est hallucinant. [..] ".

[360] Original quotation: " Ne voit plus l'intérêt de venir à l'école, il voit pas ce que ça lui apporte et du coup ça peut même être un refus de venir à l'école, d'être confronté à son échec et donc je ne viens plus en cours, je reste à la maison, je sèche je travaille plus ".

doing, I asked about the existence of interpreters: "Yes, there are some. But it's not always easy to have them available" (Ferdinand, p. 8)[361].

Sometimes, the older brother or sister serves as the intermediary, which can raise problems in terms of 'effective information' that gets to the parents[362]. According to Mr. Jardin, it is particularly difficult to meet the parents of the most prominent truants. Mr. Jardin's particular choice of the words illustrates the ambivalent relation between teacher and parents, while the former seeks to preserve his dominant position:

> *"I don't invite the parents often; well, invite them … you mean meeting them? I don't meet them often. Well, I won't meet them once a week. But I still meet them if there is a problem… Recently I saw Abdessamad's sister for the parents-teacher meeting, his mother was not there. I try to see those parents I believe I need to see, but it's really difficult. It's very rare that they answer an injunction, well, I mean to say an invitation, by the teacher. For the parents who accept the role of the school there is no problem. Maëlis's parents, for example… I'm sure I will never see them" (Jardin, p. 9)*[363]

Mr. Jardin's slip of the tongue is interesting. He speaks of "injunction" instead of "invitation", which is rather the reasons for "meeting" the parents. As Jardin said, it is difficult to see the parents whose children's behaviour is problematic. This difficulty is particularly present among the working classes and even more so among families with migrant backgrounds. At the origin of this phenomenon, there are material conditions, parents' personal experience of school, cultural misunderstandings, and also negative anticipation of moralising and disqualifying discourses and attitudes from teachers (Duru-Bellat & van Zanten, 2007, p. 170).

---

[361] Original quotation: **F : "** On a fait beaucoup ici, beaucoup, beaucoup [for the parents]. Le problème c'est que les parents ne viennent pas systématiquement, parce qu'ils n'ont pas envie de venir, parce qu'ils doivent s'occuper des petits frères et des petites sœurs et donc forcément ils ne peuvent pas venir. Ou alors d'autres parce que voilà, ils ne maîtrisent pas la langue française. Ca c'est vrai, je suis allé à la réunion parents-profs qui a eu lieu cette année, je suis allé voir un élève en lui demandant " pourquoi tes parents ne viennent pas? ", " bah vous savez monsieur maman elle ne parle pas le français donc elle va pas vous comprendre ".Voilà. Il y en a beaucoup. Notamment chez les femmes Turques, il y a beaucoup de mamans qui ne parlent pas français donc elles ne vont pas venir. Et les papas ils ne sont jamais disponibles donc…/ **C :** -Mais vous avez des interprètes, maintenant…/ **F :**- Ouais il y en a mais bon, c'est pas toujours évident de les avoir. Pas toujours évident."

[362] I made this observation repeatedly. Once, I participated in an educational commission to which parents had been summoned because it turned out that the older sister signed every form and did not inform the parents. She also failed to "appropriately" translate some messages (fieldwork notes, 29/02/16).

[363] Original quotation: " Je n'invite pas souvent les parents; alors les inviter…tu veux dire les rencontrer? Je les rencontre pas souvent. Enfin je vais pas les rencontrer une fois par semaine. Mais je les rencontre quand même s'il y a un souci si... là j'ai vu la sœur d'Abdessamad pour la réunion parents-profs, sa mère n'était pas là. J'essaie d'avoir les parents qui m'intéressent, mais c'est hyper difficile. Quand ils répondent à une injonction, enfin à une invitation du professeur, c'est rare... pour les parents que t'aimeraient voir. Pour les parents pour qui l'école ça peut aller y a pas de problème. Les parents de Maëlis... je suis persuadée que les parents de Maëlis je les verrai jamais "

Conflicts opposing parents and teachers are very old[364]. In 1989, the typology established by J.-M. Devaux, M. Hamel, B. Vrignon aimed to analyse and interpret what is often referred to as "parents' indifference". They distinguish three groups as regards institutional conformism. Parents belonging to the group of educational coupling ("*attelage éducatif*") are conformists and cooperative. The "false indifferent parents" ("*faux indifférents*") delegate all matters related to instruction and education to the school but are still interested in the school as an instrument of social promotion. They refuse the new function given to the parents in the framework of the "co-education" and the "comprehensive school". For this reason, teachers might not appreciate them because they feel overwhelmed by the double burden of educating their children and transmitting knowledge. The "truly indifferent parents" ("*vrais indifférents*") do not see school as an instrument of social promotion or professional integration but rather as an object of fear. Some expect to be "annoyed" by school professionals. The authors mention for example the parents' fear of seeing welfare aids removed[365]. They might even want to "resist" and "save" some part of their dignity and autonomy, which they have been deprived from otherwise. Indeed, these parents are often those who are also excluded from dominant institutions, such as the labour market. They do not like school and school did not like them (Devaux and al., 1989, p. 45). In this research, migrant families were mostly put in the first two groups (*ibid*., p. 46).

Generally, however, teachers are rarely speaking about the parents in positive terms, be it the parents involved in the school board who supported the quick implementation of the pedagogic experiment against teachers' voices[366] or the parents who "delegate" their children's education to school. Teachers are still being recruited for their knowledge of a subject. Furthermore, dealing with indiscipline makes them fall behind schedule in their teaching.

Like Mrs. Louvard states somewhat hesitantly (perceptible by the breaks, unfinished sentences, hesitation, as regards the use of certain words, expressions like 'I don't know'):

---

[364] Cf. Broadcast on France Culture (14/05/2014)," L'école malade des parents? " (School sick of parents ?) revisits this topic, quoting an extract of the research directed by C. Lelièvre in 1861 denouncing students' and parents' rebelling attitudes against the teacher's authority (https://www.franceculture.fr/emissions/rue-des-ecoles/lecole-malade-des-parents). Yet the theme of the broadcast is occasioned by the recent publication of a study (04/2014) showing that the relations between parents and school have become increasingly hostile.

[365] The official sanction for irregular and repeated absenteeism at school has been narrowly /thoroughly codified since 2010. The article R624-7 of the penal code institutionalised a 750€ fine in case the student fails to respond to four warnings from the local school authority by a more "diligent" behaviour. This fine replaces the removal of family allowance implemented under the previous government.

[366] Teachers were not fundamentally against the principles of the experiment but asked for a "transition" year and more training. I develop this aspect in greater detail in the final section.

"True, school must cooperate with the parents. True is…. Well, no, it cannot solve everything. And it's still better when we've got parents who take on the education of their children. Let's say that there is kind of a lack [priority education] regarding this. As regards, how to say … social skills … many students have a deficiency that we have to remedy because it's important for the kids but it's true that this can be quite troublesome sometimes. I find that it is doable if we organise rituals, if we insist on certain patterns of behaviour together with the students… Well we could do both … but no, it would be great if there would be something more solid, more constructive with the parents…[…] True, in the same vein, in the ZEP there are too many students that need our support and who have difficulties establishing normal social relations. I don't really know…" (Louvard, p. 8)[367]

The juxtaposition of these discourses with the teacher Mr. Touba's statements (see below) highlights the social and ethnic dimensions of the representations of his colleagues. Questioning the ethnic issue in relation to the issue of "*décrochage scolaire*" could mean to encourage collective reflections that could trigger collective answers to what old social fears and misunderstandings just might be. Furthermore, it is interesting to note the feeling of exclusion expressed by Mr. Touba, who does not seem to be completely at ease among his fellow teachers.

3.4.3 Fears and misunderstanding

3.4.3.1 "There is a circle you see, but if you are not in the circle, well you're out"

Mr. Touba is a young contractual teacher and an example of social mobility through education, even if he has not obtained civil servant status after having failed the entry exam twice. As such he is employed in several schools bridging gaps and taking over for other teachers. Mr. Touba, contrary to his colleagues, shares many common points with his students at La Balikan. His parents immigrated to France before he was born. He grew up in a suburb as well and also went to a secondary school that was situated in a zone of priority education. His family "did not have a lot of money". He went to the university with the support of

[367] Original quotation: "Bah ouais c'est … l'école doit faire avec les parents. C'est vrai que … bah non ça peut pas tout faire. Et puis c'est toujours mieux quand on a des parents qui prennent en charge la part éducative à bras le corps vraiment. Disons que quand même y a un manque en ZEP. Pour beaucoup d'élèves comment dire au niveau… rapports sociaux…éduqués aux rapports sociaux,et là y a pour beaucoup d'élèves un manque et nous faut qu'on comble un peu ça parce que c'est important pour les gamins mais c'est vrai que c'est un peu lourd parfois. Mais je trouve que ça se fait bien si on met des rituels, si on insiste là-dessus avec les élèves… bah on peut faire les deux; mais non ce serait bien si y avait un rapport… quelque chose de plus soudé, de plus constructif avec les parents. […] Pareil aussi quelque chose qui va dans le même sens, c'est vrai qu'en ZEP y a trop d'élèves pour lesquels on doit un peu combler cette partie là et qui ont du mal avec les rapports sociaux normés, normaux. Je sais pas trop…".

scholarships although he "did not study what he wanted to"—journalism, which was too expensive at the time. He was raised by a Muslim father from Morocco (Berber) and a Chilean mother who later converted to Islam. They "did not master French" and thus "could not support" him in school matters according to his own words –which did not prevent him from going to the university though.

Touba thinks he has a "good feeling" with the students (Touba, p. 7), with whom he maintains close relations. He seems to me to behave like a "big brother", who lectures them sometimes, encourages them other times. In return, students ask him personal questions and seek complicity, for instance as they regularly try to speak Arabic or Berber with him "because they know that my father has Berber origins" (pp. 7-8). Students tend to ask him about "personal things", "which "don't have anything to do with the lesson". They ask him, "whether he watches football; whether he knows this or that rap singer; whether he has a girlfriend, a wife, children ..." (*ibid.*)[368].

Touba distances himself from the common discourse that tends to demonise the students at La Balikan ("we are often told here: 'well, be careful, they will try to gauge you, to test you…' I'm not sure this thing really exists," p. 6).

His origins may be an advantage at the school, particularly in communication with some parents. The parents, in turn, behave with him differently than with other teachers and dare to do what they would not otherwise:

> *Q: Do you speak Arabic as well?*
>
> *T: Yes. During the teacher-parent meeting, there was a mother who spoke Berber, who did not speak French, so I spoke with her in Berber[369].*
>
> *Q: Was she happy about it?*
>
> *T: Yes, she was extremely surprised. She did not expect me to… Because actually, her daughter, N. initially was translating what I was saying in French. And actually, it's exactly the same Berber from the region where my father comes from, so I spoke to her. It was nice. It was amusing. She was surprised. After that she was happy and the following week, she invited me for dinner at their place.*
>
> *Q: Did you go?*

[368]Original quotation : " Et puis de foot, est-ce que vous avez une copine, est-ce que vous avez une femme, est-ce que vous avez des enfants…/-Pourquoi c'est important pour eux de savoir ça, tu crois ?/-Je sais pas. Franchement je sais pas. Bah peut-être parce qu'ils savent aussi que j'ai –pour certains- il y en qui essaient de me parler en berbère par exemple, ou en arabe, parce qu'ils savent que j'ai mon père qui est d'origine berbère "

[369] Berber is not Arabic but a branch of the Afro-asiatic language spoken by large population of Morocco, Algeria, Libya notably.

T: No, I did not. I did not have time. Because it was a Thursday afternoon, and I'm working in another school. But I think we will do it another time (Touba, pp. 7-8)[370].

Sharing the same language, similar origins and perhaps common experiences of migration and "integration" creates a certain complicity that other teachers do not necessarily share with the many of local parents. They may trigger certain extraordinary practices, such as inviting a teacher to their own home for dinner, or even speaking another language than French in a parent-teacher meeting inside the school.

Touba seems to keep some distance with the other teachers at La Balikan. Of course, one reason that prevents him from being considered a fully integrated member of the teaching body relates to the fact that he is working at two different schools and thus spends less time at La Balikan than his colleagues. However, compared to the school where he worked the year before, he describes the atmosphere at La Balikan as less welcoming. Without stating this explicitly, he senses a certain degree of mistrust towards Muslims:

"what is impressive here, you may have noticed it, there is a circle you see, which as such is a good thing, but if you are not in the circle, well you're out and not part of any discussion, except if you stand behind the [seats]… well I don't know … I get on well with a lot of teachers, lots of colleagues, but there are some with whom I'm not particularly talking. Well, and…. There are some, I don't know, I heard some weird discussions sometimes between certain teachers (Touba, pp. 8-9)[371]

He gives the example of teachers who absolutely refused to postpone a parent-teacher meeting during the celebration of Eid al-Adha although many parents asked for it: "there are only two important celebrations for the Muslims […] well I don't see where is the problem […] I told them it's an important celebration for Muslims, like Christmas or Easter here" (Touba, 2016, p. 9). For this reason, even if he gets on very well with "a lot of teachers", he seems to keep a

[370] Original quotation: "-Et toi tu parles l'arabe aussi ?/ -Ouais. A la réunion parent-prof il y avait une mère de famille qui parlait berbère, qui savait pas parler en français du coup j'ai parlé avec elle./-Et elle était contente ?/-Ouais elle était extrêmement surprise ouais. Elle s'attendait pas du tout à ce que … Parce qu'en fait sa fille, N., était en train de lui traduire ce que je disais en berbère. Et en fait c'est exactement le berbère de la région d'où est originaire mon père, et du coup je lui ai parlé c'était bien, c'était amusant. Elle était surprise. Après elle était contente et la semaine d'après elle m'a invité à manger chez eux./-Et tu es allé ?/-Non j'avais pas le temps. Parce que c'était un jeudi après-midi, et je suis au lycée de Brétigny. Mais je pense que ça se fera une autre fois."

[371] Original quotation: "Euh, ici ce qui est impressionnant, t'as dû le remarquer, c'est qu'il y a un cercle tu vois, et c'est bien hein, mais si t'es pas dans le cercle, du coup t'es en dehors du cercle et donc t'es en dehors de la discussion, à part si tu te mets derrière les …et, je sais pas, enfin je m'entends avec beaucoup de profs, beaucoup de collègues, mais il y en a avec qui je ne parle pas plus spécialement quoi. Et puis euh…y'en a, je sais pas. Et puis j'ai entendu des discussions des fois un peu bizarres, entre certaines profs"

certain distance with them as well, does his hours, exchanges small talk but rarely sits in "the circle" for example. The "circle" he refers to consists of comfortable seats arranged in a circle in the middle of the teachers' room. Behind this circle in the back of the room there are tables arranged in line, where teachers sit during lunch time. I'm often sitting there when I am in the teachers' room. At the beginning of my research stay, Touba came and sat next to me. We exchanged some small talk, spoke about the "circle" and shared the feeling of not "being"/ "feeling" part of it. Touba was the first teacher who accepted being interviewed.

3.4.3.2 "When students speak Arabic […] I tell them to avoid it, because it may cause problems" (Touba, p. 8)

Mr. Touba's reaction to students' speaking another language than French in the school is different from his colleagues. Let's remember that national languages carry with them certain representations, stereotypes and prejudices. They are to the expression of power relations and, in a globalised world, they are often associated with the idea of identity. In France, the term "national identity" is a tool of the nationalist discourse, related to the widely used security vocabulary and the creation of threats. Foreigners are perceived as a danger to the Nation (Noiriel, 2007). A recent controversy triggered a strong backlash on the part of the far right caused by the French Minister of Education in 2018, who wished to reassert Arabic as foreign language to be taught at school. Yet, the Minister of Education at that time was careful to also mention other languages, such as Chinese or Russian, which are often used by principals as "option" to attract a more privileged public to their schools.

One example, illustrating this trend, is that of a prestigious private school offering an "American option" located in the city centre. Touba taught Spanish there for one year and I asked him to compare his experience at La Balikan with his experiences at the private school. Although teaching the same subject and transmitting the same content, he has been facing radically different attitudes and behaviours on the part of the students. At the private school X, "where you have to pay between 3000€ and 4000€ per year if I remember correctly", it was "a different public"; "they were listening," "they wanted to learn", "nice, little students", who were "more autonomous"[372], and who were "learning their lessons and doing their homework" (Touba, 2016, p. 1). While students with comfortable backgrounds have

[372]Autonomous, meaning that he " did not need to remind them to learn their lessons and vocabulary; they knew automatically " : " Autonome ça veut dire que j'avais pas besoin de leur rappeler à chaque cours qu'ils devaient réviser, qu'ils devaient apprendre le vocabulaire ; Ils savaient automatiquement. Alors qu'ici je dois leur rappeler tout le temps " (*ibid*., p. 2).

internalised the right attitudes that allows them to succeed at school, students at La Balikan "refuse" or at least "need" to be "constantly pushed" for them to invest in their own education (Touba, p. 2)[373]. At La Balikan, Touba encounters disciplinary difficulties and inattention /carelessness: they talk a lot among each other: "Here I take, on average, at least one school diary per day" (in which students' discipline records are reported); "they insult each other a lot"; "you have to speak loud, sometimes you need to yell" (*ibid.*, p. 6). Mr. Touba is not really at ease in explaining these different attitudes ("well I cannot say… I'm still new at the job", p. 4). Interestingly, or surprisingly, he does not criticize this two-tier system. He mentions detrimental learning conditions at home that are known by all teachers (cf. the previous section). The fact that many parents "don't speak French" does not help[374]. However, he does not present this as an important issue and mentions the case of "one, two, maybe three" parents in a class of approximately twenty students (Touba, p. 3). In contrast to Mr. Jardin, Touba "knows" that students here [in the *quartier*] "have models" who tell them that school is important (Touba, p. 6). For Touba, students "know that studying is important, for sure". They start to "tremble" when they sit the exam for the leaving certificate, "even the rebels". What he takes for a sign proving that students consider school to be both important and sacred, might simply be an expression of "suffering" and a fear of certain subjects and of being disqualified (while "intelligence" is assessed), which has been identified by numerous studies (Millet & Thin, 2005, pp. 105-106).

Still, Touba can tell from his experience that many students who have made it to the general upper secondary school are stimulated by the attitudes of other students who come from other

[373] Original quotation: " Alors qu'ici je dois leur rappeler tout le temps. Et quand je leur rappelle pas ils me disent –enfin le cours d'après ils me disent: " oui mais monsieur vous nous avez pas dit d'apprendre ". Donc ils jouent un peu avec ça. Et euh, et puis ouais ici il faut vraiment les entourer, les pousser à réviser, à apprendre leur vocabulaire, sinon ils le feront pas d'eux-mêmes. A part deux élèves par classe en moyenne."

[374] Original quotation: " Je pense pas que ce soit les techniques d'enseignement, puisque ce que j'enseignais là-bas je l'enseigne ici, c'est exactement la même chose, une question d'autonomie, je pense que c'est en amont ce qui se passe déjà à la maison, déjà, d'une, et ce qu'ils vont faire à la maison. Et après ça ressort en classe quoi, je pense que c'est ça. Ici par exemple ici à la Balikan on est, on se trouve dans un quartier " sensible " et encore, enfin un quartier où il y a des populations d'origines différentes, les parents ne maîtrisent pas forcément la langue française, par exemple. Moi j'ai des élèves –je peux parler de ça parce que moi déjà à mon époque mon père il ne maîtrisait pas la langue française non plus, ma mère ne maîtrisait pas la langue française non plus, euh…ils savent parler en français, ils savent écrire en français, mais euh par exemple un exercice de grammaire ou un exercice de rédaction par exemple ils pouvaient pas m'aider sur ce point-là. De maths ou autre. Et c'est la même chose pour certains élèves ici. Pendant la rencontre des parents-profs par exemple j'avais une mère de famille qui, ouais j'en ai eu deux sur une vingtaine de parents, il y en avait déjà deux ou trois qui parlaient pas français. Et donc ouais. Donc ouais déjà il y a ça aussi je pense " (Touba, p. 3).

(more privileged) lower secondary schools, performing better but also conforming to the rules:

> *"Their colleagues, they learn their vocabulary by heart, […] and they took a real beating in the first tests with results like 1/10, 2/20 or 3/20. And I talked with them, and I told them 'yes guys, it's different from last year, now things must change because you've seen the level here, you've got to work', so well, finally, they learn more, they work more. And they have a satisfying level. They wake up. And I think this is something positive" (Touba, p. 6)*[375]

This testimony suggests that school-related contexts might play in favour of a "remobilisation" of former students from "schools of the periphery" (*op. cit.*), just like their teachers' encouragement, and a more diverse classroom in terms of social milieus, origins, levels of performance (see van Zanten, 2001, pp. 281 ff.). The fact of being "still in the running" while many of their peers have been directed to vocational secondary schools, which are perceived as a dead-end street gives students the feeling that they can succeed. Yet, it is also well-known that students from lower social milieus will face continuous difficulties in higher secondary schools (Duru-Bellat & van Zanten, 2010, pp. 46 ff.).

Touba can be described as an "ally" of the students at La Balikan. He allies with his students and does not consider their migrant background or their limited French language skills as deviant behaviour. At the same time, he is aware of the difficulties students can face when they continue to express themselves in Arabic:

> *"When students start speaking in Arabic, I try to correct them. I explain that in a Spanish class they must speak Spanish or French. And this is important because I know that there are some teachers, particularly with what happened last year ... , you see, I'm not saying they refuse but it can be disturbing to hear a word in Arabic or ... the other day a colleague heard "God" in Arabic and because it has become international, it has become famous, she was scared and I think she even made a report or something like that you see, so well ... so sometimes I tell especially certain students, I still don't know whether I'm allowed to do that but when I hear certain students saying a word in Arabic, well, saying a small word here, an expression there, I take them aside at the end of the class and I try to tell them to avoid saying this sentence or this word; they don't say violent things*

[375] Original quotation: "Leurs camarades ils apprennent par cœur leur vocabulaire, ils apprennent par cœur leur conjugaison, et les premières évaluations ils se tapaient des taules, des 1/10, 2/20 3/20. Et j'ai discuté avec eux, je leur ai dit: 'ouais les gars c'est plus du tout comme l'année dernière, maintenant là faut que ça change parce que là vous avez vu le niveau, donc là faut travailler', donc du coup là ils révisent plus, ils travaillent plus. Ils apprennent plus. Et là ils ont un niveau correct. Ils se sont réveillés. Ca déjà je pense que c'est quelque chose de positif tu vois."

but still, Arabic words. I tell them to try to hold themselves back because it may cause them some troubles" (Touba, p. 8)[376].

Mr. Ferdinand could be one of the "some teachers" Mr. Touba refer to who is intolerant to the use of other languages than French at school.

Whenever he can, he seeks to prevent students from speaking Arabic: "Hey guys, not here. You are at school, you speak French"; to which they "politely" (which suggests that he assumed a different reaction) answer: "Yes, sir, of course, no problem" (Ferdinand, p. 5). Contrary to his colleague, Touba "recommends" students not to speak their language at school because he feels that it can be disadvantageous to them. This is mainly due to the fact that Arabic over the past years has increasingly been associated with radical Islamism and thus provoked fear and suspicion among non-Arabic speakers.

The following anecdote exemplifies how this context has contributed to increasing tensions between some teachers and the *quartier*. In response to the question of "whether some things had changed at La Balikan since the terrorist attacks", Touba recalls a conflict between a teacher and a student with Kurdish origins during the minute of silence after the attacks in January 2015 in the offices of the French satirical weekly newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris.

According to different sources I have been able to collect, this student was expelled from class during a minute of silence to commemorate the victims of the attack. He had criticised this minute of silence, referring to the responsibility of France "in the bombing of Syria" or in the "Israeli-Palestinian conflict". Some months later this student was expelled after the verdict of a disciplinary hearing (*conseil de discipline*)[377]. This sentence was quite disputed among the educational assistants, who knew the student "from a different perspective" [378].

---

[376] Original quotation: "Et j'essaie aussi, d'autres élèves quand ils essaient de parler en arabe, de les reprendre, tu vois, et je leur explique que dans une classe en espagnol, donc ils doivent parler en espagnol ou en français tu vois. Et c'est important parce que je sais qu'il y a certains profs, notamment avec ce qui s'est passé dernièrement, ce qui s'est passé l'année dernière, euh tu vois je vais pas dire qu'ils refusent ça tu vois mais ça peut les gêner un peu d'entendre un mot en arabe ou…l'autre jour j'avais une collègue qui avait entendu une élève dire " Dieu " en arabe, et donc maintenant vu que c'est devenu international, c'est devenu connu, elle a pris peur et puis je crois même qu'elle a fait un rapport un truc du genre tu vois, donc euh ;donc moi des fois enfin surtout à certains élèves je sais pas encore si j'ai le droit de le faire mais à certains élèves quand je les entends sortir un mot en arabe enfin dire un truc par-ci une petite expression par-là, à la fin de l'heure j'essaie de leur dire d'éviter de sortir ce genre de phrase ou de mot, ils disent pas des choses violentes hein mais genre des mots en arabe. Je leur dis d'essayer de pas dire ça parce que ça peut leur causer des problèmes quoi."

[377] This is the only disciplinary hearing I participated in. The reason of his expulsion claimed by his judges was his general misbehaviour at school. His stance toward the terrorist attacks was not mentioned.

[378]"This was a kid who was difficult because he was a smart kid, pretty lucid. Well, this boy he will go astray because he had already gone astray and the only thing that could have saved him would have been to keep him at school somewhere [...] this kid, like two others, the school wanted to get rid of them. They were involved in the "scandal" following the attacks. Out of the three, none is at the *Collège* anymore [...] This kid was difficult with the teachers but with us, he was very kind. He was never disrespectful, we encouraged him to work and we saw

Touba rather emphasises the responsibility of the school in addressing this thematic, students' questions and criticism as well as the role of social media in students' opinion-making: "a guy who tells you 'they get what they deserve', well, things like this …; I think one should, first of all, talk this thing over with these people, I believe." (Touba, p. 10)[379].

Touba does not seem to want to accuse his colleagues of La Balikan although his words suggest that this teacher at La Balikan was not able to provide sufficient space for a debate, a ear for students' beliefs and convictions and a confrontation of arguments. Yet, providing such an open space for discussion is crucial. In their research about "the making of radicalisation(?)" (2018), Bonelli and Carré argue that the role of recruiters of young jihadists is to politicise young people's anger against school or their parents. These recruiters use certain interpretation of history and geopolitics in this purpose, which aim to make sense for these young people and justify their legitimate anger (Bonelli & Carré, 2018, p. 12). The authors emphasise the role of social media and the internet in the construction of beliefs and sociability.

They also point to the role of the school system in making some young people looking towards ideas that support a violent rebellion against national institutions. Their research also enables us to put into perspective discourses pointing to "careless" parents responsible for

---

him working" (Thomas & Annie, 2016, p. 13). // Julien, another supervisor, knew a bit more about the event: "It was during Mrs David's class that things went awry, and since then, he had been given a hard time. I think he paid a little bit for the others. One of them moved away. So he went by himself. The other one went to Djibouti and didn't come back [...] You know, there was an e-mail – I believe it was the Rectorat [regional school authority] who sent it, which instructed the teachers to discuss the issue during class. We talked a bit about that, we eased the tensions [...] and honestly, there was a teacher, she was not able to deal with this. But finally, she accepted […] saying: 'OK, I'll do that'. [...] he [the student in question] belongs to the Kurdish Community [...] so he asked a question; personally I found it very relevant. He said: 'why should I observe a minute's silence, I've got family members that died recently, in my community 130 dead people it's what we get every week because of bomb attacks, etc. I've never seen any French person telling me: 'Well, I'm sorry for you'". I found his question relevant. And the teacher said: 'OK, you get out'. So, if you want, he had an outburst of anger" (Julien, 2016, p. 1).

[379] Original quotation: "Il y a eu des problèmes notamment avec ma collègue d'espagnol; mais des choses qui n'avaient rien à voir avec ce qui s'était passé en fait. C'était un élève qui avait dit que 'ouais mais fallait pas bombarder la Syrie', donc quelque chose qui n'avait rien à voir, bien sûr fallait pas bombarder la Syrie mais pourquoi attaquer des innocents à Paris, euh moi j'étais au lycée, ce jour-là […]le jour de la minute de silence et tout la journée où on devait en discuter ; […] mais ici au collège apparemment ouais il y a eu aussi des 'ouais mais il y a eu aussi le conflit israélo-palestinien' , tu vois ? Donc. […] Et dans les réseaux sociaux il y a beaucoup de choses qui les embrigadent un peu je pense. Je vois beaucoup de choses et ils m'ont dit en tout cas au lycée, qu'il y a eu beaucoup de choses sur internet du coup ils ont une autre vision de ce qui s'est passé, enfin c'est clair, mais eux ils voient d'autres choses à côté tu vois? Et les profs, eux, c'est clair et net; c'est tout à fait normal. Il y a eu des attentats, il y a eu des personnes qui se sont fait tuer, et ça s'est passé en France, donc il n'y a que ça. Ca s'arrête-là. Soit tu respectes, soit tu respectes pas. Et si tu respectes pas on va appeler tes parents on va faire ci on va faire ça. Et il y a d'autres profs qui voient avant ça en fait, enfin plus ce qui se passe en amont, ce qui se passe aux origines de ça. Parce qu'un problème un gars qui va te sortir –apparemment il n'y a pas eu ça ici, mais dans les autres établissements- 'Ouais ils ont eu ce qu'ils méritaient' enfin des trucs comme ça… ; je pense qu'à ces personnes-là il faut d'abord leur expliquer je crois."

students' school failure and disaffection. The authors demonstrate that radicalisation mostly occurs in children who have benefitted from strict parental controls. Their parents, preponderantly first-generation immigrants principally coming from North Africa, belong to the secure stratum of the working classes and tend to see in school achievements the condition for social emancipation. Thus their education is rather strict and controlling. These parents tend to exercise moral pressure on their children, portray school as an important institution, and provide the material condition that will help their children to succeed (*ibid*.). However, when these students, who are rather good students, are sent to the higher secondary school (*lycée général*), many of them leave the comfort zone of the *quartier* and their people, experience racism from their peers, and no longer perform as well as before in particular in comparison with other students coming from more privileged schools. According to Bonelli and Carré, "the Islamist ideology progressively appears as an easy solution to simultaneously condemn the parental model, which is seen as being contaminated by the values of the host country, their materialism and denial of their origins (be they cultural or religious) and the Republican model embodied by the school. Failure ceases to be failure. It has turned into a deliberate choice of loyalty to a fictive community, which embodies an original purity as regards values and practices" (*ibid*.).

3.4.3.3 "And if there is something with which I will piss everybody off, it's the principle of the catchment area" (Jardin, p. 11)

Most teachers interviewed see the lack of school mix that results from liberalisation of school choice as an important reason for their difficulties and students' dropout.

The principle of the catchment area defined in 1963 was not initially implemented in order to promote socio-economic diversity in school but in an attempt to provide inhabitants with equal access to public services, like compulsory schooling. Students' distribution used to be organised by a division into geographic sectors ("catchment areas"). Starting in 1984, several departmental administrative units experimented an easing of this principle by liberalising school choice. The initial project was to support the diversification of educational supply and the specialisation of schools, which ought to develop their own educational projects. Despite the regular reports pointing to the negative effects of such a deregulation, the deregulation of students' distribution into local schools, together with the increase of private schools continued and led to further social and ethnic "segregation" (e.g. Ben Ayed, 2015; Merle, 2012; Dubet, 2008; Oberti, 2007; van Zanten, 2001). Meanwhile, the benefit of "school mix"

on school performances, the integration of students, social cohesion, the use of sanctions, and equal opportunities has been confirmed by numerous studies (Merle, 2011). More generally and beyond the objective of school performance, school mix has a political meaning:

"In a country which … is becoming increasingly multi-ethnic and multicultural, the issue of school ethnic composition is becoming increasingly central to debates about the nature and purpose of the educational experience" (Johnston et al., 2005b, p. 45; quoted by Hamnet and al. op. cit., p. 554).

Oberti's study address the interactions of social groups through their relation to local educational supply. One criticism to his study was that he did not elaborate enough on ethnic motives compared to class-based motives. Aust argued that "ethnic reasons appear more decisive" in people' s discourses explaining why they avoid the principle of the catchment area than class-based reasons. Yet, Oberti is careful to combine both terms as "both components are partly related" but does not investigate the "ethnic motive" more deeply (Aust, 2009, p. 189). Regarding this aspect, a British study about schooling and ethnic diversity in London provides interesting new insights (Hamnet, Butler & Ramsden, 2013). The study shows that "whilst many parents are happy for their children to attend schools with a reasonable degree of ethnic diversity, they want this to be an equal distribution, and do not want their children to attend schools where some minority ethnic groups are dominant or where, in the case of white parents, their children are in a small minority" (*op. cit*., p. 555). Without strong political regulations, there is no hope for an improvement of school diversity in very differentiated and unequal societies.

A public report published in June 2013 focuses on the negative effects of the liberalisation of the choice of school in terms of "social" and even "cultural segregation". It confirms its detrimental consequence for "social balance", plainly denouncing at the same time a rhetoric that claims that the liberalisation of students' distribution in local schools helps to solve the problem (Ben Ayed, 2009). Policy makers have been acting in one direction (liberalisation of school supply) for almost forty years. Doing so, they have made the choice of a "preference for inequality" (Dubet, 2014).

In fact, "it is evident that this policy appears *a posteriori* as not having borne fruit as regards the social balance, and even led to the opposite effect." (I.G.E.N & I.G.A.E.N.R, 2013, p. 72). The authors of the just-mentioned official report emphasise the role of hearsay and representations in the formulation of school preferences: "rejecting a specific school results more from social fears than it is based on objective criteria" while the "institution does not do

anything to counter these representations" (*ibid*. pp. 17-19). One footnote refers to an American measure aiming to regulate free choice and create a balance in the composition of local schools (*op. cit*., p. 6). However, this measure requires the existence of "ethnic" statistics, which is not the case in France.

The principal of La Balikan has invested a lot of time and effort in tightening relations with local primary schools, particularly the ones hosting the most privileged students. Advertising the "Anglo-German track" was probably a strategy to attract this public. The "school mix" regularly figures on the agenda of the school board. But despite all discourses about "school mix" and measures taken in its name, Mrs. Lejeune, who has been particularly active on the school board for many years, must admit that "bringing more diversity is essential" but one should face the facts: the representations of higher socio-professional categories are "not increasing at all" (Lejeune, p. 16).

According to Jardin, "obliging" privileged families to send their children to La Balikan would be worth more than all the "public statements" about inequality or pedagogy. The principle of the catchment area is "fundamental", but he admits that he "does not know whether this has an impact on '*décrochage scolaire'*". Still, he calls for a social diversity which effectively is an ethnic diversity, assuming that a "reasonable" presence of White people is a criterion of quality, not only for teachers, but also for students, who see in their absence from the classroom their social marginalisation:

> *"Perhaps, after a while, there is this feeling of ... we are the "outcasts". If there is no diversity [...] you see the class 3B? Very colourful? You see who they are? You've got lots of Black and Turkish students, you don't find a lot of White people: Laure, Amélie ... when you see the class coming ... well, when you are Black, like Roukia, and you see the class coming you tell yourself, well, I'm in a shitty school. Maybe you tell yourself this, I don't know... Maybe they think: well, we are the numbskulls... What thoughts does it trigger in the students? To feel ghettoised? There is no diversity here!" (Jardin, p. 11)*[380]

The question remains, whether a more diverse school would magically erase ethnicity from the factors deciding over students' success or failure. The authors of "Diversity, so what?" in urban planning demonstrate, also by referring to North American research, that the assumed

163 original quotation: **"**Peut-être qu'il y a aussi, au bout d'un moment, une forme de... on est un peu les "paria"; s'il n'y a pas de mixité, [..] tu vois la classe de 3ème B ? Très colorée là ? Tu vois qui c'est? Donc t'as beaucoup de Blacks, de Turcs, t'as pas beaucoup de Blancs, Elodie, Amélie, quand tu vois la classe arriver; bah voilà quand t'es Black, quand t'es Roukia, que tu vois la classe arriver bah tu te dis, je suis dans un collège de merde quoi. Peut-être que tu te dis ça, j'en sais rien. Peut-être qu'ils se disent bah voilà on est des boulets... quelles constructions ça construit aussi chez les élèves? De se sentir peut-être ghettoïsés à un moment aussi. Ici la mixité il n'y en a pas."

(positive) effects of "diversity" are not that obvious (Charmes & Bacqué (eds), 2016). Instead, the diverse contributions interrogate the conditions of their social participation and how minorities and working-class populations can be trusted with competences and resources to improve the conditions for living together. In fact, and given the existing knowledge, teachers could be better informed of the role of school structures and teaching arrangements in mitigating (or increasing) students' feelings of injustice.

The teachers Mrs. Lejeune and Mrs. Louvard observe that students seem to refuse school judgements that disqualify them. This is observable in the "discrepancy" between a majority of students' self-assessment and educational aspiration as regards upper secondary schooling. For these two teachers, this attitude is at the heart of the definition of "*décrochage scolaire*". According to them, students are not able to assess themselves. Mrs. Lejeune has the feeling "that they do not really know what school expects from them"; "for them, there is no problem, they talk with each other, they don't do their homework but ... well they are kind, they do not behave badly but I think some of them can really drop out" (Lejeune, p. 20). Louvard thinks that most dropouts live in a state of denial: "I've got catastrophic marks, but I write on the form that I want to go to the *lycée général*[381]. There is such a discrepancy that I tell myself, shit, nothing makes sense anymore. Neither the assessment nor the future […] especially their denial … this is incredible. Like if they were wearing blinkers" (Louvard, p. 6) [382]. The fact is that different diploma and school tracks produce different outcomes in terms of protection against unemployment and in terms of salary, "which influence individual representations and reinforce the hierarchy of the school tracks" (Cayouette-Remblière & de Saint Pol, 2013, p. 3). In their quantitative and sequential analysis of school trajectories, these authors highlighted a recent phenomenon: "*l'accrochage scolaire*" (contrary to *décrochage scolaire*,

[381] The *Lycée professionnel* or *Centre de Formation et d'Apprentissage* prepares for a vocational education.

[382] Original quotation: "Moi ça m'a toujours étonné des fois quand on fait une préparation au conseil de classe, je leur demande un peu des fois de s'autoévaluer...eh bah ils savent pas. J'avais fait une fois un bulletin blanc, et ils devaient mettre à peu près leur moyenne. Eh bah dis donc je leur demandais la lune. 'Mais madame on sait pas nos moyennes nous!' Moi je m'en rappelle au collège, moi je notais toutes mes notes et à quelques centièmes près, je savais à peu près si j'étais plutôt à 12.5 à 15 ou à 9 quoi. Eh bah non eux ils savent pas. Et puis ils refusent un peu ou ils oublient aussi tu vois. Oh j'ai eu 12 et 14 mais j'avais oublié le 7 là. Et ouais ils ont pas, ça les préoccupe pas. Alors je dis une majorité. Il y en a quand même -mais une minorité- qui sait ses notes et qui est capable de me sortir à peu près sa moyenne. Et puis aussi l'appréciation: ils ont du mal, enfin des fois j'ai l'impression qu'ils savent pas trop ce qu'on attend vraiment d'eux. Parce que, ouais non pour eux il n'y a pas de problème quoi, ils bavardent ils ne font pas le travail à la maison mais bon c'est pas...ouais ils sont sages ils font pas de bêtise mais ouais je pense qu'il y en a certains ils peuvent vite glisser vers le décrochage " Lestumes, p. 20/ " Et donc pour moi ceux qui sont dans le déni comme ça c'est là où ils sont dans le décrochage. J'ai des notes catastrophiques mais bon dans ma fiche de vœu je mets seconde générale. Y a du décrochage dans le sens où y a une telle incohérence que tu te dis merde y a plus rien qui fait sens. Ni l'évaluation, ni le futur [..] mais j'ai pu avoir des discours semblables ou en tout cas marqué d'une fatalité, de cette fatalité. [..] et surtout le déni, c'est ça qui est incroyable chez certains. Les ornières. Mais c'est compréhensible ," (Louvard, p. 6)

dropping out of school). *L'accrochage scolaire* consists of strategies (class repeating, reorientation…) that help students to remain, despite underperformance, in the socially most valuable tracks: they play with and partly resist negative school verdicts. However, they still remain those who have fewer qualifications than students from other social milieus." (*ibid*., p. 19).

Mr. Jardin, who is also active on a political and administrative level, wonders whether "one will ever be able to find solutions so that students in difficulty do not drop out" (Jardin, p. 3)[383]. At first sight, this statement seems to suggest a certain resignation in light of the weight of social inequalities at school. In the context of the interview, this assertion occurs after the inventory of institutional deficits shaping the life at La Balikan: school staff turnover; failure of the pedagogic experiment; the pedagogic reform without changing the regulation of teachers' definition of working time, fields of intervention, wages... Mr. Jardin stresses the systemic effects of such instability, which affects the "teamwork" and more generally the working environment at the school: "it produces demotivated teachers and confused students…." (Jardin, p. 3)[384]

Reflecting at school level about this thematic including teachers may trigger institutional and organisational responses, although based on an experimental status since many dimensions of the institutional life are defined at the national level. In fact, the concept "*décrochage scolaire*" has been created to organise, especially at the institutional level, actions to improve students' educational access. Do teachers in La Balikan feel concerned with the problem?

3.4.4 Teachers' apprehension of the national priority against "décrochage scolaire"

What are teachers' perceptions of the national priority fighting against "early exits" from education? Do they feel responsible for and equipped to bring such major change official discourses claim as resulting from the integration of such a priority in professionals' action framework ?

Most of teachers agree about a change in political positioning, which made this problem its own. Nevertheless, for them, nothing has changed in La Balikan concerning this issue, except as regards the increase of disciplinary measures. In the next section, I explore how teachers apply these measures and evaluate their effectiveness. Whilst disciplinary measures do not

[383] Original quotation: " Je ne sais pas si on y arrivera un jour à trouver les solutions pour que les élèves qui sont en difficulté ne soient pas en décrochage. Tout simplement "

[384] Original quotation: "Et donc ça c'est clair que dans un établissement comme ça ça amène une déperdition, une démotivation des personnels, une zone de floue, et donc du coup, chez les élèves et chez les enseignants... "

address the root of the problem, they are helpful in reinforcing their institutional authority or keeping troublemakers at bay. They also help to keep students' personal problems at a distance, something with which teachers are reluctant to interfere.

3.4.4.1 "It existed already before … is it more visible today than before? No, it isn't".

"Décrochage scolaire"? For many teachers, it is not a "new phenomenon". What is new, is that it now also figures on the political agenda: "the Ministry of Education finally does something" (Ferdinand, pp. 6-7).[385] His argument is rooted in the very nature of French educational policy making where solutions are to be expected to emerge from "the top" but where reforms are often rejected by teaching staff on the ground (Troger & Ruano-Borbalan, 2009, pp. 61-62). In fact, Ferdinand criticises the top-down "*réforme du collège*" (2016) and does not think it will improve the situation at his or any other school for that matter

For Mr. Jardin, "*décrochage scolaire*" is an umpteenth communication campaign for the same old problem (see above title), "similar to the issue of bullying"[386]; "nothing surprising" (Jardin, 2016, p. 8)[387]. His statement also points to the division of labour in the school: "For the school life department, [it may have become more visible]" because they are in charge of a tighter absence registration; but "not for the teachers" (Jardin, p. 8). As for teachers, according to Jardin, the school policy concerning "*décrochage scolaire*" just consisted of a formal modification of the way teachers should express their judgement about students' behaviour and performance in school reports. The principal informed them that they were no longer allowed to comment on the student's absences in the school report: "We cannot write 'he should attend class more frequently' or 'too many absences during this term', because absences are already registered in the final school report" (Jardin, pp. 8-9)[388]. Although "diligence" is officially understood as a prerequisite for school performance and implies the physical presence at school (law n° 2013-108, see also Douat, 2010), teachers' testimonies underline that not every student who is present performs well or commit with school

---

[385] Original quotation: "Il y en a toujours eu", "quelque chose d'actualité dans l'EN" qui "réagit enfin".

[386] Bullying at school (*harcèlement scolaire*) became part of an important national educational awareness campaign in 2015.

[387] Original quotation: "Oui, l'importance du thème; ou en tout cas que le thème est devenu... mais comme le harcèlementsi tu veux. Mais que ça existait de toute façon avant... est-ce que c'est plus visible aujourd'hui qu'avant ? Non. Pour la vie scolaire oui, pour les enseignants, non. Je te réponds clairement. C'est pas quelque chose que aujourd'hui je me dis: " ah tiens, tiens, tiens … tu vois, c'est la même chose ".

[388] Original quotation: "On ne peut plus écrire, il faudrait qu'il soit plus présent ou nombreuses absences ce trimestre, des trucs comme ça. Parce qu'elle nous expliquait qu'il y avait déjà ue comptabilisation des absences qui étaient fournies avec le bulletin, tu sais tu as le nombre de demi-journées d'absences avec le bulletin et elle nous disait que maintenant dans les textes on ne pouvait plus le mettre".

expectations (discipline issues, renouncement, problems of catching up/comprehension…).

Mrs. Lejeune shares their colleagues' views: it became a public issue, but nothing really changed for them in the school. She is involved in the school board and several other educational projects and extracurricular activities. Accordingly, she does not think that the issue of "*décrochage scolaire*" is sufficiently addressed at La Balikan, especially not in meeting and instances where teachers and the administration are gathered to reflect and decide about school affairs (*conseils d'administration, conseils pédagogiques*) (Lejeune, 2016, p. 21)[389].

Mrs. Louvard has heard of "*décrochage scolaire*" through the media and the Ministry. Echoing her colleagues, she states that "this has not triggered" any particular reaction among teachers. The school did not provide teachers with specific guidelines to deal with dropouts, nor did the teachers do any "independent research" into the issue. Furthermore, no teacher volunteered to become the "advisor for dropouts", a responsibility which has finally been given to Mrs. Rousselet, the *CPE* (chief of the "school life department", see part 4). She confirms that this issue is not addressed in the different teacher-direction meetings - "or she is not here when one does (Louvard, 2016, p. 5)[390].

Mrs. Vaudrel admits that "it is a pity" that teachers are not involved in the different meetings officially dealing with the issue "*décrochage scolaire*" (cf. in the committees addressing students' absences and lateness and their follow-up, see part 1, 3.2.1). While "all actors of the school should be concerned", there are too many "intermediary bodies" at La Balikan. The multiplication of measures coping with individual deviance makes it "too complicated" for the school to have a broader picture of the problem (Vaudrel, p. 7)[391]. They are a fertile

---

[389] Original quotation: "J'ai toujours dans les classes un ou deux élèves qui commencent à décrocher, qu'on arrive à raccrocher. Mais non j'ai pas eu l'impression que ce soit vraiment un thème... Parce que c'est vrai qu'après dans les médias on en parle pas mal et tout mais ... [...] Mais sinon c'est pas dans les conseils péda, dans les CA [Conseils d'Administration] c'est pas quelque chose dont on parle, un thème dont on...en tout cas pas un thème dont on parle énormément sinon je m'en souviendrais plus."

[390] Original quotation: "C'est-à-dire qu'on sait que ça existe mais on … l'a pas prise vraiment à bras le corps dans le sens où on n'a pas été volontaires pour être référent, on n'est pas allé faire des recherches perso. […] Moi on m'a pas donné une grille de lecture, des critères du décrochage scolaire, ce qu'il est, ce qu'il n'est pas. Ça c'est sans doute un point de vigilance qui pourrait être mis dès le début de l'année [..] ça peut être vite dit quoi et y revenir régulièrement pendant les réunions, est-ce que vous avez remarqué des gamins en décrochage? Non c'est pas fait. C'est pas habituel. Ou alors je suis pas là quand on en parle."

[391] Original quotation: "Oui mais justement, tant que l'équipe des profs n'est pas, tant que les enseignants ne sont pas intégrés dans un dispositif comme ça [commissions de suivi des élèves, perçues comme les commissions traitant le décrochage scolaire au niveau de l'établissement] bah je trouve ça dommage.[...] Il faudrait que tous les acteurs de l'établissement soient concernés, pour moi. Et notamment les profs parce que c'est eux qui les ont le plus quoi [...] Là il y a trop d'intermédiaires, je trouve que c'est trop compliqué pour euh...on essaie trop de choses, enfin il y a une échelle de sanctions qui est hyper grande, et on n'a pas de place pour tout le monde. On

ground for arbitrary practices as well, which prevents having a collective and coordinated approach to the issue.

The priority given to the control of absenteeism shapes teachers' perceptions of their roles in the fight against "*décrochage scolaire*", which is to contribute to this control (which is actually a traditional function, Douat, 2010, p. 105). As Mrs. Louvard puts it, "I always pay attention to [absences]. I have always been careful with absences. Actually, I have always considered it as a part of my job" (Louvard, p. 5)[392]. Furthermore, this function might even have some advantage, such as enforcing the power of teachers over students who put up resistance.

3.4.4.2 "So, first of all, I ask for the little ticket"

Theoretically[393], teachers are responsible for reporting all absences and for entering the names of absent students into a computer program. In practice, this process is governed by a non-negligible degree of subjectivity (Douat, *op. cit.*). The priority given to the tracking of absences at the school level runs the risk of underestimating the responsibility of school structures and staff in causing the absences in the first place.

At La Balikan teachers are supposed to write down the names of the absentees on a paper note (*billet d'appel*) that they post to the door. Then the educational assistants ("*vie scolaire*") collect these bills and enter the missing students into their computer program. They also make sure that students have regularised their absences or lateness before they are allowed to go into their class. To do so, students needed to complete their "pink ticket" in their own student's diary ("*carnet de correspondance*"[394]), which the parents must sign.

Mr. Jardin and Mr. Ferdinand always ask for the "little ticket", or "pink ticket". They both consider it as an "important formality" even if they perfectly know that in many respects, it is a "fool's game".

Ferdinand wants to specify that students do not "systematically" justify their absence, therefore it is important to follow through with these ex-post control mechanisms. However, this is just a formal control because he never asks for more details, even if he knows

---

va pas faire une commission pour tout le monde, on va pas les envoyer tous en classe relais, enfin, je sais pas ouais. Bon, il y a plein de choses qui existent, et ça a le mérite d'exister, mais je pense..."

[392] Original quotation: " Je fais attention. Je crois que ça a toujours été. Les absences tout ça j'ai toujours été vigilante à ça. En en fait j'ai toujours considéré que ça faisait partie de mon taf."

[393] Cf. Part 4. Educational assistants report many times that teachers do not do this systematically.

[394] School diary through which the "school" communicates with the parents and where the school rules are enacted.

sometimes that excuses are “fake” and that “parents are covering” for their children. He gives the example of a student who is missing the class “let’s say, one day out of four” because she “has her period, the same excuse for three years, but parents regularly signthe ticket: and in this case you see, when parents are covering the absences, there is nothing to do” (Ferdinand, p. 7)[395].

Jardin sends his students back to the “school life” office to see the educational assistants when they come to class without the ticket justifying their previous absences. He seeks to show students that there are control mechanisms in place and that they have to take responsibility for their absences. Jardin justifies his attitude by saying that “being in school instead of sniffing glue in the street is a chance” –and students should know that (Jardin, p. 9)[396]. These practices can be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, sending back a student to regularise their absences/lateness to the office of the student life advisor, keeps undesired students outside of class for a while[397]. Often students who attend classes irregularly disturb the “continuity of the class” since they attract all the attention, need to be updated on the content, and provided with the material they have missed: “This gets on [the teachers’ and the students’] nerves, [they] get pissed off” (Jardin, p. 8)[398].

---

[395] Original quotation: “Bah je demande déjà le petit billet de la vie scolaire. Chose qu’ils ne font pas systématiquement. Et après, non…ouais là par exemple j’en ai une, elle si je le demandais, parce que c’est vrai qu’on la voit un jour sur quatre on va dire, […]; alors elle m’a inventé, son histoire, que mademoiselle n’avait pas encore ses règles, alors que ça la travaillait alors elle avait mal au ventre, bon…ça fait 3 ans que ça dure, ses problèmes de règles, parce que ça fait depuis la 6ème que c’est comme ça. Donc voilà, je pense que c’était du flan son histoire, mais c’était couvert par les parents. Parce que les parents font un petit mot. Et là quand tu vois que les parents couvrent les absences, il n’y a rien à faire.”

[396]Original quotation: ”ça leur plait pas mais je les renvoie toujours à la vie sco[laire] avant de venir en cours [..] pour qu'il y ait une comptabilisation justement et une visibilité de tout ça. Pour que lui aussi puisse aller dire pourquoi il était absent”/”Après, c'est mon point de vue: moi je trouve que l'école c’est quand même une chance, et la scolarité obligatoire jusqu'à 16 ans bah c’est pas rien quoi. Je trouve que c’est bien ça. […] ou d’être dans un dispositif de formation… dans un truc pas être dans la rue à sniffer de la colle quoi, tu vois ? Moi c’est mon point de vue, je sais pas si tout le monde le partage mais en tout cas voilà.”

[397] Many educational assistants believe that teachers use this formality at times to keep a student, often a troublemaker, away from class for a bit longer. Indeed, it takes time to go from the classroom to the educational assistants’ office, where they often have to queue. Sometimes only one professional is here and is busy, or on the phone, and students must wait in line until an educational assistant is able to look after them. “In the educational assistants’ office: Y. (a student) is getting angry, the teacher does not want to accept him in class because he does not have his absence note signed. Recently, to strengthen the rules about lateness, the deputy has introduced a “zero-tolerance policy” and students who have come late have to come by to his office and if he is not there, students have to wait outside and miss class (fieldwork notes 26/05/2016). “S. is waiting in the educational assistants’ office. Madam C. does not want to accept her in class since she has not regularised her absence. Thomas, the supervisor, tells me that actually, everything is justified and regularised online in the computer program teachers have also access to. He added that the objective reason was that Mrs C. did not want this student in her class” (fieldwork notes, 02/06/2016).

[398] Original quotation: “Du coup, c'est quelque chose qui dérange l'enseignant dans sa continuité pédagogique, de cours. De façon un peu insidieuse, qui introduit une sorte de rythme pour les autres. Parce que les autres subissent... il faudrait que tu regardes ce que les autres font pendant qu’on fait ça mais, tu verras, on perd du temps, ils sont là, voilà… mais il y en a toujours qui étaient là, mais qui n’ont pas les feuilles, qui n'ont pas leur

On the other hand, the practice of checking helps to enforce or legitimate the teachers' institutional authority by showing that unattendance has consequences.

Beyond the fact that all teachers are aware of their students' private, social and family issues, which often explain students' repeated absences/lateness, the efficiency of this check is questioned by all teachers interviewed insofar as it does not improve their working conditions or prevent dropout attitudes (Vaudrel, p. 7; Lejeune, pp. 20-21; Jardin, p. 8; Ferdinand, pp. 6-7; Louvard, p. 7). The fact is that, however, they help to keep students' private issues at distance, with which they are unlikely to be willing to interfere.

3.4.4.3 "You don't interfere with it because you know that it is a pile of shit"

Like bureaucrats working in welfare offices, who are exposed to the social misery they have to deal with (Dubois, 2009, p. 36), teachers are exposed to some of their students' social distress while in they have to commit with part of their role, which is to sort students out according to ability to commit with school norms and to perform well. Being confronted with their students' problems, is a source of suffering for many teachers. To protect themselves, many teachers are tempted to stick with their traditional teaching role regardless of students' private issues. The bureaucratic treatment of absenteeism allows them to avoid engaging with students' private issues.

According to Mr. Ferdinand, students "are skipping class a lot" and it has "increased" (Ferdinand, pp. 6-7)[399]. He "does his best" but he cannot look after every student individually as "there are so many dropouts!" (Ferdinand, p. 7)[400]. Investigating the reasons why students refuse to comply with school norms and requirements, would require teachers to interfere in students' private lives. Indeed, teachers can be very quickly involved in very intimate and difficult issues, as the Mr. Ferdinand's following anecdote tells: "I did it, I do not want to do it anymore. On the one hand, it can be absorbing, disturbing, it can hurt, students can become attached to you and this can be annoying". A couple of years ago a young girl who had many family issues and was seeking affection and support from him became quite invasive. The girl

---

matériel, etc. Donc c'est une forme de non-implication scolaire. Il y a 10 à 15% de la classe qui sont en demande de quelque chose, et du coup on perd énormément de temps."

[399] Original quotattion: "Le problème c'est que ce sont des élèves qui maintenant sèchent beaucoup".

[400] Original quotation: "Franchement j'essaie de faire mon possible mais il y en a tellement quoi, il y en a tellement. Tu vois dans la classe où je suis prof principal, c'est une 4ème, il y en a 1/3 qui sont en décrochage scolaire quoi. 1/3. -C'est-à-dire pour toi, qui viennent sporadiquement ou…-Déjà –oui qui viennent parce qu'il faut venir, et qui une fois en classe déjà ne font rien. Voilà. Des élèves qui un jour ne vont pas venir, un jour vont venir, un jour vont pas venir…voilà c'est ça."

was in a difficult situation, she was beaten by her mother, did not see her father anymore and started to confide in him: "and I do not refuse to talk, but at one point I had to set limits to how often I would listen to her, because she always came to me. She was clingy". The pedagogic relationship became complicated from the moment the teacher was involved in her private life. The situation also impeded on his ability to teach: "The relationship with the student became difficult, because it was centred on her issues, and not at all on the aspect of learning anymore. And this bothered me. So well, one needs to strike a balance. It is not always easy"[401] (Ferdinand, p. 2). Interfering with students' private spheres can be disturbing, time consuming, and emotionally straining, especially if there are several cases in the class. Furthermore, it can put teachers in uncomfortable situations, particularly when students approach them with issues regarding their (intimate) health, family issues, sometimes due to their migrant status. The student who has been pretending for three years that she is about to have her periods, is a case in point (see above). According to Mr. Ferdinand, "she is putting on a show" ("*c'est du flan*") but he is not trying to find out the reasons of her absences since the parents seem to willing cover her absences; furthermore, it would imply addressing and clarifying with her the thematic of menstruation. The frontiers between private and public spheres are fading as soon as teachers decide to interfere with students' issues, without knowing in advance how far it might engage them emotionally. So, Mr. Ferdinand has decided to restrict himself to the bureaucratic registering of absences. In response to my question why he thinks many students are often absent, he answers that he "does not know", even though he is aware, like other teachers, that it probably involves family related and socio-economic issues (Ferdinand, p. 8)[402].

Beyond physical absenteeism, Mr. Jardin calls students who refuse to participate in class activities, whilst being present, "passive dropouts". According to him, "there are several

---

[401]" -Et est-ce que tu penses que tu noues des relations personnalisées avec tes élèves ? -Ca j'évite. Je l'ai fait. Je veux plus le faire. Je veux plus le faire parce que d'une part, c'est trop prenant, ça peut être déstabilisant, ça peut faire mal, et puis après faut faire attention aussi les élèves peuvent un petit peu trop s'attacher à toi et puis ça peut être un peu pénible quoi. -Est-ce que tu peux éclairer avec un exemple concret ? -Bah avant j'avais une élève qui avait des problèmes avec sa mère, parce qu'elle se faisait plus ou moins tabasser par sa mère, elle voyait pas son père, et si bien qu'elle s'était confiée à moi. Ca par contre je refuse pas, de discuter, mais il y a un moment il faut mettre une limite parce qu'après c'est vrai qu'elle venait sans arrêt me voir, sans arrêt. C'était collant. C'était chiant au bout d'un moment. Voilà et puis même la relation avec l'élève du coup devenait pas terrible parce qu'elle était centrée autour de ça, et plus du tout autour du travail. Et ça ça me gênait un petit peu quoi. Voilà. Faut trouver vraiment un juste milieu et ça c'est pas toujours évident".

[402] " J'en sais strictement rien. Parce que j'ai un autre cas aussi en 6ème, un gamin pareil, un jour sur deux il est absent. Et les parents couvrent, là c'est clair. Pourquoi, je sais pas. Alors si, j'ai eu un cas comme ça il y a quelques années ça ça a été prouvé. L'élève était souvent absente parce qu'en fait la mère me demandait de rester à la maison pour s'occuper des petits frères et des petites sœurs, voilà "

aspects to this phenomenon, different attitudes and causes" (Jardin, p. 8)[403]. The formal control of absenteeism and lateness in turn can be interpreted as an "easier" answer to the complexity of the phenomenon (Bernard, 2013).

On the other hand, the tracking of absenteeism does not help to ease the teaching activity load and does not provide teachers with relevant indicators that would allow them to have a clear picture of the problem:

> *"I think everyone agrees with the fact that we cannot do anything [against absenteeism]. We do not have sufficiently accurate indicators to deal with the problem. At the end, we do not know who was absent and who was not, who got their exercise forms and who did not, who did the test and who did not ... you see, it is really annoying and finally it gets on your nerves, you are pissed off. And you tell yourself, you don't interfere with it because you know it is a pile of shit. Finally you get to a point where you tell the students 'if you do not come, it is your problem'... Décrochage scolaire is something that is not clear at all, something that teachers are unable to prevent.... (Jardin, p. 8)[404].*

This extract summarises the challenge at stake in dealing with such a complex phenomenon. Students' private life can "hijack" the pedagogic relation. Teachers take on an additional role. However, balancing between both roles can be difficult, emotionally challenging or even contradictory. In turn, their incapacity to cope with the disruptions caused by students' nonconformist behaviour, leads teachers to blame individual students for the difficulties they experience in class.

In addition, you have the "silent dropouts" who do not necessarily disturb the "continuity" of the class (Lejeune, p. 23)[405]. If teachers do not ignore the silent dropouts from the outset, they are soon confronted with the social question. Mrs. Vaudrel feels "often powerlessness as regards specific situations". She gives the example of Elodie, a young girl who is "surely

[403] Original quotation: "Le décrochage scolaire pour moi c'est "un décrochage inclusif". Sauf pour les élèves dont je viens de te parler qui eux sont …, qui viennent pas en cours etc. Mais il y a aussi beaucoup d'élèves, dont je te donnerai les noms aussi, qui eux sont en décrochage passif. Donc du coup il y a vraiment pour moi deux sortes de formes de décrochage. Il y a plusieurs visages à ça, plusieurs postures et plusieurs causes différentes."

[404] Original quotation: "Je pense que c'est une chose assez partagée qu'on ne peut rien y fait parce qu'on n'a pas d'indicateurs assez précis d'observation. A la fin on ne sait plus qui était absent, qui n'était pas absent, qui a eu sa feuille, qui ne l'a pas eue, qui a fait l'évaluation qui doit la rattraper... tu vois c'est une gestion hyper pénible et du coup ça t'énerve, du coup tu bouilles. Tu te dis, tu ne rentres pas là-dedans parce que tu te dis c'est un nid de merde. Du coup tu en viens à avoir des discours: "si tu ne viens pas c'est ton problème, etc. Donc c'est quelque chose qui n'est pas du tout visible de façon claire, et c'est quelque chose sur laquelle les enseignants ils n'ont pas de moyens concrets d'action. Pour réintégrer les élèves quoi ".

[405]Original quotation: "Alors je pense qu'il y a certains collègues qui essaient d'aménager, d'individualiser un peu leurs cours et les aides qui lui sont apportées, mais bon quand t'as une classe bah ouais où ils sont 25 dans la 4ème eh bah, voilà il est un peu noyé dans la masse quoi".

dropping out". The girl has been underperforming for "so long" that she lacks the knowledge that is expected at her age. Moreover, the "mother is very sick" and potentially "about to die". A "youth worker" is supervising her "already". She told Elodie "to go to the dentist" because she is getting "black teeth". The girl states that she does not have "proper insurance". "Everything piles up" but at least Elodie "feels emotionally secure in her class". Forcing Elodie repeat the year would run the risk of destabilising her even more: "I don't know what to do" (Vaudrel, p. 17)[406]. While she is describing her powerlessness in what seems to be a highly precarious situation in both material and emotional aspects, Vaudrel refers to what is assumed to be the traditional role of teachers to justify to herself that she simply cannot help Elodie with both her private and school related problems: "Well, it's not my role, is it? It is difficult ... [...] and even if I had all the rights, what could I do? I'm not a doctor, I won't save her mother and how am I going to address Elodie's shortcomings?" Eventually she contradicts herself and starts arguing in favour of Elodie being removed from the school, regardless of the emotional impact that such an action would have on Elodie: "She should be taken out of this class, because she does not say anything anymore. She should benefit from additional support" (Vaudrel, p. 17)[407].

Teachers seem to be left alone when dealing with their students' problems. There is no room for collective reflection. The zero-tolerance policy towards absenteeism and lateness is reinforced yet never questioned between all actors. Thus, the decisions they make or do not make are based on their subjective appraisal of the situation, which often does not contribute

---

[406]Original quotation: "Oui avec certains élèves, là je vois notamment face à une élève-là Elodie, elle est décrocheur complet, je sais pas quoi faire. Elle est en 5ème. Elle est en grande grande difficulté scolaire, dans la famille ça va pas, la maman a une grave maladie *a priori* elle serait en fin de vie. Voilà, il y a une -comment on appelle ça- un éducateur. Nous depuis le début on nous dit 'Elodie il faut qu'elle aille chez l'orthophoniste'; -'oui on va prendre un rendez-vous'. Ils ont pris un rendez-vous mais en fait ils se sont vite rendus compte qu'ils n'avaient pas les assurances je sais pas quoi, donc tout est un souci quoi. Tout est un souci. Elle a les dents qui noircissent, je lui dis 'Elodie il faut que t'ailles chez le dentiste' – 'oui mais on n'a pas la carte de la mutuelle', je sais pas quoi 'je peux pas'. Donc voilà, tout cumule quoi. Et si ça se trouve elle va partir maintenant dans les mois à venir et je vois pas comment on va la raccrocher quoi. Parce qu'elle a tellement de retard, tellement de lacunes. C'est...Et la faire redoubler, je suis pas sûre que ça serve à grand-chose. Parce que là elle a une sécurité affective un peu dans la classe, et ça c'est important un peu aussi. Donc oui oui parfois je me sens impuissante complètement ouais. Souvent même. Mmh. "

[407] Original quotation: "Après moi mon rôle, c'est difficile hein ? J'ai déjà, là où j'étais en lycée pro, j'ai déjà enfin j'ai eu l'impression des fois de dépasser mon rôle, donc je sais ce que j'ai le droit ou quoi de faire, mais ouais si j'ai ...là tu vois avec Elodie je sais pas ce que je peux faire par exemple. Même si j'avais tous les droits qu'est-ce que je peux faire en fait? Moi je suis pas médecin, sa maman je vais pas la soigner, et toutes les lacunes de Mathilde comment on va faire pour les combler? Je sais pas. Parce que déjà l'année dernière c'était la catastrophe, euh, en primaire à mon avis -j'ai pas lu le dossier, mais à mon avis ça devait pas être...Donc à quand remontent ses lacunes? Comment palier tout ça? à 13 ans, avec autant de lacunes déjà...alors tu vas me dire que sa vie elle est pas encore finie mais...elle il faudrait ouais une structure de remobilisation […] Là il faudrait qu'elle soit enlevée de la classe, parce qu'elle ne pipe plus un mot. Et puis qu'il y ait quelqu'un derrière elle […] "

to putting the institutional position into question either. For example, Mrs. Lejeune and her colleagues repeatedly saw children excused from PE for what they believe to be religious or cultural reasons, as analysed previously. However, they did not address this issue at aninstitutional level. At the moment of the interview, Lejeune says that she could personally "try to call the families." Her voice, however, suggests her to be very reluctant to enter the private sphere of the family, which is perceived in advance as a losing battle: "'well, it is surprising, your daughter could not explain it to me, well, I don't want to interfere with the familial intimacy, there might be things that I am not allowed to know but...'; […] anyway I think we won't succeed in taking them to the swimming pool" (Lejeune, p. 11)[408].

3.4.4.4 "Well I know that each class teacher tries, a bit, to find solutions individually"

The absence of a collective space to reflect on the issue "*décrochage scolaire*" and teachers' unwillingness to go beyond their teaching and educating roles reinforce each other and are detrimental to the students' success. In particular, to the conjunction of these two factors prevents the school community from thinking the problem beyond absenteeism and underperformance, while the traditional institutional response consists in organising learning support and orientating the weakest students in the vocational track (Duru-Bellat & van Zanten, pp. 46 ff.). This is well illustrated by Mrs. Lejeune's words:

> *"I know that each class teacher tries to find individual solutions to the problem. When you are receiving the families… well there are sessions of homework assistance at school. And then there are families who try to find solutions.There many local organisations, which offer homework assistance. Even for families who cannot afford it, a student can help with maths one hour. Regardless, considerable effort is put into orientating students to the vocational third grade[409]… […] maybe the internships … but otherwise…" (Lejeune, p. 21)[410]*

[408] Original quotation: " Pourquoi pas déjà aller voir l'administration pour leur en parler… mais moi je pense que j'essaierais peut-être d'appeler ouais les familles, voir un peu bah : "oui c'est étonnant, votre fille n'a pas pu m'expliquer, voilà je veux pas non plus rentrer dans l'intimité de la famille il y a peut-être des choses que je n'ai pas à savoir mais...pour un peu bousculer les choses mais je pense que voilà, on n'arrivera pas à les emmener à la piscine quoi".

[409] This class prepares to enter a vocational education.

[410] Original quotation: "[…] après je sais que chaque prof principal un peu à l'interne essaie de trouver des solutions; tu vois bah quand tu reçois des familles, bah il y a l'aide-aux-devoirs au collège. Après ils y a des familles par contre qui se rendent compte de ça et qui du coup essaient de trouver des solutions. Donc il y a pas mal d'associations de quartiers aussi, tu vois, qui proposent de l'aide-aux-devoirs. Même de l'aide après pour les familles qui le peuvent, tu sais un étudiant qui vient donner une heure de cours de maths. Alors après oui il y a un paquet qui est mis justement ouais quand même pour essayer d'orienter les élèves vers la 3ème prépa pro, […] si peut-être ça avec les stages mais sinon…"

Support is discretionary and pertains to the individual teacher. In some circumstances, they can be confronted to review their prejudice, even if this does not mean that they automatically change their mind. This is exemplified with Mrs. Dubuy and her French-German exchange. The first time, she faced strong resistance from the parents who did not want to let their children go: "because they were probably afraid that their children would eat pork there" or that "their girl would turn into a whore". Then, because she needed everyone to participate in order to realise the exchange and receive the necessary financial support, she called in the reluctant parents individually. She answered their questions and worries. Some of the questions she clearly did not expect. She recalls a father who "heard that in Germany, Turks are not well liked"[411]. It was the time during which the far-right movement PEGIDA[412] was organising demonstrations against immigrants and immigration. Finally, out of three German classes, only two children did not participate in the exchange.

Since tackling "*décrochage scolaire*" is not whether seen nor organised as an issue needed collective reflected solutions, this increases the isolation of teachers who see resources to cope with their students' "negative participation" in themselves:

> *"How do I work on [décrochage scolaire] in my class? Well, I do not. I don't have visible means except the attention I can grant some of them during pedagogic activities (Jardin, p. 9)*[413]

Teachers' isolation increases the "subjectivity" of the pedagogic relation (Dubet, *op. cit*.). The following example highlights the need, already elaborated in the previous section to think the issue "décrochage scolaire" through from an interactive perspective:

> *"The problem is students' refusal, it is not to find the door [...] when you try many little things and none of them works. It is discouraging and you feel bad. It is a vicious circle that affects the child negatively. Because dropouts are even contagious for the adult. I could have been a dropout teacher with some of them. It is a failure and I don't manage it well. But it helps to understand that dropping out makes it easier for them as they do not have to face failure. It is a failure that does not enable addressing other failures" (Louvard, p. 8)*[414].

[411] Off discussion, fieldwork notes, 11/01/16.

[412] "European patriots against the Islamisation of the West" ("Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes").

[413] Original quotation: "Comment moi j'agis là-dessus au sein de mon cours? Bah j'agis pas quoi. J'ai pas de moyens visibles que par l'attention que je peux accorder à certains dans les activités pédagogiques."

[414]Original quotation: "Je repense à l'année dernière avec les 3èmes là. Ce qui pose problème c'est le refus des gamins et de pas trouver l'entrée. De pas avoir de petits sursauts et de petits rochers sur lesquels s'accrocher pour pouvoir passer à autre chose. Je sais pas quoi faire, franchement je suis démunie face à ça. De pas trouver

It is not very clear whether Mrs. Louvard speaks for herself or for the students, or for both when she says that dropping out is "a way of not addressing failures". The fact is that for years Louvard has been a politically active teacher at the school, who has always been in favour of collectively concerted pedagogic solutions. She gradually gave up, because she was discouraged by the recent "defeats" of teachers in this domain (the already mentioned pedagogic experiment, the label REP +, the Freinet pedagogy, which does not have the principal's support). Furthermore, her relations with Mrs. Madec, the principal, have turned sour. Starting from her example, the next section analyses the unfavourable conditions that prevail at school and prevent teachers to think and address the issue of "décrochage scolaire" more effectively from an institutional-organisational perspective.

3.4.5 Obstacles to a collectively reflected institutional change

Questioning the meaning of the school[415] would lead to reflect collectively on the "role of school: knowledge transmission, education, socialising? How do we produce, promote and maintain the will to and pleasure of learning? How can we deal with the norm of work, which supposedly gives some meaning to initial and general education?" (Verdier, in Boudesseul, 2013, p. 215). Given that teachers' pedagogic practices are based on representations and prejudice (Duru-Bellat & van Zanten, 2010, pp. 148-149)–which may refer to /be shaped by global structures of inequality and dominant discourses, it would imply reflecting on these representations and thus providing teachers with opportunities to carry out that reflection.

At La Balikan, teachers have their own explanations for failure and suggestions for improvement, which speak for the lack of opportunities to think the problems collectively. Whilst the need for more collaboration and mutual support is understood and promoted by official discourses on education (Duru-Bellat & van Zanten, 2007, p. 148), it still encounters numerous structural, institutional, interpersonal and school-related obstacles. As F. Dubet writes, teaching remains a personal activity and teachers' cooperation should be based on solid sympathy in order to be able to reveal the intimacy of the classroom to each other

---

de solution quoi. [..] quand t'essaies plein de trucs et que rien fonctionne c'est un peu décourageant. C'est un peu décourageant et puis tu te sens mal. C'est un cercle vicieux qui rejaillit de l'adulte à l'enfant aussi. Parce que son décrochage est presque contagieux, peut être contagieux envers l'adulte. J'ai pu moi-même devenir prof décrocheur avec certains. C'est un échec je le vis pas bien. Mais ça permet de comprendre aussi que le décrochage permet de ne pas affronter l'échec. Enfin c'est un échec mais qui ne permet pas d'affronter d'autres échecs."

[415] As prescribed in the national programme against "*décrochage scolaire*" which also defines the problem as a general one involving the relation to school "as an institution "La lutte contre le décrochage concerne tous les territoires, toutes les catégories de la société et toutes les formations. Au-delà de la question des apprentissages, la lutte contre le décrochage interroge la relation des élèves à l'école en tant qu'institution". (MEN, 2014, p. 3)

(Dubet, 2002, p. 159). Yet, since it breaks up their isolation and the exclusive face-to-face interactions teachers enjoy with their students, the implementation of concerted approaches to teaching would reshape the nature of teaching profoundly (Duru-Bellat, 2001, p. 332). In the particular context of La Balikan, organising a collective reflection about the issue of "*décrochage scolaire*" would maybe help to identify if and how far the students and their parents' assumed or real origins actually do have an impact on the interactions at school (Lorcerie, 2009, p. 64). In a second step, teachers, with the support of other external experts, could ponder on appropriate solutions to solve the current difficulties facing teachers[416].

Although most teachers seem to have resigned themselves to the hopeless situation and apprehend their job as a lone daily fight, sometimes involving individual reflection outside the classroom, they find the means to question their teaching, school organisational arrangements and pedagogic approaches. However, a divisive working environment at La Balikan, the attention given to implementation of top-down reform, and institutional grievances further undermine the already fragile cohesion among them. It is no surprise that such a context is not conducive to change. The fact that the reform lacks all legitimacy among teachers, makes change even more unlikely to occur.

3.4.5.1 Teachers' scattered initiatives

At La Balikan, extra hours teachers invest in addition to the regular teaching schedule are negotiated individually. This is common practice at most schools (Dubet 2002; Duru-Bellat & van Zanten op. cit). Some teachers develop special projects with their classes, others are politically active and try to help shape the nature of the institution and its organisation. Some teachers do both, while others only focus on their teaching. This is the case of Mr. Touba, who works at different schools.

Mrs. Dubuy organised the exchange program with a German partner school, for which she received the full support of the principal Mrs. Madec, who herself wants to set up an English-German option. A few years ago, Mr. Ferdinand offered maths support during lunch time on a voluntary basis. Mr. Jardin also used to leave the door of his classroom open and students were allowed to work on their lessons while he was working at his desk. Today, he no longer offers either of the two options. Both Jardin and Ferdinand were visibly uncomfortable, when

[416] The director of the special track (SEGPA) initiated something similar called "exchange of practices". He was trained by upper educational authorites to animate such exchange. External experts, for example in social sciences specialized in education could help to give some elements of comprehension of issues met by teachers, which may involve elements exceeding the classroom or even the individual school.

they mentioned the birth of their own children as the reason for ending their additional commitments. Their embarrassment may be due to the dominant idea framing the mission statement to which civil servants subscribe, to devote effort to the general interest before personal interests: in education, this may have no limits[417].

Now, Jardin is involved in higher local administration and cooperates with researchers on specific projects. He also contributed to the establishment of "special classes" for "French as second language" for students who may feel disadvantaged in ordinary classes, although the research has proved this practice as possibly having negative effects on students' relation to school (see above). Mrs. Lejeune co-organises cultural and sports activities with some colleagues and is also involved on the school board and the "social committee" that deals with students' socio-economic issues. Shortly after her arrival at La Balikan, her colleague Mrs. Vaudrel wanted to implement a project for "dropouts" involving teachers. Another idea, based on a recent experiment she worked on with students, was to encourage a peer-to-peer support group. The idea stemmed from the observation that growing class numbers made it impossible "to have more than two minutes of attention per student within one hour" (Vaudrel, p. 15)[418]. Mrs. Louvard tried to convince her colleagues and the head of school of the benefits of the Freinet pedagogy, which, according to her, emphasises[419] the concept of "pleasure" in education. For V. Troger and J.-C. Ruano-Borbalan (*op. cit*., p. 52), "the autonomy and trust C. Freinet granted children, the importance given to cooperative and community relations directly contravenes vertical pedagogic traditions of the Republican School ideology.

This is why "alternative educational" approaches (Laurent Gutierrez (eds.), 2011) have only really prospered in public education within special needs education, where knowledge to be acquired was marginalised" (Prost, 2013, p. 135). According to Mrs. Louvard, implementing such an alternative approach of education would help to reflect on common ascriptions, and

---

[417] Dubet elaborate the interesting analogy between the priester and the teacher job (Dubet, 2002).

[418]Original quotation: "S'il y a moins d'élèves dans les classes. Enfin ici c'est assez privilégié -quoique l'année prochaine ça va changer, on devrait pas avoir des classes comme on a eues là d'expérimentation à 27 ou 28. C'est pas possible. Sur une heure de cours on n'a même pas 2 minutes par élève, d'attention. Donc il y a ça; ouais… là j'avais un exemple en tête: j'ai une élève -je fais FLUENCE avec mes élèves et j'ai une élève ce matin, qui fait pas FLUENCE avec moi et qui me dit: "Mme on a un trou là, est-ce que Shaïla elle peut venir chez moi?" Alors je me dis bah pourquoi elle me demande à moi. Alors je lui dis "bah est-ce que vous êtes toutes les deux externes, est-ce que vous avez l'autorisation de sortir?"Elle me dit "bah oui parce que j'aimerais bien la faire lire, comme ça elle va s'entraîner pour demain'. Et j'ai trouvé ça génial en fait, le tutorat entre élèves ça devrait, c'est des choses qui sont simples à mon avis. Et qui pourraient être mis en place assez facilement, en fonction des compétences des élèves. Bah lui il est bon en anglais, bah tiens tu pourrais peut-être aider de temps en temps […]".

[419] This pedagogy is based on different pedagogic principles and arrangements than traditional teaching, regarding for example the meaning of performance, assessing practices, collaboration, hierarchical relations and competition…

more broadly the meaning of students' commitment to school, including "material rewards". Her following statement put also into perspective the consequences of assessement and selection on to the relation to knowledge:

> *"Do you want me to share with you what "laziness" means? I've been able to put my convictions into words thanks to Freinet […] actually, they have no pleasure. They have no drive … we … they don't take any initiative, they don't create, they are not active, they are not actors … they are not enough … it is true that it this aspect improved. There are lots of projects which give students a central role and this is cool. And yes, it's also because it doesn't make sense to them. Why would you make any effort if you don't see what it can give you in return? You see, sometimes it pisses me off to go to work but I know that it will give me the possibility to go have a drink […] or other pleasures, well, holidays, everything. So it's purely material but it is still a motivating force. I think this is the problem: For them work makes no sense because they are not sufficiently stimulated" (Louvard, p. 7)*[420].

Mr. Jardin suggests somewhat cynically, to let children decide whether they want to come to school or not: "It would be interesting to try this and see what happens. One day or two, or a week, so that parents get annoyed" (Jardin, p. 10). Others suggest increasing the amount of participatory activities and invert roles, for instance by "asking students what they want to learn" (an approach similar to many alternative approaches to education, such as Freinet). Teachers should then comply with these demands. "Maybe we would be surprised by the result" (Jardin, p. 10)[421]). Mrs. Vaudrel suggests adopting the rules together with the students in a democratic way (Vaudrel, p. 8)[422].

---

[420] Original quotation: "Tu veux que je te dise moi ma vision de la "flemme": c'est que en fait je suis convaincue ça mais j'ai pu mettre des mots grâce à Freinet, [..]c'est qu'en fait ils n'ont aucun plaisir. Ils n'ont aucune initiative... on leur ... ils n'ont pas d'initiative, ils sont pas créateurs, ils sont pas actifs, ils sont pas acteurs... ils sont pas assez... c'est mieux c'est mieux c'est vrai. Il y a plein de projets qui donnent plus de place à l'élève et ça c'est cool. Et oui c'est surtout parce qu'ils donnent pas de sens aussi. Comment veux tu faire un effort si tu vois pas ce que ça peut t'apporter? Tu vois moi des fois ça me fait chier d'aller au travail mais je sais que ça va me permettre d'aller boire un coup, [..] ou d'autres plaisirs quoi, les vacances tout ça. Alors c'est purement matériel mais ça vaut motivation. Je pense que c'est ça ils donnent pas trop de sens parce qu'ils sont pas assez stimulés".

[421] Original quotation: "Et je pense que tu laisserais le choix à des gamins, de venir en cours de français etc. tu verrais…. ça serait intéressant de le faire. De dire bah voilà "vous n'êtes plus obligés à l'école". Ce serait intéressant de voir ce qui se passe. Tu vois tu peux faire une journée ou deux, ou une semaine pour que ça fasse un peu chier les parents, pour uq eça soit pris en compte par la famille et pas seulement par l'élève qui va sécher et qui va être content. De faire une semaine de volontariat, de demander aux élèves ce qu'ils veulent apprendre. Pendant une semaine. [..] et que nouson s'organise en fonction des gamins et de voir vraiment qui vient. On aurait peut-être des surprises."

[422] Original quotation: "Donc si tu veux on adpate aussi en fonction de la situation, et du coup chacun fait un petit peu… il y a des textes, mais chacun fait un petit peu aussi selon son ressenti. Donc, ouais je sais pas comment t'expliquer mon ressenti; je trouve qu'on fait un peu comme on peut quoi, en fait.... […] Il y a trop de choses quand je vois le règlement intérieur, je le lis des fois avec les élèves en début d'année, pff...et à la fin du carnet de correspondance, à la fin du règlement intérieur, il y a un résumé en 15 ou 20 points. Des règles essentielles il y en a au moins 20. Enfin au bout de la 2ème ils ont oublié quoi. Donc je pense qu'il faudrait

Mr. Ferdinand regrets the removal of the "3ème *insertion*", a "special" class for "dropouts", "between the ordinary third grade and the special needs educational division"[423]. The pedagogic approach in these classes favoured project-based learning. There were fewer teaching hours and more time for out-of-school projects and internships, which is difficult to combine with the obligation to validate core knowledge and skills until the end of the lower secondary school (2005). Ferdinand recalled one of his most successful and pleasant week-long experiments with students, who "finally succeeded in almost catching up with the level of performance in math expected in the ordinary track" (Ferdinand, p. 11). The project in question was based on active pedagogy and consisted in applying construction techniques that were used during the Middle Ages to a tourist site. Volunteers came to renovate a castle using these old techniques: "It was wonderful [...] because when you are working you have to tell the tourists what you're doing and how. It was great, absolutely great" (Ferdinand, pp. 11-12)[424].

Such special classes were officially abolished in the name of "inclusion" and temporary measures of support and remediation (Taraud and al., 2015, p. 6). Special classes, regardless of their positive effects, face the (eternal) dilemma of inclusion/exclusion. On the one hand, they enable students to remain in the same structure as others but in smaller groups with an adapted programme. On the other hand, they are stigmatised in a school system that remains based on competition and selection. Ferdinand's engagement depended on how cohesive the class was – and his capacity to create this cohesion. Indeed, he did not repeat the experiment the following year because "students didn't get on with each other" (Ferdinand, p. 12).

Finally, some critics address the low cohesion of the teaching staff, which prevent them from reflecting collectively on pedagogic approaches. Mrs. Louvard mentions a lack of "collective impetus", of "collective dynamism" at La Balikan. "I cannot say that there are divisions. It's a friendly atmosphere […] we get on well together, there is no dispute, no clans, no-conflict,

---

simplifier tout ça. Et d'ailleurs […] il faudrait construire ces règles avec les élèves. En début d'année."

[423] Since their creation, these "pre-vocational" classes are actually welcoming students with learning and school issues (Tarreaud and al. 2015, p. 11).

[424] Original quotation: "C'est en Bourgogne, en fait c'est un type qui a eu une idée complètement dingue, au début –mais finalement c'est une idée géniale- son idée dingue c'était de construire un château fort du 13ème siècle avec les méthodes du 13ème siècle. Donc ça marchait que sur du bénévolat, avec des gens qui sont là-bas à l'année, et sinon il y a des gens bah qui sont dans le privé et puis qui en vacances eh bah viennent bosser une semaine ou deux. Eh bah nous on a emmené les élèves là-bas bosser sur le château fort pendant une semaine quoi. C'était gé-nial. C'est vrai avec les méthodes du 13ème siècle on allait casser du caillou dans les carrières qui sont juste à côté, on transportait les cailloux dans des charrettes, on faisait monter ça au sommet avec des cordes et tout. […] Il y avait 25 ans de travaux en tout. Et nous ça faisait déjà quand on y est allé ça faisait déjà 10 ans que le château était commencé. Donc c'est génial. Et donc c'est le 2ème site touristique maintenant de Bourgogne. Après les hospices de Beaune. Par que quand on travaille, il y a les touristes qui sont là. Parce qu'en plus quand on travaille on doit expliquer aux touristes ce qu'on est en train de faire. Oh c'était génial, c'était genial."

but there are no exchanges about pedagogy either […]" (Louvard M. , 2016, p. 3&5)[425]. Mr. Jardin admits that more cohesion would enable them to work together on solutions and make the daily work easier: "You try to find solutions but everyone should implement them [...] there should be a stronger cohesion" and "rules need to be enforced consistently by all teachers" (Jardin, p. 2)[426]. Instead, in this respect, discretionary practices dominate, which can lead to tensions among the school staff. The great number of measures and rules increase the scope for interpretation and thus lead to discretionary practices among teachers. "There are certain rules, but everyone applies them a little bit according to their own feelings" (Vaudrel, p. 8).

All these initiatives and reflections question the role of the educational community in improving the students' experiences. Furthermore, while blaming socio-ethnic aspects for the students' failure at school, this aspect is not mentioned as an obstacle in their daily work experience. Instead, teachers highlight a lack of cohesion and room for collective pedagogic reflection and cooperation, including with the non-teaching staff, or even implementation of alternative approaches of teaching. The following section focuses on the interplay between individual and institutional reasons, as well as reasons specifically related to La Balikan. Thus far attempts to change the pedagogy at a systemic level have been rather unsuccessful. How can this be explained?

---

[425] This teacher was particularly tired and emotionally fragile regarding this thematic. She used to have certain leadership among the teachers, she was trying to set up an educational model according to the principles of Freinet pedagogy in La Balikan (I return to this later). She burst into tears as I mentioned the words of an 'old' teacher who, at the cafeteria, once said that the professionals used to share more meals: Original quotation: "Ce qui me fatigue, il manque de collectifs à la Balikan, d'élan collectif, de dynamisme collectif, de dynamique collective, de… [..]"/"je suis un peu en manque d'équipe soudée. Je dis pas qu'il y ait des divisions. C'est cordial. [..] on s'entend bien, pas de dispute, y a pas de clans, y a pas de conflit mais y a pas d'échanges pédagogiques non plus. [..]"

[426] Original quotation: "Et donc tu te bats un peu, t'essaies de trouver des solutions mais il faudrait que tout le monde les applique; il faudrait que tout le monde se dise bah voilà, comment on fait pour faire ça, pour faire en sorte que les gamins lèvent la main avant de parler en cours, pour être moins fatigué en fait, plus disponible, parce qu'en fait on est fatigué au bout d'une moment, après une journée de cours t'es crevé; et puis voilà, tu lâches, tu lâches au bout d'un moment, et petit à petit tu en as marre, parce que il faudrait une cohésion plus forte. Soit être plus drastique et dire, "voilà dans cet établissement ça se passe comme ça", et si ça ne se passe pas comme ça eh bien voilà, on met ça en place, soit dire bah écoute moi je fais 5-6 ans, 7, 8, 9, ans ici et puis je fonctionne d'une certaine manière, j'accepte ça, de se dire que c'est des gamins et que de toute façon ce ne sont pas mes enfants, et que l'éducatif c'est pas à moi de le remplir complètement et que je n'y arriverai pas tout simplement."

3.4.5.2 "I'm starting to get tired […] I don't know whether it is because of priority education or La Balikan"

The lack of collective impetus seems to discourage teachers in their capacity to make school better.

The logic of the "project", which aims to increase school actors' responsibility but also their capacity to apply collective solutions adapted to local issues coexists with traditional and hierarchical regulation of resources and norms (van Zanten, 2014, pp. 90 ff.) that may sometimes discourage actors' mobilisation.

The "trauma" of the pedagogic "experiment" (project) has marked the memory of La Balikan. As already mentioned in the first part, the project was introduced by the former principal three years ago, just before he retired. It was voted by the school board just before the summer break and against the votes of the teachers. The teachers were not against the pedagogic innovations it promoted, which included a reduction of teaching hours in order to create more time for teachers to organise project-based learning and interdisciplinary teaching. They voted against, because most of them asked for a "transition year" in order better prepared for the planned changes. The new principal Mrs. Madec had to deal with a project she had not initiated and maybe never would have. Furthermore, this experiment collided with the structural reform of lower secondary education. The enforcement of the experiment placed teachers in difficulty, divided school staff, and increased distrust towards the school head.

> *"It made us do impossible things […] it was a "big mess" because "we did not have the means to implement it" (Jardin, p. 3)*[427]*.*

> *"Well, the things that have changed… Well, the experiment has left traces in teachers' minds. Hem…. It was voted a bit against teachers' opinions. It was a project that was dealt with single-handedly, without teachers' approval –well, not exactly without our approval but we would have liked to have one more year to get prepared, but it was imposed on us. So it was complicated. There was maybe more distrust among the teaching staff. We are more careful. We tend to*

[427] Original quotation: "Il y a eu ça et puis le fait qu'on a essayé de trouver des solutions, donc on a été, un moment donné, un établissement expérimental sur des choses, il nous a fait faire des trucs pas possible, on s'est retrouvés coincés avec des trucs de 45minutes avec des projets à faire mais pareil, on n'avait pas les moyens de mettre ça en place donc c'est devenu un vaste bordel".

say 'no' quicker because we know that, if we say yes, we don't know where it will end … so well, there is still … more distrust" (Vaudrel, p. 12)[428]

.

"We had a great project [...] it turned into a great fiasco […] it was something that needed to be prepared a long time in advance. And exactly the same thing will happen next year [with the reform]" (Ferdinand, p. 3)

"I think, it was a great idea but I voted against in June […] because we lacked time. Everybody was about to be on holiday for two months, no teacher meets during the summer holidays to work on such a project. It asked all teachers to be involved and we needed lots of time to prepare the workshops on Thursday afternoons. We had to suggest interdisciplinary projects but there was no frame […] actually it was a terrible year. Personally I haven't recovered yet" (Louvard, p. 1)[429]

As expressed through the interviews, the pedagogic experiment had visibly marked teachers' "memory" negatively. While they were having a hard time to adapt to new circumstances, another decision related to the differentiation of educational areas ("priority education") seems to have increased their discouragement. Mrs. Louvard recalls their mobilisation against the local school administration after they heard that they would not get the label "REP +", which was given to the lower secondary school in the neighbouring "priority area". Thus, La Balikan was not granted supplementary financial and human resources, which could have been interpreted as a lack of recognition of their difficult working conditions. These two decisions led to tensions with decision-makers (the principal and the school administration). They also increased tensions among the teaching staff between the ones who mobilised and those, who did not. These events also illustrate the tensions between an (obscure) hierarchical

[428] Original quotation: "Euh, c'est qui a changé...Bah c'est l'expérimentation ça ça a laissé pas mal de traces dans les esprits. Euh, ça ça été voté un peu à l'encontre des profs. Donc c'est un projet qui a été porté à bout de bras sans la volonté -enfin c'était pas sans la volonté des profs, on avait dit oui mais on aurait aimé avoir une année de plus, mais on nous l'a imposé. Donc ça ça a été compliqué. Donc après du coup il y a peut-être plus de méfiance, des collègues enseignants en fait. On fait plus attention. On dit plus facilement non, parce qu'on sait que quand on dit oui, on sait pas jusqu'où.. y a toujours ouais […]. Plus de méfiance ouais"

[429] Original quotation: "pour moi l'idée était génale mais j'ai voté contre au mois de juin au CA parce que ça manquait de temps. On partait en vacances, deux mois, y a pas de profs qui se voient pendant les vacances pour travailler sur un projet tel. Parce que ça demandait la mobilisation de tous les enseignants et ça demandait un temps incroyable pour mettre en place les ateliers du jeudi après-midi. On devait proposer des choses, des choses trandisciplinaires mais y avait aucun cadre.. [..] et en fait ça a été une année terrible. Moi perso je suis pas guérie."

regulation and a procedural management of the local educational policy making (Zanten, 2014, pp. 90 ff.):

> *"[Mrs. Madec] did not take this project [the experiment] on. And it was cancelled very quickly [….] But we had changed the entire time table […] and it was stopped underhandedly with the support of the local school administration that was against it as well … because it cost too much because we were doing too much overtime and they did not have the means to pay, but actually this had not been anticipated: everyone was a bit responsible for the situation […] what discouraged me totally was that we nipped this project in the bud without trying to adapt it, without trying to see the positive in it. The following year we started again from scratch […] and the same year they refused to give us the label REP+; we joined the fray. I put myself at risk this year, we went to the local administration with Mrs. Lejeune. We had a conflict with [the inspector] in a meeting … it was emotionally challenging. We tried to make things change at La Balikan, to inform the parents, to boycott some things. So that we would get the label REP+. There were many things happening at the same time and we never won. And almost all teachers were mobilszed. Even if many of them didn't implicate themselves very much. But since we lost, since we didn't get anything, I was professionally devastated. We are not labelled REP+, we don't have any supplementary resources, we stopped the experiment, we stopped everything" (Louvard, pp. 1-2)*[430]

In her function as new school manager, Mrs. Madec promotes a different line of projects while getting back to a traditional setting. For example, she supports initiatives related to the objective of making the "English-German option" durable aiming to get the wealthy and educated families of a neighbouring primary school to enroll their children. Although she found the idea "good" (according to Mrs. Vaudrel's words), she did not support Mrs. Vaudrel's project for dropouts or Mrs. Louvard's project to initiate teachers in Freinet pedagogy. Furthermore, the relations between the teaching staff and the principal, or the

[430] Original quotation: "[…] elle ne s'est pas mise en tant que chef de file de ce projet. Et donc ça a été annulé très vite [..] sauf qu'on avait changé tous les horaires. [..] et ça s'est arrêté de façon très sournoise avec l'inspection qui était contre aussi.. alors l'inspection, parce que ça leur coutait cher parce que ça nous faisait faire des heures sup et qu'ils avaient pas les moyens de payer et qui n'avait pas été anticipées en fait : tout le monde est un peu responsable dans cette histoire. [...] ce qui m'a fait déchanter complètement c'est qu'on fasse mourir dans l'œuf un truc sans même essayer de l'adapter, sans même essayer d'en voir le positif. L'année d'après on repart à zéro. [...]Et alors dans la même année [...] on nous a refusé le label REP + ; on est monté au créneau. Je me suis exposée cette anéne là, je suis montée à l'inspection [...] avec Ms Lejeune. On s'est engueulé avec lui lors d'une réunion avec plein de chefs d'établissement, ça a été éprouvant. On a essayé de faire bouger des choses au collège, d'alerter les parents, de boycotter des trucs. Pour qu'on soit REP+ tu vois. Y a eu plusieurs choses en même temps et on n'a jamais eu gain de cause. Et là y avait un élan à peu près collectif. Même si y en a plein qui se mouillait pas... [..] mais comme on a perdu, comme on n'a rien eu, moi ça m'a anéantie professionnellement. On n'est pas REP+, on n'a aucun moyen en plus, on n'arrête l'expérimentation, on n'arrête tout. [..]"

nature of the "leadership" (Rayou & van Zanten, 2004), seem to impact on how teachers perceived cohesion in their school:

> *"…lots of things have changed. When I arrived there was a principal, well, it was her last year, she had a big mouth, strong principles regarding education, she was respected by the students. So, I never knew this period but I felt that it was kind of a golden age, when people talk about it today … we have the feeling that it was working better. Then there was another head of school, someone who was softer, an intellectual, who had good intentions but who had no authority over the students. I mean that it was a very lax atmosphere, students did not even know who he was; and today we have got a principal, who is a pure bureaucrat and completely indifferent to pedagogic issues" (Jardin, p. 3)*[431]

Mrs. Lejeune confirms that the first school principal (during the "golden age") considered informal gatherings and the sharing of information as very important. While she was "like a friend" and "allowed us to organise parties before almost every holiday", the current principal Mrs. Madec seems to be more distant and is not in "favour of having parties on school property" (Lejeune, p. 15)[432].

Many teachers deplore a lack of "teamwork" (see 2.3.1) at La Balikan. Most of those who note certain shortcomings blame either the organisation of their working hours or management in general. Structural, policy and local elements are intertwined that refer to the complex processes of devolution, decentralisation and "territorialisation" of public educational policies (Zanten, 2014, pp. 85 ff.). Mrs. Louvard, for instance, is not sure whether her 'tiredness' stems from the difficulties linked to the 'priority education' section, which she

[431] Original quotate: "Beaucoup de choses ont changé. Quand je suis arrivé il y avait une principale, c'était sa dernière année, qui était une forte gueule, qui avait des principes très forts dans l'éducation, qui était respectée des élèves. Voilà donc je n'ai pas connu cette période-là mais je sentais que c'était la belle époque un petit peu, quand on en parle aujourd'hui de voilà... on avait l'impression que ça tournait quand même plus. Et puis il y a eu une nouvelle direction, avec quelqu'un d'un peu plus mou, un intellectuel, qui était pétri de bonnes intentions mais qui par contre n'était pas du tout dans un rapport, je veux dire "autoritaire" dans le sens positif du terme avec l'élève. Je veux dire que c'était hyper laxiste, les élèves ne savaient même pas qui il était; et là aujourd'hui on a une chef d'établissement qui est une administratrice pure, une gestionnaire pure et du coup qui est complètement détachée des questions pédagogiques."

[432] Original quotate: "Alors au niveau de l'ambiance entre les collègues moi j'ai connu trois chefs d'établissement. Et c'est vrai qu'avant l'ambiance étaient quand même plus, je trouve festive un peu entre les collègues. Tu vois on faisait quasiment à chaque vacances des petites bouffes, on faisait en fait nos fins d'année dans le collège, on les a même fait dans les ateliers technos là, dans la cour, et les chefs d'établissement étaient avec nous et voilà. Là maintenant il y a un changement à ce niveau-là, il a quand même des petites restrictions. Avant en fait c'était G.M. qui était l'intendante, et qui étaient en fait l'une de nos copines. Et un peu fêtarde on va dire aussi. Et donc voilà toutes les fêtes du collège, quand on demandait de faire un truc en salle des profs ou dans la cour, en fait faut mettre l'alarme quand on part et elle c'était la dernière à partir, elle mettait l'alarme. Et puis même le chef des fois, il restait tard aussi à des fêtes de fin d'année. Là Madec est plus à cheval sur le respect, on va dire, voilà des choses, et elle voit pas d'un très bon œil le fait que l'on fasse la fête à l'intérieur de l'établissement. Et du coup on n'a pas été tout le temps autorisés à faire ça."

always used to like, or whether it is due to the leadership at La Balikan under Mrs. Madec of which she disapproves (Louvard, pp. 1-2)[433].

The complexity of the situation becomes visible when looking at how teachers are assigned to difficult schools. As it is done now, it may not provide teachers with the best conditions to promote collective solutions to cope with their difficulties. It does not only involve the process of allocating young and unexperienced teachers to difficult schools, but also the conditions that provide professional instability.

Mrs. Lejeune and Mrs. Louvard emphasise the "important turnover" and the diversity of statutes such as the "adjunct faculty" (*Blocs de moyens provisoires).* These part-time teachers are shared between several schools, "which actually makes it difficult to involve them in a team (Ms Lejeune, p. 15)[434].

While the above-mentioned failed pedagogic project foresaw paid working hours that teachers could use to develop their teamworking skills, the now re-established traditional model is mainly perceived as lacking (paid) opportunities for teamwork (beyond some occasional projects). However, this should not be understood as a lack of measures encouraging co-teaching but rather as a lack of settings enabling teachers to address common issues and reflect on ways to solve them. Regular meetings bringing together teaching staff, the school head and sometimes representatives of non-teaching staff constitute an additional burden in the teachers' schedule and are not perceived as creative spaces for reflection and solutions. For instance, many meetings were dedicated to the preparation of top-down reform. These meetings not only led to disagreements among teachers but also were disliked because no-one was paid for attending them.

> *"… the big problem here, in this kind of school, is that we don't work as a team [….] the first thing is that in the definition of the teacher statute, there is no time foreseen for teamwork; this means that if you decide to organise a dialogue or to do some projects, you won't be granted additional hours by the administration. Everything happens in your free time. This means that if you want to work in a team, that includes 30 people working together, you have to organise these meetings during the lunch time or in the evening and in any case*

[433] Original quotation: "Je commence à fatiguer. Je commence à fatiguer de la ZEP, de l'éducation prioritaire, je commence à fatiguer du fonctionnement, je commence à être trop souvent déçue [...] Je sais pas trop si c'est l'éducation prioritaire ou la Balikan qui des fois me fatigue."

[434]Original quotation: "Il y a quand même un *turn* over assez important dans le collège […] et de plus en plus avec les DGH à un peu à la con, il y a de plus en plus de collègues qui sont sur plusieurs établissements. Et donc tu vois t'investir dans une équipe et tout, enfin c'est un peu plus dur en fait […] une équipe stable et qui fait ses temps plein à la Balikan, c'est des collègues qui sont là tous les jours et qui connaissent les problématiques du coup, qui suivent les évènements…".

not everyone will be present, since these meetings are not included in the normal working hours" (Jardin, p. 2)[435]

Jardin does not hesitate to say that teachers should be paid for a 40-hour-weekly presence job (meaning they are not able to go back home even if they have no classes). Would such an option be agreed by all without reconsidering the whole teaching function?

Yet, in times of budget cuts, few teachers believe in the possibility of such a reform, which would imply a general pay rise. Furthermore, collaborating is not easy, according to the diversity of teachers' different pedagogic approaches, timetables, and statutes. This might explain why most of the teamwork is driven by personal relations and friendships. Indeed, according to Mrs. Lejeune, there exists numerous occasions for interdisciplinary work ("*conseils pédagogiques*, *Aide Personalisée*, interdisciplinary projects, own teachers' initiatives…"). These occasions are used by those who feel at ease with co-teaching and collective projects and dedicate time to it (have the possibility to do so). "Some teachers meet outside of school" (a minority), others "do not bother". And "otherwise, we don't meet that much outside of school […] But it's like everywhere, you have colleagues who are involved […] and others, more neutral…" (Lejeune, pp. 6-7)[436]. Such a division might cause tensions among the teaching staff and inhibit a general mobilisation of teachers.

The testimonies also suggest that time theoretically reserved for teacher' meetings is very often used for other duties. Mrs. Vaudrel regrets that no time is formally reserved for teacher-only meetings. It seems to her, "as if the educational authority is afraid that teachers will play truant". She refers to the failed above-mentioned project, during which time that was not dedicated to teaching was meticulously planned through by the institutional authorities (Vaudrel, 2016, p. 8)[437].

---

[435] Original quotation "Alors effectivement, le gros problème ici, enfin dans ce genre d'établissement c'est qu'on ne travaille pas assez en équipe, […]: la première chose c'est que, […]de définition du métier de l'enseignant, on te donne pas de temps pour travailler en équipe; c'est-à-dire que tout le travail en équipe, toute la concertation que tu peux faire, même là avec la réforme, si tu veux faire des projets etc., tu n'auras pas de temps dans ton emploi du temps qui sera compté comme des réunions d'équipe etc. donc c'est toi qui le fais quoi. C'est-à-dire que si tu veux travailler en équipe où il faudrait mettre 30 personnes ensemble, bah ce serait des réunions qui seraient prises sur le temps du midi ou le soir et il n'y aurait jamais tout le monde, car ce n'est pas inscrit dans ton temps de travail."

[436] Original quotation: "[…] plein d'occasions de se retrouver de façon interdisciplinaire (conseil péda, AP, pratiques interdisciplinaires, initiatives de quelques professeurs… […] après sinon on se voit pas trop en fait en dehors [..] Enfin ça les préoccupe pas trop quoi. Ils viennent faire leurs heures et puis voilà quoi après ce qui se passe à côté un peu, bon du moment qu'ils aient leurs classes, leurs emplois du temps corrects. Bon après je pense que c'est comme ça partout, quoi, t'as des collègues qui s'engagent [..] et puis d'autres voilà, plus neutres".

[437] Original quotation: "Une heure libre où on pouvait se concerter librement. Et ça ça devrait être dans tous les établissements. Parce qu'on nous demande de faire des projets, nanana, de travailler là-dessus, de faire des évaluations communes, bah oui mais on a nos emplois du temps, on a notre emploi du temps global familial,

Nevertheless, the meeting that Mrs. Louvard convened during lunch time to inform her colleagues about the possibilities of the Freinet pedagogy and to "test the waters" – to her own surprise – was met with approval[438]. It gave perspective to certain prejudices some teachers held about other teachers' "unwillingness to get involved" in school matters. This time, almost all teachers were present and some of them participated and took the opportunity to express themselves collectively about current issues. It also revived the trauma of the failed experiment, which some teachers addressed in their comments. The tension was palpable. The meeting was quite abruptly put to an end when Mrs. Madec stated her disapproval of the Freinet-project (fieldwork note 01/04/2016). Despite some similar pedagogical approaches, the implementation of such a project would have been difficult when simultaneously enforcing the top-down "réforme du collège".

3.4.5.3 "I don't really see what they want to do with our education system"

Certain educational reforms work and others do not, and the latest developments of the research point in this respect to the role of actors' commitment in the implementation of any change (practices, organisation, teaching arrangements (Rey, 2016). From this perspective, "change has to be understood by looking at the actors' practices and representations. In other words, changing [teachers'] practices needs to be understood by the meaning they have to the actors themselves in order to better cope with the issues that prevent them from committing to prescribed general objectives and norms" (ibid., pp. 22-23).

From this perspective, the issue of "*décrochage scolaire*" and its representations and practices should be addressed and debated with the teachers. More specifically, the fight against "*décrochage scolaire*" and the reforms are not related to each other in the testimonies (as it is in Mrs. Madec's discourse, see part 2). At La Balikan, an atmosphere of distrust dominates regarding the reform, while they still consider it essential to share affinities in order to cooperate or recognise that teachers have their own teaching style.

> *"Well, now they ask us to co-teach classes, but it will be impossible because, imagine the difficulty, I will teach a class jointly with you but you want to work*

---

après pour trouver des créneaux enfin, faudrait imposer des choses je pense. C'est pas normal...alors on a essayé hein. Quand on a eu l'expérimentation -je sais pas si mes autres collègues en ont parlé...ouais donc bah ça a été un fiasco total, parce toutes les heures on était censé préparer les projets, bah on nous a imposé des réunions, des formations, donc à quasiment aucun moment on a pu se retrouver pour échanger. A croire que dans l'éducation nationale on a peur que s'il y a une heure de pointée dans l'emploi du temps pour concertation des enseignants, je pense que la hiérarchie a peur qu'on ne se voit pas, qu'on sèche, qu'on...mais non."

[438] I participated in several meetings organised during lunch time and rarely did they enjoy the same participation as this one.

with the English teacher because you've got a project with him. Then he … well, it'll be impossible to implement that. So finally, I think next year won't be easy" (Lejeune, p. 20)[439]

Even if Mrs. Louvard wishes for more teamwork regarding pedagogic issues, she admits that there is no "universal vision" of "what should be". The former experiment and the current reform have been "pushing" everybody to work in a team but it is not a model with which everyone is at ease: "I think there are a lot of teachers who are unhappy [with the reform] who want a classical schema [following the principle] I am doing my weekly 18 hours and that's it" (Louvard, 2016, p. 2)[440].

The reform aims to standardise teachers' teaching methods and pastoral duties, yet, according to many of them, without providing the appropriate organisational and institutional support:

"The reform [says] 'well, now you have to work together' […]. By involving people, even if they don't do it by themselves, in a dialogue, a community…. The problem is that the reform doesn't provide us with the time for that. So well, there are two constraints. A deontological constraint and a material one (Jardin, p. 3)[441]

Mrs. Lejeune, for instance, who has witnessed the decrease in financial resources, rather agrees with the principles of the reform. Yet, she cannot imagine implementing it word for word, because the allocated resources do not improve teachers' possibilities to work in an interdisciplinary way and do not provide students with more differentiated support. They even threaten existing measures, which aimed to ease teaching conditions, such as co-teaching or the reduction of class sizes (Lejeune, p. 18)[442].

---

[439] Original quotation: "Là on va nous demander de le faire mais d'être en coanimation c'est quasiment impossible parce que, imagine le casse-tête chinois là si moi je vais être en coanimation avec toi mais toi tu veux être en coanimation avec le collègue d'anglais aussi parce que t'as un projet avec lui. Puis lui...enfin c'est impossible à faire. Donc du coup ouais je pense que là pour la rentrée prochaine ça va être un peu tâtonné et puis ça va pas être simple." In a school, which is not part of this research, it could be observed that some teachers even took the risk of skipping this compulsory co-teaching. They negotiated to alternate every other week the leading of the class.

[440] Original quotation: "Je pense que voilà y a plein de profs qui sont pas contents de ça, qui veulent un schéma classique, je fais mes 18h et voilà".

[441] Original quotation: "[…] la réforme elle cherche justement à uniformiser justement les pratiques; en disant "bah voilà, maintenant vous êtes obligés de faire des projets par exemple. En donnant l'obligation de faire des accompagnements personnalisés, des EPI, et en faisant que ces obligations-là deviennent des choix d'équipes. En impliquant les gens, même s'ils ne le font pas eux-mêmes, dans une concertation, une collectivité. Le problème c'est que la réforme elle ne donne pas de temps pour ça. Mais voilà, deux contraintes à ça quoi. Une contrainte déontologique et une contrainte matérielle quoi".

[442] Original quotation: "Mais de manière générale ouais les moyens baissent un peu partout quoi. Avant on avait des classes 6ème à projet, on faisait beaucoup plus de choses et c'est vrai qu'on sentait qu'on pouvait faire des choses quoi. On avait les budgets. Là maintenant à chaque fois que l'on propose un truc c'est compliqué quoi. Et puis il y a des choses qu'on ne fait plus parce qu'il n'y a plus de sous. Là l'aide-aux-devoirs c'est des étudiants

Others, like Mrs. Dubuy, are puzzled. She does not see what "they want to do with our school system"[443] (fieldwork notes, 12/01/18)[444]. Mr. Ferdinand sees in this "umpteenth" and "time wasting" reform a measure that will yield no results. According to him, teachers "don't learn anything new", the reform recycles "old themes", which have already been "unsuccessfully implemented" … "we come to these things again and again but shhh!" (Ferdinand, pp. 3-4).

The surge against structural top-down reforms is not new and has been greatly analysed notably as resulting from the French model of decision making in education (combining co-construction and authoritarian imposition, as well as the role of unions in organising compliance or revolt, van Zanten, 2014, pp. 73 ff.; Prost, 2013, p. 230). F. Dubet (2002) saw them as the result of tensions resulting from the subjectivation of teaching activities. A reform satisfies some interests and convictions and hurts others. A protest, or at least a distrust on principle seems to be part of the on the job socialisation, as illustrated by this young teacher, who remains sceptical about the capacity of the institution to implement durable changes, while the pace of the reform regularly disturbs its appropriation:

> *"…the thing is that I hope that everything will be done now; that we don't change everything for the short-term, because what is happening now, we talked about it with the colleagues the other day, the day the far right is in power, well I think they make other reforms that will undo this one. I don't know. For a language teacher, it's positive. Because we'll start to teach from the 5th grade […]I saw a lot of teachers changing their minds, getting more involved. But well, you know the educational system, don't you? As soon as there is a reform, you know that shortly after there will be a demonstration" (Touba, p. 11)[445].*

This research highlights the missing organisational and institutional conditions that would allow teachers to meet and to collectively debate and reflect about concrete difficulties they

---

bénévoles qui viennent quoi […] Bah je pense que ouais proposer des choses interdisciplinaires et de l'aide personnalisée c'est très très bien mais malheureusement on nous donne pas du tous les moyens."

[443] Original quotation: "je vois pas trop ce qu'ils veulent faire avec notre système éducatif "

[444] Original quotation: "Tu vois on a plein de réunions à la con pour la réforme, et c'est du vent pour moi. C'est du vent toutes ces réunions. On en a déjà eu deux. C'est du vent, on n'a rien appris. Et voilà. Et souvent quand on a une réunion comme ça, entre collègues, oui on discute on discute mais voilà, je trouve qu'il n'en ressort rien quoi. Donc pour moi c'est une perte de temps. […]Alors on en parle on en parle et rien ne se met en place, et on arrive au premier septembre il n'y aura rien de mis en place. C'est du bricolage qu'on va faire, on fera illusion. Ouais il y a des choses qui seront à peu près bien, mais ça sera de l'illusion totale. Et même, ces choses-là on été testées déjà il y a plusieurs années, les IDD, Itinéraires de découverte, des choses comme ça, et on y revient tout le temps mais pouf…"

[445] Original quotation: "le truc c'est que j'espère que tout ce qui va être fait maintenant, qu'on ne fasse pas un changement à court terme quoi, parce que ce qui est en train de se passer maintenant, on en parlait avec d'autres collègues, le jour où par exemple la droite passe, si un jour la droite passe, bah je pense qu'ils referont une autre réforme et qu'ils annuleront celle-là quoi. Je sais pas. Après, pour un prof d'espagnol, pour un prof de langue, c'est positif. Puisque du coup on va commencer les classes à partir des 5ème […] Dès qu'il y a une réforme de toute façon tu sais que hein, il y aura une manifestation quelques secondes plus tard."

encounter on their job. The head of the special needs education track initiated occasional and voluntary meetings where teachers had the possibility to address problems anonymously. I could observe the positive consequences for the participants, who always asked for a follow-up meeting. Teachers could express relational issues with other school staff, the disputed shared competence in pedagogy between the head of school and teachers, and external pressures, such as the catchment area definition (fieldwork notes, 25/04/16). The lack of room for reflection and initiatives based on teachers' experiences contributes to the weakening of their cohesion, which is already jeopardised by the multiplication of their statutes (temporary/full-time worker) and quick teacher turnover. The risk is that they may dismiss any form of collective involvement and consider the classroom as the space where they can express their freedom, trying to solve the issues they face on their own.

3.5 Comparative lessons

What can be learned, when comparing teachers' perceptions of and attitudes towards "*décrochage scolaire/Schulverweigerung*" in France and Germany?

In both schools, the issue "*décrochage scolaire*/*Schulverweigerung*" is not explicitly debated with the teachers, especially not against the backdrop of the ongoing reforms (*GMS*/*réforme du collège*) implemented in the name of "equal opportunities" and "inclusion". Both in France and in Germany, the teachers interviewed do not see the reforms as means to improve the classroom situation or face the challenges of their "heterogeneous" clientele. They deplore the lack of resources and redefinition of teachers' service needed to face the challenges of "project-based" teaching, "inclusion" and "differentiation". Teachers' attitudes towards these reforms can be easily summarised in four words: "hostility", "discouragement", "distrust", and "scepticism". German teachers seem to be particularly exhausted, while their jobs, in comparison to their French counterparts, involve more non-teaching activities and, in principle, more teaching hours (29 to 18)—even if two out of three German teachers interviewed were not working full-time.

If teachers are not convinced of the validity and the promises of the educational system they embody, how can students believe in it?

Teachers' testimonies follow a similar mindset: their discourses first blames students' environment and parental education, which reveals class-based and ethnic positioning, before considering the role of the institution (including theirs sometimes, often blaming "defective" leadership although they recognise that principals do not have it easy either). To say that students' (or their parents) did not "want" is more acceptable for their role than to say they

"could not" (Leloup, 2000). Investigating the issue of "*décrochage scolaire*/*Schulverweigerung*" has highlighted the ambivalence of teachers' positioning, who are also aware of complex changing social settings and of the difficult socio-economic context of "dropouts". Prejudice and stereotypes are much influenced by the local/national contexts, contingent historical events and socio-economic-political transformations: so the "Hartz-IV parent" or the role of "communitarianism" where (Muslim) religion and "culture" challenge the institutional norms and authority. In that case, most arguments refer indistinctly to unemployed parents with little or no education and who do not commit to school norms and expectations, thereby "excluding themselves" and their children from school.

At La Balikan, making students and parents responsible for their non-commitment can be interpreted as unwillingness to enter into the delicate topic of their environments being affected by the social question. Moreover, the development of personal relations might disturb the pedagogic relation, and the teachers' role as conveyors of knowledge. The "school of the Republic" requires treating everyone the same way. In Germany, teachers tend to make parents and students responsible in order to avoid additional workload in a context where non-teaching tasks are becoming an ever-greater burden. Representations are often ambivalent, mirroring the complexity of such a phenomenon as "passive" or "active" drop out. Arguments making students and parents responsible for their negative school participation in general overlap with arguments describing students as victims of internal and external factors: The ambivalence of teachers' testimonies illustrates the fact that "educational success depends on a number of variables and their constellations; there is no simple causality" (Amos and al., *op. cit*., p. 86). The fact remains that, for these authors, attributions and stereotyping have an influence on the way teachers consider their role and interpret it. Insofar, it has an influence on the way support is conceived. Amos et *al*. see it as challenge for the new *GMS*, which also includes the "unclear or ineffective communication structures of the professional actors involved": "because teachers tend to be particularly stressed and overworked in these schools, not least due to political pressure and high performance expectations, and the other professions (school psychologists and social workers) have their own professional procedures and organisational structures (i.e. they respond to organisational logic outside of schooling), feedback and communication loops may be a real problem" (ibid., p. 85).

If the (class-based) tensions between teachers and parents are not a new phenomenon in the history of compulsory schooling, one can assume that the relations between different worlds

experiencing different norms of work due to the precarization of many situations (Observatoire des inégalités et Compas, 2018; Geißler, 2014) are unlikely to improve this situation. While a dominant discourse stresses more than ever the importance of education (and diplomas) for future life chances, the structural trend of the loosening correspondence between education and jobs (Dubet and al., 2010, p. 164) may turn such a situation into an explosive one. Furthermore, this should lead us to question the general wisdom according to which students' diversity is perceived as challenging (following on from the dissolution of homogeneous clientele) whereas the homogeneity of teachers is never really put into question (Stauber, *op. cit.*).

The following two testimonies of Mrs. Rist (Geschwister Scholl *GMS*) and Mr. Jardin (La Balikan) echo each other. Both refer to existing attitudes of their school towards the problem "dropout". For Rist, the school addresses the problem of the "active" dropouts (physically absent) by "calling the police". I already mentioned that this measure follows a symbolical and securitisation logic. At the same time, the school completely ignores the "passive" dropouts, meaning what could be a more rooted issue (Rist, p. 18)[446].

For Mr. Jardin, the school has improved in the tracking of absenteeism. He also identifies "some tools" that effectively take into account "students' learning needs". Nevertheless, if students "drop out for other reasons" than learning related issues, "these reasons are not addressed" (Jardin, p. 9)[447].

This positioning reveals that teachers are, in both French and German school studies, a resource on their own: they fight or abandon but to a great extent, the fight against "early exits" involves their subjectivity enormously. On the other hand, political guidelines promote a cross-sectoral vision of education resulting from the cooperation between all professional actors constituting the school community. At La Balikan as well at the Geschwister Scholl, despite different traditions, this cooperation is commensurate with the isolation of teachers, who are focused on their problems in the classroom and "make use" of the non-teaching

---

[446] Original quotation: "also bei der aktiven, also .. mit dem Antrag und die Polizei, genau.. dass der Herr M. zu Hause anruft... bei den passiven… macht man gar nichts. Pff.Eigentlich macht man nichts.ähm..".

[447] Original quotation: "Après ce en quoi l'établissement fait des progrès c'est justement dans les outils qui permettent une meilleure visibilité des absences des élèves, mais le reste… et puis des dispositifs particuliers qui permettent aux élèves de travailler sur des compétences fondamentales comme fluence, tacite, qui font que voilà les élèves sont quand même pris en compte dans leurs difficultés mais, en dehors de la difficulté pédagogique... si on se disait bah voilà les élèves décrochent parce qu'ils sont en difficulté, là on a quelques outils, on fait des trucs c'est vrai, mais si on se dit : c'est parce que ils ont des difficultés mais aussi pour d'autres raisons, ces autres raisons là on les a pas explorées, on sait pas. Enfin moi en tout cas je sais pas. L'établissement ne me parait pas être pionnier en la matière… des élèves qui décrochent on les envoie aux chalets, en classe-relais, on leur fait parfois un PPR[447], plan personnalisé de réussite... l'adjoint me demande dans son bureau et me demande si je veux être référent élève, je dis ok, mais voilà c'est tout."

professionals in a discretionary way. The conclusive development should open to the last part that addresses the perspective of the non-teaching staff.

3.5.1 The subjective experience of teaching

Struggling against "*décrochage scolaire/Schulverweigerung*" is about trying to convince students of the importance of the subject and induce them to actively participate, involve their intelligence and subjectivity. They have to manage this and negotiate their authority in narrow imposed settings, knowing that some students might have difficult situations at home, other interests or preoccupations. They have to enforce the meritocratic ideology despite the fact that they have many reasons to question it. The job as a teacher challenges the individual's personality and ego. Pedagogic and didactic methods cannot be fully rationalised, since "their efficiency must "fit" with the personalities of those who implement them; thus teachers tend to be suspicious towards techniques that one wants to impose on them and prefer to adapt them in their ways" (Dubet, 2002, p. 158).

According to Jardin, "this is what is terrible about teaching as a job". Teaching is an activity of seduction and students have to be transported in order to listen to and learn: "students will be more receptive to someone that interests them, in human terms, than to orders "careful, you should know how to count, you should know…" (Jardin, p. 7)[448]. It implies "human" competences that one does not necessarily acquire and learn at the university. That teachers consider their charm and personal competences as their own resource may turn teaching into a challenging job. And the fight against early leaving is transformed into a personal fight when one still has the energy.

Most German and teachers interviewed refer to their own strategies and leadership to catch students' attention which they develop over years. Teaching is a personal learning process and experience that develops over the whole career (Dubet, 2002, pp. 156-158).

Against the backdrop of increasingly heterogeneous classroom, "doing the class" mainly consists in establishing the conditions that enable to do the class (Dubet, p. 154), to enforce the rules of the game and make students internalise and respect the appropriate behavioural codes. Teachers emphasise the relationship and the importance in connecting with students.

[448] Original quotation: "Et puis tu sais pertinemment, et ça c'est terrible dans notre métier ; pour moi c'est la grande tragédie de notre métier , c'est qu'on veut développer des outils pédagogiques, des savoir-faire etc pour amener les élèves à avoir des compétences, etc. etc. alors qu'on sait très bien que ce qui va fonctionner chez les élèves, ce qui va faire que l'élève va avoir un déclic, c'est l'individu qui va le toucher; C'est ce qu'on appelle à l'IUFM (teacher college) "l'effet maître". C'est-à-dire qu'il va être largement plus réceptif à quelqu'un qui l'intéresse, en terme d'humain, qu'à des injonctions: « attention faut savoir compter, faut savoir…"

At La Balikan and at the Geschwister Scholl *GMS*, teachers develop their strategies to keep students interested. At the same time, a lot of them show signs of tiredness or even resignation[449]. In general, teachers tend to complain about their increasingly weary working conditions, which leads many of them to retire prematurely (Kastirke & Jennessen *op. cit.*; Duru-Bellat & van Zanten, *op. cit.*, p. 143)[450].

3.5.1.1 At the Geschwister Scholl GMS

At the Geschwister Scholl *GMS*, the three teachers interviewed all underlined the lack of discipline in their classes. However, each of them has a different way of dealing with rebelling attitudes and disruptions. Mr. Müller, somewhat half-heartedly, makes use of his "natural" authority, male voice and large stature and enforces traditional punitive measures. He also invests "much time" in establishing a good class atmosphere. Mrs. Rist seems to have resigned to a challenge that is overburdening her (see above). Mr. Schatzl fights to find the right measure that will help him to enforce his authority.

For Rist, the pedagogical relationship is based on "finding the right distance" and building up a special bond (*Beziehungsarbeit*) between the child and the teacher (Rist, p. 3)[451]. Potential problems should be solved before the beginning of class, so that the students do not get distracted. However, she is no longer able to live up to this principle "because the disruptions have become too many" and "she does not know how she should start" (Rist, p. 16)[452].

---

[449] Despite the fact that they "love" their work and particularly the students, the majority of the teachers interviewed were looking to be transferred to another school or even leave the school (Mrs. Rist and Mr. Schatzl who actually did, Mr. Markel, the principal of the Geschwister School GMS; Mrs. Lejeune, Mrs. Vaudrel, Mrs. Louvard, Mr. Jardin also told me in their interviews that they were looking to change the school; the principal Mrs. Madec left the school one year after I was finished my research at the school). At La Balikan, the non-teaching staff was often referring to teachers' regular absences (for instance: " *commission de suivi des élèves*, professionals talk about teachers generally, criticising their defensive and "authoritarian" attitudes which have a negative influence on students, while they "do not listen to" their recommendations (the deputy tried to give a teacher some advice about his attitude). The discussion evolves towards the feeling of injustice experienced by some students resulting from those attitudes. The social worker continues: "it is like telling them [students] that they should not be absent whereas [implying teachers are often absent] (fieldwork notes, 31/03/2016); Thomas and Annie (educational assistants) know of many absences among the teachers. This behaviour irritates educational assistants' irritation. The story of one teacher who stayed at home because "her 16-year-old girl had gastrointestinal disorders" is telling (Thomas & Annie, p. 16).

[450] In Germany, a higher proportion of teachers, compared with other professional groups, are retiring early because of mental health issues (see Kastirke & Jennessen *op. cit.*). The fact that teachers are particularly sensitive to burnout has prompted an increased interest in the issue of teachers' health (vgl. Dauber & Döring-Seipel, 2013, S. 11 quotiond by Böhl *et al., op.cit.* pp. 157-159)

[451] Original quotation: "D.h. am Anfang war ich noch sehr damit beschäftigt mich selber zu finden, wie möchte ich überhaupt sein als Lehrerin. Wieviel Distanz brauche ich zu den Schülern aber auch wie viele Nähe. Also dieses Thema Beziehungsarbeit zu Schülern war die ersten Jahre sehr wichtig".

[452] Original quotation: Oh, so habe ich studiert… eigentlich ist es immer so ein Grundthema der Pädagogik: holt die Kinder dort ab wo sie stehen. Und manchmal, wenn die Welt außerhalb der Schule so unterschiedlich ist,

Mr. Schatzl, on the other hand, seeks to fully assert his authority (Schatzl, pp. 8-13)[453]. He describes an endless and never-ending fight between him and the students. Initially, he thought that simply expelling students would force them to behave. However, as he had to admit, he was wrong: "they start to argue!"[454]

For Mr. Müller it is about emphasising the transmission of behavioural codes in order to establish a peaceful and respectful learning environment. Although Müller blames the prison-like features of the contemporary educational system, he doesn't see any better way to discipline his students than being authoritarian and severe from the beginning (Müller, p. 15). He also invests a lot of time in the relationship and in class cohesion, which he considers as his first role besides the transmission of knowledge ("*Erziehungsarbeit*," p. 2). As he said, he could not realise this "essential" task and invest "so much energy and time in the relationship" (*Beziehungsarbeit*) if he was working "27 hours a week"[455] (Müller, p. 2, p. 8)[456]. When he considers that his authority has been more or less accepted ("after half a year"), he "relaxes" the pressure. Sometimes he lets students suggest a song and while they do written exercises, he plays the music in the background. He is satisfied with his work "if, on the one hand,

---

dann schafft man diesen Spagat nicht … die Kinder dort abzuholen, wo sie grade sind […]Inzwischen gibt es so viele Störungen, soviele Punkte, dass ich nicht weiß, wo ich da anfangen soll."

[453] Original quotation: "Also ich habe auch oft geschrien, was keine pädagogische Methode ist. So ich habe echt alles... ich war laut, ich war gemein, ich war ruhig, ich war… Also ja sie haben gesagt, mach doch und so, ich habe Leute rausgeschmissen, ich habe ALLES probiert, ALLES. Aber sie haben gemerkt, ich lass es nicht locker. Also egal was ich gemacht habe, aber ich habe immer Stressgekriegt" (Schatzl, p. 8)

[454] Original quotation: "Also erst. Als ich mit der 8. Klasse angefangen habe, hatte ich dann so, drei Striche, also [lächelt] erste Vorwarnung, zweite Vorwarnung, dann hatte ich erst, was hatte ich… ich glaube eine Strafarbeit, es hat nicht funktioniert. Dann habe ich gesagt, ich rufe bei den Eltern an, das hat dann auch nur so mäßig funktioniert. Dann hatte ich Nachsitzen... alles alles… und dann habe ich irgendwann gesagt, he ich habe keine Lust mehr auf diese drei Striche, entweder ihr funktioniert jetzt oder es gibt Stress und so. Und dann am Ende des Jahres mit der 8 Klasse lief es ok. Und jetzt aber 9. Ist wieder... so runtergegangen. Und das sind nicht alle. Es ist nur einen Teil. Ich habe gemerkt, jetzt beim Rauschmeißen. Ich schmeiße so, 10 Leute raus und der Rest funktioniert. […] hinterher kamen zwei, drei von denen, die mitarbeiten wollen haben gesagt, he, wir finden es total gut. Und dann wusste ich ok alles klar so mache ich es. Aber glaub nicht, dass es jetzt total toll ist! Sie fangen an zu diskutieren! [afft die Schüler] "he, wie he, warum! Und was soll das jetzt, ich habe doch gar nichts gemacht" (Schatzl, p. 6).

[455] Full-time service.

[456]Original quotation: "Also Erziehungsarbeit. Ich lege viel Wert auf die Beziehung zu den Schülern. Und investiere auch Zeit. Aber auch das könnte ich den Massen (???) nicht tun, wenn ich 27 Stunden arbeiten würde. Ich könnte nicht soviel Energie und Zeit in Beziehungsarbeit investieren. Und dann eben, das 2. Ziel, Fahrinhalte vermitteln. Den Kindern Englich beibringen, den Kindern Geschichte beibringen aber Erziehungsarbeit finde ich wichtiger" (Müller, p. 2). "und ich habe. Ich bin echt … ich habe, ich habe.. jetzt ist das erste halbe Jahr ich habe mich voll viel Zeit genommen mit der Klasse und habe wirklich viel mit denen geredet, viel mit denen gearbeitet. Und sie hatten am Anfang ja... sehr viel Probleme mit Mobbing und mit ja auch mit Gewalt. Also so... so die Art von Gewalt was für den ein Spaß ist und für den anderen eben nicht. Und ja.. ganz viel mit .. Respektlosigkeit" (p. 8)

students have understood what he tried to teach them"; and, on the other hand, "when he notices that students like to come to school" (Müller, p. 22)[457].

3.5.1.2 At La Balikan

The strategies observed at La Balikan are numerous, diverse and scattered: from using charm and personality through to the adoption of motherly attitudes in the implementation of alternative educational approaches. Some of these approaches though, if they buy a kind of social peace in a particluar moment, are not necessarily helping students' educational success in the middle and long-term.

At La Balikan, Mr. Ferdinand is a "lonely warrior". His has built his success on his lifelong experience in "difficult" schools, mostly welcoming students from underprivileged categories. Mr. Ferdinand spends a lot of time in planning and renewing his teaching ("I think a lot of my colleagues ignore it")[458]; in his class, he is "putting on a show", "plays a role, makes jokes". His motivation, his "challenge", is to make them "feel like going to school, and to his class" and "if not for them, for the next generation" saying that if students have good souvenirs of their school experience, they will tell their children that school is worth going". The "challenge" is also "to win over a big slacker, who does not give a shit [about school], who even disturbs the class, and to succeed in making him work"[459]. These "unmotivated" students even give "sense to his work" (the same as for Mrs. Louvard and Mrs. Lejeune, see above). He would not want change for anything else (his wife informed him that a post would be free

---

[457] Original quotation: "wenn also… zum einen, wenn de Schüler was lernen, wenn ich sehe in ihrer Arbeit, dass sie verstanden haben, was ich ihnen beibringe. Und zum anderen, wenn ich merke dass die Schüler ein gutes Verhältnis zu mir haben und, dass wir in unserer Klasse [???].. dann irgendwann auch die Schüler.. also wenn da keine Aggressionen da sind, wenn ich merke dass die Schüler gerne in der Schule sind… das finde ich erfolgreich".

[458] To justify himself that he prefers to work on his own contrary to the current injunction to "work in team".

[459]Justifying the fact that he rather likes to work on his own and is not much into teamwork: " je pense que beaucoup de collègues n'en sont pas conscients mais je passe énormément de temps à préparer mes cours, parce que je les renouvelle tout le temps ", Ferdinand, p. 4 " Moi après je t'ai dit je fais comme je peux, après ma façon de faire justement avec mon show que je fais en classe c'est justement c'est pour leur donner envie de venir en classe. C'est déjà ça qui est important. Et tu vois ça je l'avais perçu quand j'étais dans le Nord. C'est là où j'ai travaillé là-dessus. Parce que là-bas je crois que c'était pire qu'ici au niveau de la motivation scolaire. L'école ça ne représentait rien pour eux. Parce que les parents pour eux c'était rien non plus, l'école. Mais vraiment. Quand tu leur disais : " tu serais content de faire des études ? " - " ouais bah mon frère, il est à abattre, ça sert à rien il est au chômage ". Voilà. Donc bon. Donc j'avais vraiment envie de leur donner envie de venir à l'école. Et venir dans mes cours. Donc ça j'y réussissais. Et je pense que là aussi. Voilà. Déjà, je pense qu'ils ne viennent pas dans mes cours à reculons. Et ça c'est déjà un pari de gagner je trouve. Peut-être pas pour eux, mais peut-être pour la génération d'après. Parce que si eux, peuvent dire à leurs enfants plus tard : " ah si tu sais en cours on peut passer aussi des bons moments ", eh bah c'est quelque chose qui peut être gagné " (Ferdinand, p. 9) (cf. he himself became a teacher after he admired his former maths teacher so much). " Jouer un rôle, faire des blagues " ; " quand je suis en classe c'est un show que je fais" (p. 1) : il y a toujours des élèves à remotiver [..]et pour moi c'est toujours un plaisir de voir un élève qui est un gros branleur qui n'en fout pas une, qui est même perturbateur: arriver déjà à le calmer dans le cours, et puis arriver à le mettre au travail " (p. 3)

in a neighbouring school in the city centre, which he refused because he was “not interested”, and the job seemed “too boring” (p. 3). He recalls his former experience in the North of France, where he “challenged himself” —a former mining region particularly affected by phenomena of deindustrialisation: “it was worse than here”; education “did not mean anything” because students learned, through their relatives experiences, that qualifications do not protect against unemployment[460]. This aspect illustrates how teachers’ representations are influenced by the local context. Indeed, at La Balikan (suburban underprivileged area), Mr. Ferdinand refers to the “ethnic” category to explain this phenomenon. Ferdinand is aware of his responsibility and capacity to make students’ school experience meaningful. However, this responsibility is rather understood as an individual and not as a collective responsibility.

Mrs. Lejeune, says about her work at La Balikan, “is being a teacher, an educator, a youth worker, a social worker, a mother”. It is about creating a special bond and relationship, especially with those “who see school as a way to succeed, to blossom, maybe more at school than in the family or the *quartier*”. Indeed, at La Balikan, some students have a “particular way” to approach the relationship with the adult, which is not about being a “boot-licker”, but because they see a good relationship as a “means to succeed” (Lejeune, 2016, p. 1)[461].

Jardin’s resource in fighting against *décrochage scolaire* is “the personal attention he is able to grant the kid in the pedagogic activities” (Jardin, p. 9). It is about “having a special personality”, “energy”, “to be able to love them and not despise them”; this is very important “otherwise it will never work”. Jardin remembers an anecdote, where he once told a student that he was “stupid” and immediately realised the “enormous consequence it had on him” (Jardin p. 7)[462]. Because they are children that are already “conscious” of their social and spatial relegation (see above).

Jardin admits that he is employed to teach students new skills and knowledge but understands his role as making them “drop out of their environments”, perceived as difficult ones. It is

---

[460] See the documentary film ”Chante ton bac d’abord” (2014) directed by David Andé.

[461] Original quotation: “Donc du coup c'est sûr que le travail -notamment moi de prof d'EPS- ouais c'est enseigner, éduquer, c'est un peu assistante sociale, maman, éducateur.. ” “ il peut arriver qu'il y ait certaines accroches parce que des gamins sont demandeurs, et puis ont une approche particulière aussi pas forcément pour faire comme on dit un peu de la "lèche" à la prof machin, mais qui voilà à l'école trouvent un moyen de réussir, de s'épanouir, peut-être plus qu à la maison et que dans le quartier, et qui du coup aiment bien le rapport à l'adulte qui peut aussi être différent du rapport qu'ils ont avec un adulte en dehors du collège. Et le rapport qu'ils ont avec les élèves de la classe. Mais c'est vrai que c'est pas du tout le même fonctionnement que dans un autre collège; t'as des élèves qui voient l'école comme vraiment un moyen de réussir, ici.”

[462] Original quotation: “Je crois qu'il faut avoir une personnalité particulière, qui ne soit pas toute la même évidemment, pour cet élève-là. Il faut une énergie, il faut les aimer quoi. Faut monter que tu les aimes Il ne faut pas les mépriser, sinon ça ne marche jamais. Jamais jamais. Moi ça m'est déjà arrivé de dire à l'élève: "Mais tu es stupide!" au tout début, et je m'en suis voulu tout de suite parce que la conséquence que ça a pour cet élève-là elle est énorme. Et donc je me suis dit ‘plus jamais je ne dirai ça à un élève’”.

about offering “something else”, “let them leave their luggage at the front door” (Jardin, p. 6)[463].

Mr. Touba, as I previously mentioned, has special relations with the students. He shares a similar childhood and his position as “a visible minority” thanks to his North African origins. He is aware that students are not doing their homework – what he “perfectly understands”: “and I understand it, they are right because when they are at home, they have to do some housework, help the brothers and sisters, well after a while, they must get some free time, yeah”. So he adapts his teaching methods and assessments, gives less vocabulary to learn and starts to do the homework with them ten minutes before the bell rings: “I’m not sure that a school inspector would agree with this […] but I continue because it seems to be good for them” (Touba, p. 2)[464]. Some practices aim to encourage them (“because otherwise they would not do anything at all”, Touba, p. 4), or buy dissenters' support and attention in class dominated by small talk and indiscipline (“80% of the class”, p. 8)[465]. Touba, as well as Lejeune, are aware that these (protective) methods will disadvantage students in comparison to other schools and for their future orientation (Duru-Bellat, 2001, p. 301; Duru-Bellat, van Zanten, 2010, pp. 148-149).

> *“They won’t have the same basic knowledge as other students, they will get lost and some teachers, not all of them, won’t wait for them […] and I tell them” (Touba, p. 5)*[466]

[463]Original quotation: “Le décrochage scolaire, c'est “d'abord les décrocher de leur univers.” / “Et nous on est là, enfin moi maintenant j’en suis persuadé, on est là pour leur apprendre des choses, leur faire développer des compétences, c'est clair, c’est quand même ma mission première. Mais aussi pour apaiser un moment donné de la journée, les faire ouvrir sur autre chose, les faire décrocher de leurs préoccupations quotidiennes, quelles qu'elles soient; que ce soit des prises de tête à la maison, ou où que ce soit. Parce qu’au collège ; je me souviens que quand on était au collège, on est préoccupé par plein de choses. Et ils ne sont pas là, quoi. Je me dis que mon but ce n'est pas de les sauver de ça: je me dis que je ne peux pas ; “ écoute ta copine, là, c’est pas grave… ” Ou à la maison bah “écoute c’est pas grave, ton père il boit, il tape ta mère, mais c’est cool quoi, on est en français… ” enfin non, je peux pas. Donc du coup, ça va être: “je vous amène dans un autre espace et j'essaie de vous faire décrocher de ces choses-là. De poser vos bagages à l’entrée”.

[464] Original quotation: “Et je les comprends, ils ont raison aussi parce que s’ils sont à la maison et qu’ils doivent travailler, aider les frères et les sœurs après ils doivent bien, enfin au bout d’un moment ils doivent aussi se libérer quoi. […] je sais pas si un inspecteur accepterait ça” (Touba, p. 2).

[465] For instance, I participated in a class where Touba organised a collective correction of the exam where people were able to get more points if their correction was correct (fieldwork notes, 02/02/2016). This is one more discretionary strategy not to “lose” the students, which might in turn contribute to weakening the function of marks as “objective” indicators informing where students stand as regards knowledge acquisition.

[466] Original quotation: “ils vont pas avoir les mêmes bases ils vont pas avoir les mêmes connaissances que les autres élèves, ils vont être perdus, et il y a certains profs, pas tous, vraiment peu, qui s’arrêteront pas pour eux […]et je leur dis croyez-moi ils ne s’arrêteront pas pour vous”.

"They are here, in their collège La Balikan,in a kind of a cocoon sometimes and for some of them, they do not really realise their level and the reality outside" (Lejeune, p. 25) [467].

At the same time, Touba continues to warn the students that conditions and expectations will be "much harder" and "higher" when they will move up to the *lycée*. So, students understand that he is helping them, but this help will be short-term only and might even disadvantage them. This can be interpreted as a way to tell them that they are able to go to the *lycée général* (Touba, p. 6) and, contrary to some other views that already see in students' deficit the impossibility to achieve such an objective, to prepare and encourage them to achieve this goal.

This is one of the numerous "dead-end alternatives" teachers face in their everyday routine: "what to do with the official curriculum, which teachers are often attached to because they symbolise the expectations of secondary education and the value of each discipline? Respecting it to the letter, means excluding certain students; ignoring risks everyone's educational opportunities" (Dubet, 2002, p. 148). Resultantly teachers do their best at running with the hare and hunting with the hounds.

After she failed to convince her colleagues and the principal of the advantages of the Freinet method, Louvard now applies these pedagogic principles at the classroom-level. Sometimes, she even uses the method when co-teaching a class with one of her colleagues.

In these examples, French and German teachers invest their subjectivity and energy in different strategies, which help them to gain students' subjective adhesion and also enforces their authority. They show how teachers give much importance to the "relationship" aspect of the pedagogic interaction, underlining its personal, emotional and subjective charge. The most difficult aspect remains enforcement of discipline in class. The fact that teachers have the feeling of (having to) fighting on their own, it may lead to interpreting objective tensions and social conflicts in class and with students, (which are produced and shaped at the structural level), in interpersonal or individual terms, because it challenges the ego so much (Dubet, p. 163).

[467] " [...] pour certains de nos élèves je t'avoue que non je ne pas forcément optimiste parce que…C'est vrai que j'ai l'impression que là ils sont un peu là bah justement dans leur collège de la Balikan, un peu dans un cocon hein des fois, certains, ils se rendent pas forcément compte de leur niveau et puis de la réalité un peu des choses [..]"

The relative isolation of the teaching activity and the pedagogic relationship, as well as the subjective and emotional charge related to the profession, help us understand why French and German teachers tend to make students responsible for their own failure or refuse to engage in their private life, especially when they know how hard and helpless some situations can be. In both schools the teachers' room is a sanctuary, where tensions are released: one shares a coffee, falls back in the seat, exchanges jokes and anecdotes about students and classroom anecdotes. The teachers' lounge at La Balikan is simply organised and poorly decorated and if there were not these seats, one could say that it is even austere. However, it is situated on the other side of the entrance hall and is cut from the noise of the school. At the door of the German teachers' room a notice forbids students to knock at specific times of the day. Inside, the fridge and shelves are clustered with comic strips and cynical sayings, underlying the difficulty of the job. Here is an example:

> *"Teachers have the duty to guide a group of hikers consisting of top athletes and hikers with disabilities through the mist in a pathless country in the North-South direction; so that all of them arrive at three different destinations, in a good mood and if possible at the same time"*[468]

Teachers tend to consider themselves as lone warriors in the school and feel that the non-teaching staff should help to make this experience less difficult (which does not automatically involve them as co-educational and equal partners though).

3.5.2 Teamwork with the non-teaching staff

Indeed, teachers cooperate to various degrees with the other professionals working at the school.

3.5.2.1 At the Geschwister Scholl GMS

In Germany, educational support understood as cooperation between school and social work/social pedagogy already started in the early 19th century according to a dual understanding of education - qualification and integration (Cramer and al., *op.cit*, p. 27). Over the last few years, the cooperation of school, social work and youth services "started to develop its modern character in form of a distinct field of school social work that today is the mainstay of educational support in German schools" (*ibid*. p. 28). School expansion, the

[468] Original quotation: "*Der Lehrer hat die Aufgabe, eine Wandergruppe mit Spitzensportlern und Behinderten bei Nebel durch unwegsames Gelände in nordsüdlicher Richtung zu führen, und zwar so, daß alle bei bester Laune und möglichst gleichzeitig an drei verschiedenen Zielorten ankommen*". Prof. Müller-Limmroth (Züricher Weltwoche).

increase of problematic school-to-work transitions, and the development of all-day and comprehensive school forms, such as the *GMS*, have been accompanied with an increase in needs and demands for additional support in schools. Reflections about the renewal of cooperation between formal and non-formal education have in the meantime increased in both France and Germany (Berger, Labadie, Wittmann, 2018), but for some (German) authors, in a subordinate way as regards non-formal education: how could they help school to achieve its objective and help "at risk" students to cope with their duty? (Lütgens, Mengilli, Pohl and al., 2015).

The recent development of the *GMS* and its challenging working conditions for teachers who used to work with a rather homogeneous clientele (see previously) lead them to consider this staff as a support in their difficulties with students.

> *"The fact is, that let's say, the Land Baden-Württemberg always needs more people from the outside to keep this school system, let's say, working [...] because we, as teachers, cannot do it alone […] they took a huge weight off me. I would not have been able to keep it up" (Rist, pp. 7-8)*[469].

Mr. Müller "activated" the social school worker to deal with three boys, so-called "troublemakers". He sought the youth worker's support to help him find a way to deal with these students and to integrate them in the classroom settings. Then, as a class teacher, he informed other teachers about the ways they ought to deal with these three students, "advice and tips that they may follow or not"[470] (Müller, pp. 6-7). However, except for these special cases he "does not refer much to the social workers" (Müller, p. 13)[471].

Tensions between teaching staff and social workers can happen when both parties do not share the same vision of the management of indiscipline. Mr. Müller considers the

---

[469]"Aber Tatsache ist eben dass, eben sozusagen das Land Baden Württemberg braucht immer mehr Leute die von außen kommen, um dieses Schulsystem sozusagen am Laufen zu halten. […], weil wir als nur Lehrer sozusagen das nicht leisten können[…] und da habe ich immer in enger Kooperation mit den Schulsozialpädagogen gearbeitet. Die haben mir dann ganz viel abgenommen. Ich hätte das im Lauf der Jahren nicht mehr geschafft" "

[470] Original quotation: "Ich bin dieses Jahr Klassenlehrer von der 7. Klasse. Und ich habe.. jetzt zum Beispiel .. mit.. da gibt es drei Schüler die sehr verhaltensauffällig sind und da habe ich auch den Schulsozialarbeiter eingeschalten und habe mit ihm gesprochen was man da machen kann und habe mit ihm noch mit den drei Jungs gesprochen. Oder habe auch da mit den Eltern darüber gesprochen. Habe mich ein bisschen ein Bild gemacht von den drei Schüler und dass auch zu den anderen Lehrern in der Klasse gesagt: "also ich wünsche mir, dass man mit dem ein bisschen so und so umgeht, mit dem ein bisschen so und so, mit dem ein bisschen so und so umgeht. Aber das ist freiwillig. Also sie müssen das nicht machen was ich sage. Aber ich kann mal eben Klassenlehrer so sein, das vorschlagen dass man eher so oder so macht"

[471] Original quotation: "ähm. Ich muss es nicht so sehr im Anspruch nehmen. Also ich habe ihn gebeten, dass er so en Program macht mit den Schülern. Ähhh... mit Schülern die ein schlechtes Sozialverhalten haben, mit ihnenso Sozialtraining macht. Aber ... ich ... dass ich welche zu ihm schicken kann, aber ich könnte jetzt nur mit den betroffenen Schüler eigentlich reden."

introduction of school social workers as an expression of an individualised, "compromise-oriented" way to deal with compulsory schooling. Such an approach would undermine teachers' authority, since misbehaviour is addressed on a case-by-case basis, thus increasing the scope for discretion and interpersonal dimensions. Although he deems interpersonal relations with students important, he sees the introduction of such a logic at a bigger scale as unrealistic and threatening for the cohesion in the school (Müller, p. 14)[472]. His positioning highlights the tensions between a traditional and authoritative vision of the duty of education (embodied by the structures: obligatory schooling, sanctions…); and education as a right, where the reasons that undermine this right has to be addressed or its relevance explained.

However, the introduction of school workers and their ability to provide pedagogic suggestions demands a reorganisation of cooperation between the teaching and the non-teaching staff, their roles and visions of the regulation of misbehaviour. It is also a power struggle over the definition of pedagogy and support. Mr. Müller gives the example of a special room, which has been created, following the advice of the school social worker, so "students can get out of the class if they do not find it provides appropriate conditions to concentrate on their learning" (Klein, 2017, p. 12)[473]. While this measure aimed to be "pedagogic" and was not meant to be a "punishment" ("*kein Straffraum*"), it was used by the teachers as an opportunity to externalise troublemakers. Teachers expected this measure to help them to enforce their authority and ease the discipline in class. Indeed, when a student had "often" been in this room, "the principal would contact the parents" (which already contradict the fact that the room was not thought as a punishing measure). However, it appeared that even the principal did not systematically enforce this rule and "adapted" his answer to individual students. Practices and discourses from all different professional bodies (principal, school social worker, and teachers) did not converge around the measure and in the eyes of Mr. Müller, this room even became "attractive" to students, who saw it as an opportunity to get out of class (and "challenge" teachers' authority) but not as an official

[472] Original quotation: "Sozialarbeiter könnten da natürlich schon was machen, wenn man sie hätte aber... in der Schule. Also in so großen Zusammenhängen, das sind ja jedes Jahr mindestens 60 neue Schüler. Der ist immer einfach wichtig und das ist das was Herr Markel nicht … hinkriegt. Das jeder Sozialarbeiter… dass nicht jeder einzelne Schüler einen eigenen Sozialarbeiter hat, sondern dass es Regeln gibt, die für alle Schüler gelten. Und dass man nicht, wenn die Schüler sagen, sie haben kein Bock darauf, dass jeder einen einzelne Sozialarbeiter hat, der mit ihm darüber spricht, dass er das einsieht, sondern dass man eben auch mal sagt, das ist egal, ob du da Bock darauf hast oder nicht, die Regeln gelten."

[473] The social worker will be introduced in part 4. "[…] dass es wirklich ein Stillarbeitsraum ist und kein Straffraum. Das ist einfach ein Raum ist, dass die Schüler, mit dieser Lautstärke nicht so gut klarkommen, dass sie in Ruhe arbeiten können".

warning about their misbehaviour. Finally, "teachers kept the students in class" (Müller, p. 14)[474].

Last but not least, referring students to the school social workers can be interpreted as having difficulties oneself in dealing with students. It is a "bad" signal sent to colleagues or the principal. I already mentioned that Mr. Schatzl complains a lot about disciplinary issues in his class. However, he says he does not "often" work with social school workers: "fortunately!" (*zum Glück*!). He considers that he does not have "big troubles" but only occasional "cases". He works with the school social worker occasionally, when students have mental health issues or personal problems, either at home or in the classroom (mobbing) (Schatzl, p. 11)[475]. When he thinks it exceeds his role as a teacher, he refers to the school social workers: "I ask her whether she could speak with her again because... she has different role to me. I'm a class teacher and I cannot simultaneously be a school social worker" (*ibid*.)[476].

The following statement shows as well that social youth workers' coeducational role is not fully recognized by (some) teachers :

> "He simply plays football [...] and she... dances Zumba with the girls. Otherwise I do not really notice them in the school. Perhaps they do something that I do not see" (Müller, p. 13)477.

At least for Müller, the only "concrete measures to support students at school is school itself: there are teachers and there are classes! And [teachers] offer "books" and "classes" (Müller,

---

[474] Original quotation: " Man hat einen Stillarbeitsraum gemacht… und… es ist .. dass der Stillarbeitsraum war dafür da, dass wenn jemand im Unterricht stört, dann kann man ihm in den Stillarbeitsraum schicken und dort arbeitet er alleine für sich. Es ist ein Lehrer drin, der ihn beaufsichtigt und.. dann.. und wenn er aber oft in den Stillarbeitsraum kommt, dann.. wird.. er ... werden die Eltern bestellt. Und es wird ein Gespräch mit den Eltern geführt und so weiter. Du siehst, wenn jemand fünf mal in den Arbeitsraum kommt, oder sechs mal dann, werden die Eltern informiert und die Schulleitung kümmert sich dabei um und hat ein Gespräch mit den Eltern. Als die erste Schülerin sechsmal instillarbeitsraum war, hat [der Schulleiter] beschlossen, dass du die Schülerin Sonderregelung getroffen wird. Das man dann nicht die Eltern informieren muss. Als die 2. Schülerin sechs mal im Stillarbeitsraum war hat er beschlossen, für die gibt's auch eine Sonderregelung und dass man jetzt auch die Eltern nicht informiert….und… so nach und nach haben die Schüler gedacht: naja es ist voll cool, wenn man in den Stillarbeitsraum kommt, kommt man aus dem Unterricht raus, und dann war es für die Schüler ganz… attraktiv in den Stillarbeitsraum zu kommen. Und die Lehrer haben gemerkt, hier passiert nicht, es bringt gar nichts und dann hat kein Lehrer mehr Schüler in den Stillarbeitsraum geschickt sondern hat die Schüler im Unterricht behalten und äh dann."

[475] Original quotation: **"**weil ich … nicht viele Probleme jetzt groß habe. Also es gab immer wieder Fälle, wo ich da mit ihr gesprochen habe"/"Mobbing war eine Geschichte. Mmm. Ja, dann … schwieriges Elternhaus. ähm.. also… Probleme in der Schule."

[476]Original quotation: **"**Dann habe ich mit der Schulsozialarbeiterin gesprochen und habe gemeint, ob sie nicht nochmal mit ihr sprechen kann, weil… weil sie eine andere Rolle hat als ich. Ich bin halt Klassenlehrer und da kann ich ja nicht gleichzeitig Schulsozialarbeiter sein. Es geht nicht."

[477] Original quotation: **"**Er spielt einfach Fußball [...] und sie... tanzt Zumba mit den Mädchen. Ansonsten nehme ich die nicht so wirklich wahr in der Schule. Vielleicht machen sie auch was, das ich nicht sehe."

p. 21)[478]. The complementary role of non-formal and formal education is not obvious. On the other hand, the *GMS* has just begun.

3.5.2.2 At La Balikan

In Brittany and despite a longer tradition of diversification of school staff in French lower secondary schools (see next part), relations between teaching staff and "others" (school social worker, educational assistants and principal councillor of education[479], nurses….) are still unsystematic and subject to discretionary practices (van Zanten, 2001; Duru-Bellat & van Zanten, 2007, 2010).

Mr. Ferdinand used to make funny drawings on the "*billet d'appel*"[480] that the educational assistants collect at the beginning of each hour. It is his way of maintaining good relations, which might also be useful when he will need their support to take charge of the class in case he "cannot be present" one day (p. 4)[481].

Given his young age, Mr. Touba is close to the educational assistants, as a temporary and contract teacher, he also shares a similar precarious statute with them, despite being better paid and accorded slightly more recognition. He often stops[482] by the educational assistants' office to say hello and exchange small talk and get information about students.

For Mrs. Lejeune, it "might be interesting" to have closer relations with the educational assistants since these have privileged, more informal and closer relations with students They "know things that teachers do not know"[483]. According to Lejeune, their feedback can help understand some students' problematic attitudes in class and take the new information into account in their interactions. It sometimes helps to avoid direct confrontations and regulates the classroom tensions better (Lejeune, pp. 8-9)[484].

---

[478] Original quotation: "Aber... konkrete Maßnahme um die Schüler zu unterstützen... ja: es gibt Lehrer und es gibt Unterricht! Und wir stellen Bücher zu Verfügung und wir stellen Unterricht zu Verfügung! Na-tür-lich (lächelt). Schule ist die einzige Maßnahme, um Schüler zu unterstützen beim Lernen".

[479] As mentioned above, this department is called "vie scolaire" ("school life")

[480] At the beginning of the class, teachers call the roll and write down the names of missing students on a ticket (*billet d'appel*) they put at the door and *educational assistants* collect them.

[481] Original quotation: "J'ai toujours eu de bonnes relations avec la vie scolaire. […] Moi je sais que si j'ai un souci je peux compter sur eux. Par exemple style je peux pas être présent à un cours, j'avais un devoir de prévu pour tant à ce moment-là, je sais que je les appelle, je leur envoie le sujet: je sais qu'ils vont s'occuper du truc quoi. Ils vont s'occuper des élèves et leur faire faire le devoir. Voilà je sais que je peux compter sur eux, et eux aussi peuvent compter sur moi."

[482] Cf. Teachers have a "private" entrance and exit to their room, which is opposite to the "school life" office.

[483] Other studies have shown that the non-teaching staff might make use of this knowledge in order to assert their autonomy towards the teaching staff (van Zanten, 2001, p. 183).

[484] Original quotation: "Bah ouais eux leur rôle il est un peu multiple, c'est...bon c'est vrai leur rôle un peu là de surveillance, de présence on va dire euh "humaine" aussi, au moment des récréations, au moment de la sonnerie, mais c'est aussi une présence humaine dans des temps aussi plus calmes où c'est un peu des interlocuteurs pour

For Mr. Jardin, cooperation with educational assistants should be closer as regards “specific issues” –yet does not explain which ones. His discourse emphasises the need for more cohesion and coordination between and within the different school staff. However, in response to my question about his perception of Ms Zaoui’s [485] job, he confesses of not “being really aware of it” (Jardin, p. 4) [486].

Many reasons can explain such deficient teamwork: different statues and distinctions (despite the fact that these distinctions are less and less justified by qualifications, see next part), turnover, working hours that do not coincide (teachers’ presence is calculated on the basis of teaching hours while educational assistants and the principal educational councillor, for instance, have regular working hours), and certain organisational logistics.

In both French and German schools studied, there is a challenge as regards the cooperation of the teaching staff with non-teaching staff for the sake of educational support.

The challenge of this cooperation with regards to the issue “early leaving” from school is addressed in the following and last part of this research. I analyse how these professionals with lower institutional recognition see their role and consider the issue of students’ negative participation more as a school or individual related problem.

---

beaucoup d'élèves. Il y a beaucoup d'élèves même je vois, comme ça en discutant je discutais avec un surveillant et il y a des élèves qui arrivent où c'est moi qui arrive sur une conversation où c'est un peu aussi où c'est bah devenu des grands copains un peu quoi. Ils ont un rapport assez proche avec eux, ils se confient beaucoup à eux, je pense qu'il y a des surveillants qui connaissent très bien certains élèves et certaines situations familiales, et qui n'ont pas la même vision que nous du coup. Parce que nous on amène un rapport à l'autre là, machin, "il a encore" et puis eux alors "ah bon, ah ouais c'est vrai, mais à la maison voilà il faut qu'il amène son petit frère, donc du coup il est souvent en retard donc du coup..."; et puis bon bah nous il est tout le temps en retard donc voilà ça nous énerve, et ...[…] Et puis en fait […] oui par exemple M. ou je sais pas qui de la vie scolaire m'explique un peu plus le détail donc oui je peux en tenir compte, et j'en tiens compte d'ailleurs. Mais après je dis à l'élève "bah voilà oui je comprends que tu dois ramener ton petit frère ou que t'as plein de choses à faire mais voilà moi je peux pas accepter, faut que t'essaies d'être à l'heure en cours tu peux pas comme ça arriver, […] ”

[485] Mrs. Zaoui is the professional in charge of “security and prevention”. She is, among others, responsible for the measure “inclusion exclusion”.

[486] Original quotation: “Je pense qu’il en faudrait plus mais sur des choses plus précises... Sur des thématiques… mais de toute façon en général il en faudrait plus partout" / [about Ms Zaoui] : “ c'est vrai que j'ai aucune visibilité là-dessus ”.

Part 4 “The others”

The policy programmes, which define and address “early school leaving” as an issue (cf. part 1), promote a “comprehensive” and global understanding of this phenomenon. In the first part of this thesis, I have shown how this management is defined discursively at all levels of governance giving particular importance to the “cross-sectoral” perspective (“integrated approach”, “interdisciplinarity”, “intersectorality”). Cross-sectorality is at the same time a necessity and a result from changing patterns of governance. Such a concept aims to ensure that the multidimensional properties of educational failure are taken into account, or rather “access” and “accessibility” (Stauber and al., *op. cit*.). The logic of “cross-sectorality” applies at the school level. In this respect, the “cross-sectoral” approach to education, which combines (at least in theory) the efforts of school staff and external actors, is assumed to better “understand”, “address”, and “prevent” dropout behaviour while taking into account the local and individual environments. Over the last fifty years (more recently in Germany), a diversity of professions has developed parallel to the teaching staff in French and German secondary schools. These non-teaching actors are supposed to support students and their parents to cope with their right to schooling and compulsory education. However, due to its diversity, this group of non-teaching professionals has developed their own status and logic. The present part aims to highlight the role of these different, non-teaching professionals in supporting students, parents, and sometimes teachers to deal with each other, their educational rights and duties. How do they contribute to enforcing institutional positions or develop different logics of legitimation? Are they, in fact, the key actors in the real world of school and dealing with dropout?

These professionals are “living” measures helping to address the challenge addressed to European educational systems to realise “equal opportunities” in and through an “inclusive” education. They embody educational solutions to school failure: they are in charge of educational, individual or collective support or supervision, of contributing to the improvement of the “school climate”, etc. Also, and depending on the way their role is framed organisationally and institutionally, their feedback considered and integrated, they might contribute to a diversification of ways of conceiving and addressing negative school participation. In this respect, they can help to critically reflect on school settings and arrangements, but also call into question historically established institutional power configurations.

Indeed, their relative institutional invisibility results from the fact that, in the school system, everything that is not immediately related to teaching in the classroom is underrated. According to a feminist and Marxist approach to labour, educational activity is considered as a process of production /re-production: “productive work” is paid for, reproduction of the individual’s ability to work is not paid, but instead carried out as “unseen”, low status unpaid work by housewives (Toupin, 2016). In a school context we can also apply this model, “production” is teaching, reproduction is everything that has to do with making students able to follow/attend/not be a nuisance to teaching. This is the case for these less well paid and low status professionals whose role is to help students and teachers cope with the teaching activity. This theory presents some stimulating theoretical framework, when one considers the highly hierarchised professional environment of the school based on the statutory domination of teachers and principals. It may be also relevant to interpret, like the housewives’ movement in the 1970s, the call for institutional and financial recognition of their work made by French educational assistants and French assistants for students with special needs. Such a theory may also be relevant to a certain extent as regards the gender, class, age category, migration origins, of many of the professionals performing this domestic work. Nevertheless, it does not apply to all non-teaching professionals, which corresponds to a much differentiated landscape as regards statutory positions, wages, and institutional recognition. Later, I show through analysing the French example how some professionals who do not feel their contribution nor their needs are recognised by the institution and who have themselves experienced the unfairness of the educational system may in turn influence students’ distrustful attitudes towards school and its dominant representatives.

Yet another perspective can be gained by applying Erving Goffman's front stage/backstage metaphor (1956)[487] (elaborated in Germany by Jürgen Zinnecker in the specific school context (1978)). Teaching and everything officially happening in the classroom/school is front stage. Everything happening unofficially or informally is backstage. Drawing from this metaphor, the analysis would consist of saying that teachers also have a backstage and that without that backstage they would unable to act. Referring to this approach, Anja Reinecke-Terner analysed social school work (*Schulsozialarbeit*) as a kind of a “multifunctional” in-between stage- ("*Zwischenbühne*") (Reinecke-Terner, 2017). Because school social workers’

[487] French version published in 1973.

activity takes place at the crossroads of so many different actors (teachers, parents, students) and institutions (school, municipality), they adopt diverse roles. Their "professional being" is thus characterised by its ambivalence and paradoxes, also because it is framed by different repertoires referring to the fields of children, youth aid, school social pedagogy and youth work (*ibid*., p. 295; see below).

Both these approaches summarise the function of non-teaching professionals: needed, insofar as they support students' ability to successfully attend the front stage, but institutionally remain relatively invisible, or struggling for their autonomy and visibility. How does this look in practice? What are the consequences of this invisibility for them?

Some authors see a trend at the international level in line with the rise of mass education and the increase of school educational duties in the increasing number and diversity of school agents (Tardiff and Lessard, 1999, referred by *ibid*., p. 148; Cramer and al., p. 28). Amos, Loncle et *al*., discussing the "trend of involving new actors in educational governance", wonder whether the "involvement is realised in practice or is mainly a question of semantics" (2016, p. 76). Actually, the division of educational tasks, the lack of coordination of activities between teachers and these professionals, the diversity of status (temporary workers, civil servants, precariousness, security), diverse professional logics and identities, as well as varying career prospects contribute to looking critically at their capacity to constitute the collectively organised educational resources they are supposed to be (Masson, 1999; Barthelemy, 2000, quoted by Van Zanten, op. cit. pp. 148-149; Amos and al., p. 85). Amos et *al*. refer to the research support discussing the findings of the GOETE study in detail (Du Bois-Reymond et al., 2012), "which took note of a remarkable tension: on the one hand, there is a proliferation of expertise and professionals to guide students and to facilitate difficult decision processes, but on the other hand, students are reported to feel left alone and to be burdened with the individual attribution of decision" (*ibid*.)

After a short introduction about the development of educational support in France and Germany that contributed to the diversification of the school professional landscape, I will then develop my argument separately for France and Germany. Indeed, the history of "educational support" and its institutionalisation refers to different contexts which in turn frame different professional identities. Also, recruitment in certain (new) professions introduces individuals whose allegiance to the educational system has not been "prepared"

upstream, nor undermined.

The following development focusses on different groups of educational support: school social workers, "school life" department ("*Vie scolaire"*: Principal Councillor of Education and educational assistants), special needs assistants and assistants for security and prevention in La Balikan and the "afternoon pedagogic assistants" in the Geschwister Scholl *GMS*. This presentation of the contexts of their emergence helps to understand the asymmetry of the collected materials, not only in qualitative terms - already mentioned in the introduction and due to differences in field conditions during the research - but also in quantitative terms. As I regularly explained during the previous argument, there is a department in French secondary schools, which does not exist in Germany, called the "*vie scolaire*". Moreover, the fact that the school La Balikan has been labelled as having a "particularly deteriorated" school climate entitled enabled it to employ Mrs. Zaoui as "assistant for prevention and security".

These professionals will be situated in their historical, institutional and organisational contexts which help in understanding relations between how they perceive their roles, their apprehension of the issue and of the ways through which the school and, more broadly the educational system, cope with the issue "*décrochage scolaire / Schulverwiegrung*" that challenge or support development of their professional identity. This part concludes with a case study of the (French) figure of Mrs. Zaoui: in my opinion, it will help in understanding the complex interrelation of social, educational structures and individual agencies in the production of educational support, which does not automatically mean institutional allegiance; or how the "backstage" status of certain actors undermines their potentially positive supportive force, which can then transform into potentially subversive ones.

4 Who are the "others"?

For reasons of "educational continuity" [488], Mrs. Madec, principal at La Balikan (see part 2), in, wishes to establish closer cooperation between teachers, student life department (*vie scolaire*)—consisting of the Education Counsellor (CPE) Rousselet and the educational

[488] Original quotation: " […] il y a à poursuivre, je dis bien à poursuivre, ou à faire que le lien entre les enseignants et la vie scolaire soient plus ténus. […]. Ce qui serait bien aussi c'est que là, sur les exclusions-inclusions, donc les élèves sont pris en charge dans la majorité des cas par l'APS […] ça veut dire qu'il est dans l'établissement donc il n'est pas en cours mais il reste élève donc il faut qu'il y ait une continuité de scolarité […] ce serait bien que le professeur aille voir Fatima et demande alors comment ça se passe [..] ".

assistants—and Mrs. Zaoui (prevention and security manager) in charge of the "exclusion inclusion" disciplinary measure. In the previous part, I showed how teachers identify the role of these professionals in various ways and interact with them accordingly. I also highlighted some institutional and organisational obstacles to this teamwork, such as high turnover rates, rare moments of institutionally organised exchanges, the rare presence of teachers at school, the lack of integrated approaches to pedagogy, and the organisational division of educational tasks. In this part, I now turn to the historical hierarchisation of roles and status, which are based on the difference in value that is put on teaching and disciplinary tasks respectively.

With regards to the German case, I mentioned how the principal Mr. Markel saw school social workers as a crucial support in coping with the challenges of the *Gemeimschaftsschule* and "inclusive" education (see part 1). In the previous part, I show how teachers seek support from and /or tend to transfer difficult students and situations to the school social workers. Besides case-management, school social workers are entitled to implement collective activities. There are for instance a number of projects aiming to address classroom issues in the first three grades. These projects enable some cooperation between teachers and school social workers. Moreover, the school social worker in the Geschwister School *GMS* seems to benefit from a non-negligible degree of freedom and autonomy in the way she conceives her role, attributing importance to collective activities through the concept of "experiential education" (*Erlebnispädagogik*). As mentioned previously, not all teachers understand the purpose of these activities. The development of the new type of school, *Gemeinschaftsschule (GMS)* and particularly the introduction of all-day schooling, introduced new professionals in charge of supervising the students during the afternoon and of organising activities with them[489].

4.1 In the Geschwister Scholl GMS, professionals are finding their niches

In Baden-Württemberg, the newly created *Gemeinschaftsschule* (GMS), "is equipped with multi-professional teams to provide the necessary support structures" (Amos et al., *op. cit*., p. 85). It is important to note from the beginning that the model of the *GMS* and all-day school refer to a diversity of implementations in Baden-Württemberg, meaning that support is

[489] I mentioned in the previous part how this time is very differently organised from school to school (see previously, Cramer and al. p. 27).

differently conceptualised and organised. This is explained by the fact that "the responsibility [for implementing the changes] [was given] to the principal and the school staff (*Kollegium*)" (Rauschenbach, 2015). For example, some schools offer all-day schooling on three days of the week, others on four. In some schools non-teaching activities focus on formal education and homework support while in other extracurriculars are at the heart of these measures.

As a resulting of its history and development, the social-pedagogical *praxis* in Germany is understood as consisting of traditional educational support including welfare, protection, care, and counselling and also as an activity with socio-political impact promoting measures that aim for the development of a critical awareness and emancipation (Böhm, 2005, p. 599). In this respect, social work is based on "self-organisation" and "voluntary participation", which are quite antinomic values to formal and compulsory education. With the development of the *GMS*, "most providers of youth work are getting involved in partnerships with schools and thus are constrained to follow the logics of the education system [based on] prevention and control"; the universal claim of youth work is undermined by the fact that providers "increasingly have to legitimise their work with targeting particular groups or "problems", which may enforce their stigmatisation and not address these issues as social ones (Lütgens, Mengilli, Pohl, von Schwanenflügel and Walther, 2015, p. 11; p. 22). Yet, because the approach of youth work is to question *normalcy* and support young people in reflecting norms, values and attitudes, they may provide them with different highlights and interpretations of phenomena like negative school participation (but implying collective answers); while schools are most likely reproducing dominant structures in place. There is a clear gap between didactic and pedagogic approaches followed by the school itself and youth workers respectively. Furthermore, some studies examining biographies of "early school leavers", have shown that at times stepping out of the school context can actually be beneficial to the young people and ease their reintegration in the education system at a later stage (Riedlinger & Pohl, 2017; Barrez, 2014).

School work can be divided into two groups: full-time social workers with a secure status - and "afternoon pedagogic assistants", many of whom are in minimum wage part-time employment (450-Euro-Job). At least in the Geschwister Scholl *GMS* it seems that the social workers are less worried about their status –contrary to their French counterparts – and more interested in playing a role in the establishment and enhancement of a "new" type of school, which better acknowledges their work. Indeed, they are in charge of making the concept of

all-day school sustainable, which consists of "cooperative and individual learning phases alternating with phases of movement and relaxation, […] sport and cultural activities […] common lunch […] numerous types of cooperation with out-of-school partners" (Ministerium für Kultus, Jugend und Sport 2019). German pedagogical assistants who are more in the backstage of the school want to prove their worth in the establishment of the model of the *GMS* created less than ten year ago; French educational assistants, who were supposed to gain in recognition with the development of the comprehensive secondary school back in the 1970s, have lost hope of contributing to making any change in the system. I will show how this context influences the way German school social workers understand the problem of "*Schulverweigerung*", in particular in the light of their supporting role.

Actors referred to:
Dorothee Klein, part-time school social worker (50%), contractual employee (municipality)
Kristin Maute, pedagogic assistant (450 €/basis, then part-time employee)

The reformed educational strategy initiated by the *GMS* has opened new fields of intervention for (social) youth work. In the Geschwister Sholl *GMS*, the perception the school social worker and the "afternoon supervisor" have of their role and the issue "*Schulverweigerung*" illustrate the fact that they aspire to be legitimate actors in the school, providing the possibility to make it better for everyone.

4.1.1 "Here we work in a more interconnected manner […]"

The full quotation underlines the multiple aspects of school social work ("and my function in the school is essentially to support and guide students, but also teachers and parents… and facilitate access to other support structures […] and class projects"), at the intersection of all school actors: head of school, teachers, parents, students (Reinecke-Terner, 2017). Mrs. Klein underlines as well her integration, which is particularly good compared to other school environments (see below).

The expert conference on youth social work in May of 2015 took place under the title of "all-day school as a means to reduce *Schulverweigerung*"[490]. This title speaks for itself, insofar as

[490] "Ganztagsschule als Chance Schulverweigerung zu reduzieren?" The conference understands Schulverweigerung as "school tiredness" (Schulmüdigkeit) and "Absentismus" /absenteeism(Pudelko, 2015). This is only one example of many: "Schulabsentismus verhindern! Strategien und Konzepte" (2018), "Schulabsentismus – Reflexionen über gelingende Ansätze in der Jugendsozialarbeit" (2017); "Schulabsentismus als europaweite Herausforderung: Herangehensweise und Perspektiven" (2016);

the actors in the field of "social pedagogy" see in the *GMS* an opportunity structure to enforce their pedagogic approaches of education. However, as defined in the introduction of this thesis, "opportunity structures" are characterised by certain elements that frame the perceptions of the professionals and their actions such as macro discourses, institutional and organisational settings (Parreira do Amaral, Dale & Loncle (eds), 2015, pp. 30-31). As analysed hereinafter, I will show how the Mrs. Klein's experience mirrors this aspect: the discourse on the *GMS* let assume a better integration of social work in the school environment but some institutional and material aspects put this integration into perspective.

Anke Spies in her own research mentions the multiplication of studies, which see in the development of all-day schooling a hope for better support of dropouts through a supportive and student oriented school environment, as well as a better integration of social pedagogy (see Pudelko, pp. 4 ff.). Spies also refers to a recent study that puts these hopes[491] into perspective. It shows that all-day schooling does not obviously lead to "change in the learning culture" in schools (Eder, 2015, quoted by Spies, 2015 in *ibid*.). The vertical, compulsory and normalising traditional school settings collides with principles that give more power to students in terms of autonomy and participation, who are issued from different social milieus. The integration of social work perspectives into the daily school routine implies a reconsideration of the whole didactic fundaments.

According to Spies, the actions of school social workers also depend on the local environment, local agencies and available resources. They also depend on how local authorities choose to consider phenomena of negative school participation (truancy, violence, etc.): Some choose a security-oriented approach to negative school participation, others stress prevention, social and health determinants. The third element necessary to changing school practices refers to the "principle of diversity of the learning and practical opportunities". This means to think "far beyond the current opportunities, which are predominantly subject oriented and based on supplementary learning support (*ibid*.)". School social workers can play a significant role in providing the school culture with tools to renew the relations between

---

"Partnerschaftlich gegen Schulabsentismus. Gemeinsam eine Schule für Jugendliche gestalten" (2014); "Die Wiederentdeckung der Schule … durch junge Menschen ermöglichen. Beiträge zur Reduktion von Schulabsentismus" (2013), etc. see [https://jugendsozialarbeit.de/themen/jugendsozialarbeit-und-schule/schulverweigerung-begegnen/], 19/01/2019.

[491] "All-day schooling used to be associated with stronger individual support, stronger support of individual interests and aptitudes, better connection between the school and living environment, larger transmission of transdisciplinary competences and a more meaningful relation between free time and leaning" (*op. cit*., p. 4).

students, parents and teachers and additional support measures. Social work at school can be organised around the concept of "connectivity" (*Anschlussfähigkeit*) –supporting students' participation as a "bridge" between school and living environments, as part of enabling formal, non-formal and informal education to coexist and complete each other to support students' educational processes and accessibility (Spies & Pötter, 2011). According to her, school social workers may find in the *GMS*-model a project that provides with the conceptional fundaments of the creation of a stage "in-between" (Reinecke-Terner, 2017). Because school social workers are supposed to look at concepts like "disadvantage", "work with parents" ("*Elternarbeit*"), "support", from another perspective (see W. Pabel's intervention, p. 3 in Pudelko, *op. cit.*), they may be able to introduce different ways of considering and dealing with "*Schulverweigerung*".

Finally, the integration of school social work also depends on the openness of the other players who are able to share the stage of the school theatre and perhaps redefine the play, sharing their protagonists' position. At the Geschwister Scholl *GMS*, the principal is willing to support the development and work of the school social workers whereas Mr. Müller, involved in the school steering committee, questions the capacity of school social workers to perform at eye-level with teachers in the school context ("I've got the feeling that school social workers are not specifically trained to work in schools […] They have to develop their own concept […] this is challenging work. It's about social pedagogy, that is, social education for young people," Müller, p. 13)[492]. As I showed in Part 3, 6.2.1, Mr. Müller does not see (yet) the collective activities organised by the social workers (Zumba, football) as part of an overall educational project. However, it does not seem to affect Mrs. Klein apprehension of her uselfulness, as I will show. She believes in the evolution of thinking with the time by the teachers.

Last but not least, the different workshops and interventions organised during the above-mentioned expert conference in 2015 point to existing limits, such as wages and the widespread practice of temporary contracts. They argue that this is a problem, for the professionals as for their employers while "continuity is very important especially for children

[492] Original quotation: "Ich habe das Gefühl, dass die Sozialarbeiter selber… keine... spezifische Schulausbildung haben. […] deswegen glaub ich, dass die Schulsozialarbeiter müssen da selber ein Konzept erstellen. Und ... das wird anspruchsvoll. Es ist eine anspruchsvolle Arbeit. Das geht ja um Sozialpädagogik. Also, soziale Erziehung für Jugendliche".

with behavioural problems" (Pudelko, p. 2). Generally, the ongoing precariousness of this professional field through a constant flow of new and temporary programme structures (Spies & Pötter, 2011) should deserve greater attention"[493] in the analysis of school social pedagogy to better identify its impact (Wendt, 2011).

This context helps to understand how the school social worker Mrs. Klein, one of the two school social workers who divide their working time between the *GMS* and the nearby Gymnasium, considers her role positively in the Geschwister Scholl *GMS*. Indeed, she sees in it an opportunity to implement principles of school social work compared to the *Gymnasium* nearby, where she is also active but more reluctantly. With regard to issue "*Schulverweigerung*", she highlights the specific educational approach of the *GMS* that obliges the whole educational community to work together. Finally, her interpretation of the problem "*Schulverweigerung*" as a psychological one illustrates the ambivalence of her role, as part of the institution but also in charge of her transformation, which is difficult due to limited resources: against them, the "school cannot do anything".

4.1.1.1 Emphasis on collective approach

In the German report for the project GOETE (*op. cit.*), Cramer et *al*. underline the diversity of school social work, especially as to how individual schools make use of it: "school social work appears as an umbrella term for diverse social, socio-pedagogical activities. […] In that it is not a service for schools but rather a complementary field to help young people to cope with the school's demands as well as of achieving subjective well-being in a more or less complex society" (Bolay et al., 2004, p. 12 quoted by Cramer and al., 2010, p. 29). The work and function of school social workers is characterised by their multifunctional aspects and tensions (Reinecke-Terner 2017), because they stand between different actors, institutions, "stages" by helping students to "achieve a general well-being" but also to conform to the classroom settings and teachers' expectations. In this context, cooperation is seen as the "core activity" ("*Kerngeschäft*") of school social work (Spies & Pötter, 2011, p. 29).

In an attempt to underline her autonomy, Klein describes her field of intervention as very wide and diverse. She states that she "supports" but does not serve teachers, who sometimes seek to have her on their side against some parents. For example, she says that "teachers would be pleased to have [her]" in teacher-parent meetings because "some parents are

[493] Peter-Ulrich Wendt. Rezension vom 24.10.2011 zu: Anke Spies, Nicole Pötter: Soziale Arbeit in Schulen. Eine Einführung. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften (Wiesbaden) 2011

difficult and put the blame on school and teachers" (Klein, p. 11), "but" she considers that this pertains to teachers' field of intervention ("I'm not a teacher"; this should be "kept disjoint", Klein, p. 11); but "if she can, she supports them" (Klein, p. 11) [494].

Referring to the well-defined professional field of "school social work", she sees more possibilities to work in line with the principles of her field in the *GMS* than in the *Gymnasium* nearby, which is dominated by teachers' views ("This is more teacher oriented there and here it is more jointly"). In the *GMS*, she is more able to fulfil her supportive function and being a counsellor for "students", for "teachers", and for "parents". She also mediates between these three groups, which is not always easy as she is asked to take sides, as shown in the previous argument.

But school social workers may have different focuses as developing their own domain. She mentions her colleague who supervises students with specific issues, "for example, with autism" during class excursions (Klein, p. 6)[495].

Regarding her special focus, she refers to the "class projects" she implements and leads according to the principles of "experiential education" (*Erlebnispädagogik*) that deals with group dynamics and collective experiences, through which children are supported to acquire individually and collectively – namely at school – how to solve conflicts and strengthen their social competences.(Klein, 2017, p. 2)[496].

Mrs. Klein places an emphasis on projects that take a different approach to education than formal education does, notably the so-called collective approach, which is rooted in the development of social pedagogy (Böhm, *op. cit*.). She also organises workshops related to the "prevention of addictions" and "social training" (Klein, pp. 5-6). In the lower grades, where activities related to classroom cohesion are systematically organised, she addresses bullying and issues of self-esteem (p. 3).[497] The system of the "post-box", where students can submit their problems, helps Klein to adapt her activities to address the major problems first. The

---

[494] Original quotation: "Ich bin hier kein Lehrer. Das muss man trennen. […] Lehrer hätten mich teilweise gerne dabei, aber..." […] manche, bei manchen Fällen. Weil sie wissen, dass es ist nicht so einfach. Die Eltern sind vielleicht schwierig und hätten da gerne eine Unterstützung durch mich. Wenn ich kann mache ich das auch. […] es gibt Eltern die das Problem an der Schule sehen, die Lehrer sind schuld, Schule ist schuld [lacht] weil das Kind nicht richtig lernt [lächelt], also so, in die Richtung. Genau.

[495] Original quotation: "mein Kollege macht auch bei Klassenfahrten mit, wenn man eine besondere Betreuung braucht. Wenn z.B. Autisten sind […]".

[496] Original quotation: "[…] und meine Funktion an der Schulsozialarbeit ist es hauptsächlich die Unterstützung und Beratung von Schülern oder Schülerinnen, auch von Lehrern, von Eltern und… auch Vermittlung an weitere Hilfen. Das mache ich auch. Und Klassenprojekte. Klassenprojekte biete ich an, aus der Erlebnispädagogik".

[497] This is particularly important in Germany, where the compositio of the class remains basically the same until from the 5th grade to the final exam.

collective workshop, where students learn how to get on with one another or "to complete an assignment together", "to make the experience of cooperation" (p. 2)[498] seems to be particularly important to her besides the individual management of special cases.

Through her different interventions, she may be able to gain a broader picture of what students are concerned about. According to Klein, while the younger students are mostly concerned by mobbing and disputes, the older students are more worried about their future orientation and sometimes domestic issues (pp. 2-3). However, her work with the upper grades is not systematic and she is mostly called in to address individual students' problems.

Individual support works on a voluntary basis, which is also a way to emphasise her autonomy towards some teachers who ask her to urgently deal with "critical" cases they have trouble dealing with: "Students' disposition to cooperate [*Bereitschaft*] is important to me […] I do not force any student to work with me" (Klein, p. 7)[499]. In this context, the organisation of collective and playful activities – such as "Zumba" – helps establish a friendly and personal connection with the students: "well, I also use the medium of sports to create a connection with students" (pp. 12-13)[500]. In general, she wants to give students the feeling that her office is a "safe space" where they can feel "well" and "free" (Klein, p. 3)[501].

The setting of the newly created *Gemeinschaftsschule,* based on the discourses of "inclusion" and "educational landscape"—referring to the cooperation and network between partners and relevant educational actors (Bohl and *al. op. cit.*, p. 93)— opens up new opportunities for her to reinvent herself and her professional identity. She does not feel considered as a resourceful school social worker in the *Gymnasium* nearby but as a "wizard" who one calls in the very

---

[498] Original quotation: "Sozialprojekte, wie man miteinander umgehen kann oder auch Erlebnispädagogik, d.h. wie man es zusammen schafft eine Aufgabe zu erfüllen, also dieses Miteinander erleben und ähm.. dann führen wir hier, auf alle Fälle auch bei den 5. Klassen den Klassenrat ein. Was immer einmal in der Woche stattfindet […] [about the "Briefkastensystem" in the lower classes: "äh Streitereien mit Mitschülern. Mobben, also nicht mobben sondern eher Ärgern, Beleidigen, Schubsen ... also.. eher sowas. Oder. Äh. Ja, eher sowas in die Richtung es geht um Selbstwertgefühl. Es wird da oft gestört, sie sind da am Finden von Freundschaften".

[499] Original quotation:"Wichtig ist bei mir die Bereitschaft der Schüler […] ich zwinge keine Schüler"; she just mentioned the teachers in the Gymnasium who call her "in the last minute" and expect her to solve the issues with the problematic student "at the push of a button".

[500] Original quotation: "ich biete noch vielleicht, das könnte ich noch sagen, ich bin hier auch noch Zumba Trainer, […] ein Projekt in den 8. Klassen. Da findet ein Projekt statt und ich biete ein Zumba Tanzkurs an, wo wir ein Tanz einstudieren, also ich benutze auch das Medium Sport, um eine andere Beziehung zu den Schülern zu bekommen. Also ich bin auch auf dieser Ebene tätig".

[501] Original quotation: **"**ein Ort wo sie sich wohl fühlen können. Den Schülern sage ich auch mal, hier ist ein geschützter Raum, das was wir hier machen, das bleibt unter uns und geht nicht nach außen. Ich gebe ihnen ein Gefühl, dass sie sich hier wohl fühlen können und dass…. Sie frei sein können".

last moment to fix the situation single-handedly with a "magic wand" and "ready-made recipes" (Klein, p. 6) [502]. However, in the *GMS* she is able to define and implement her ways to approach educational support, in conjunction with teachers and the head of school, who gives much value and importance to school social work (cf. part 2). In the *GMS* she feels "part of a team", a member who is valued and considered as an equal. Althouh she spends 50 percent of her time at the nearby *Gymnasium*, she admits prioritising the *GMS* ("My wish would be to stay here and to stop going to the Gymnasium", p. 4; "meanwhile, I don't offer them [the *Gymnasium*] my service very intensively, because I see my place rather here and they know about that. I already told them" p. 6)[503]. Actually, she wishes to be "allocated" only to the *GMS*, which is why they are currently "looking for an additional workforce for the *Gymnasium*". Indeed, in the *GMS*, she is able to work "in close collaboration with the colleagues, with teachers, with the rector's office and with the students", and implement her "way of doing" regarding education and educational support from the perspective of school social work:

> *"I'm here, I'm present and I also spend much time in the teachers' room and when teachers are here, whose students are supervised by me, I enquire about them, how is it going with this or that student at school. Well, in this case teachers are also very communicative. The principal as well is very communicative, works well, keeps himself up to date with my work, supports me as well, so does the concierge … everybody. It's optimal like it is. I must say. Well, here I feel … well integrated" (Klein, p. 4)[504].*

Such a positive atmosphere in the *GMS* has a direct influence on her perception of the phenomenon "*Schulverweigerung*", as a phenomenon which engages the responsibility of the institution. School social workers are here to realise the establishment of a "pedagogic

[502] Original quotation: "die Lehrer drüben kommen erst wenn es zu spät ist. Und dann soll ich mit einem Zauberstab kommen und helfen. Und ein jeder hat sich schon eingemischt. Dann soll ich kommen und das Problem lösen, am besten sofort und mit einem Rezept A oder B […]".

[503] Original quotation: "Aber dadurch, dass ich das gar nicht schaffen kann drüben, biete ich mich auch mittlerweile gar nicht mehr intensiv an. Weil ich eher meinen Platz hier sehe und dass wissen sie auch. Das habe ich auch schon kommuniziert". / K: "(…) mein Wunsch ist es nur noch hier zu bleiben und nicht mehr ins Gymnasium zu gehen. Das heißt, wir suchen eine Zusatzkraft fürs Gymnasium./ Q: und warum ist das dein Wunsch hier zu bleiben und nicht mehr ins Gymnasium zu gehen? / K.: weil ich äh… hier sehr eng mit den Kollegen, mit den Lehrern, mit dem Rektorat, mit den Schülern zusammen arbeite. Also die Kommunikation ist sehr eng und sehr vertraut und wir begleiten die neuen 5.-Klässer auch stets sehr eng hier. Was drüben anders läuft".

[504] Original quotation: "Bin da, […] bin präsent, und bin auch viel im Lehrerzimmer und wenn Lehrer da sind und ich deren Schüler in der Beratung habe, da frage ich auch nach wie esin der Schule mit dem und demjenigen läuft. Also, die Lehrer sind auch sehr kommunikativ. Auch die Schulleitung ist sehr kommunikativ, arbeitet gut, fragt auch nach, unterstützt mich auch, der Hausmeister auch… alles. (…) es ist optimal so wie es ist. Muss ich sagen. Also ich fühle mich hier…. gut integriert".

masterplan" in cooperation with their colleagues (*pädagogisches Gesamtkonzept*), which assumes, "the interconnection of living environments; school on one side, families, the world of work and out-of-school environments on the other side" (Spies, *op. cit*.). Such a perspective makes the issue "*Schulverweigerung"* a more visible phenomenon. Furthermore, school social workers are responsible for finding solutions to deal with "negative school participation":

> *"It has always been… let's say… it has become more. It has become a bit more; I believe, before it was common that this issue was addressed at the school level and that school social work was not involved, not yet. And I say, very honestly, over there at the Gymnasium, we are also less involved, because they try to solve this problem scholastically. Which is also fine. Well […] [in the* GMS*] the teachers open up and say…. Communicate more with us and tell us, this one does not study, what can I do, do you have any tips? […] this means, we work close with the teachers and parents are not surprised at the end of the year" (Klein, 2017, p. 11)*[505].

At the *GMS*, Mrs. Klein feels "useful" in her supportive role. For this reason, her perception of how the school deals with the issue "*Schulverweigerung*" is positive and the limits are to be seen, according to her, either in the lack of resources or need to be searched within the individuals and their environment themselves.

4.1.1.2 "Here, things are done very quickly": the "promises" of the GMS

According to Klein, the way truancy and students' issues are handled in the school is an example of a good integration in the school as well as the efficiency of professionals' cooperation:

> *"Well, here thing are handled very quickly, […] we organise conversations with parents, with students and even the principal. Well… we react quickly, when we notice that a child refuses school" (Klein, p. 9)*[506]

---

[505] Original quotation: "gab schon immer... sagen wir... es ist ein bisschen mehr geworden. Es ist ein bisschen mehr geworden; ich glaub früher war das so üblich dass, dass, eher auf schulische Ebene gelaufen ist und dass die Schulsozialarbeit nicht, noch nicht so einbezogen wurde. Und ich sage noch ganz ehrlich drüben im Gymnasium, werden wir auch weniger einbezogen, es ist einfach so, weil sie versuchen, dass schulisch zu klären. Was aber ok so ist. Also. […]Und die Lehrer öffnen sich mehr, sagen auch… kommunizieren mehr mit uns und sagen, die, der lernt nicht richtig, was können wir machen, hast du paar Tipps […] Das heißt, sie [Eltern] werden nicht erst am Ende des Schuljahres überrascht, sondern man arbeitet auch eng mit den Lehrer zusammen".

[506] Original quotation: **"**Also hier wird auch ganz schnell geguckt, […]… man bietet Gespräche mit den Eltern an, mit den Schülern, auch oft von Schulleitungsebene. Also das.. es wird schnell reagiert, wenn bemerkt wird, dass ein Kind die Schule verweigert"

Furthermore, Klein is perceived as an important resource in the *GMS*. For some teachers coming from the *Realschule*, the *GMS* constitutes a challenge as developed in the third part. The new student body makes them feel less secure. For these reasons, they ask the school social worker "for help". So, she has the feeling that teachers at the *GMS* tend to include her more than at the nearby Gymnasium. Most importantly they do not only call her to "extinguish a fire":

> *"I've got the feeling that, through the introduction of the* GMS*, [teachers] ask more often for help. A teacher asks regularly…: 'is this OK, would you do this in the same way?' well, they are looking for more cooperation. Because, through the GMS, well, a lot of… different students come together. Each of them with a unique and often difficult history" (Klein, p. 8).*[507]

She organises meetings with specific students but also leaves her office door open for unscheduled appointments. Her office is situated on the first floor at the centre of the main building that allows for a panoptic view. Over time, she has created her own little niche in the school, which is well known by the students. Some of them just come in to talk. According to Klein "they need this a lot. At best, they would like to meet daily" if it were possible (Klein, p. 3)[508]

Klein believes in the "principles of the *GMS*" -which theoretically consists in "renouncing selection" and considering "heterogeneity as a way for a good or even better leaning" (Bohl and Wacker, *op. cit*., p. 73), as this quotation illustrates: "I find everybody, the 5th grade very lovable in their heterogeneity" (Klein, p. 10)[509]. Mrs. Klein thinks that *Schulverweigerung* is not really an issue but "self-worth and self-esteem […] the work on relationship and on the way students get along together in their class" (Klein, p. 11)[510]. In that, she shares an interactionist vision of the problem, seen from a systemic perspective more than an individual issue.

---

[507] Original quotation: "ich habe das Gefühl, durch die Einführung der GMS, fragen sie noch viel mehr nach Hilfe. Der eine Lehrer fragt regelmäßig auch nach...: ‚ist das so in Ordnung, würdest du das auch so machen'? Also die suchen nach enger Zusammenarbeit. Weil… durch die GMS, ja, eh... viele... verschiedene Schüler zueinander kommen. Jeder, der ihren Päckchen haben."

[508] Original quotation:"… ich will den einfach nur helfen und unterstützen und in der Regel klopfen sie an und wenn wir auch was vereinbaren, dann kommen die auch. Auch die Älteren wie die Jüngeren, das sowieso. Die haben ganz viel Bedarf. Sie möchten am liebsten täglich [lacht]. Aber das schaffe ich gar nicht".

[509] Original quotation: "Ich finde alle, die 5. GMSklassen sehr liebenswert in ihrer Heterogenität".

[510] Original quotation: "das Hauptthema ist... das Selbstwert, die Selbstwertfindung. Sage ich mal. Die Beziehungsarbeit, dieses Miteinanderauskommen in der Klasse".

However, pedagogic innovation needs time – she refers to the above-mentioned disputed measure of the "silent work room" ("*Stillarbeitsraum*"), conceptualised for students to escape the class setting if they consider that they cannot work properly in there but used by teachers as a punishment measure (see Part 3): "let's say, in ten years, it will most probably work as it was originally thought" (Klein, p. 12). Echoing the discourse of her colleagues, she reckons that the *GMS* also needs more material and human resources to ease teachers' workload. To conclude, the school social worker finds the *GMS* to be a school form with a positive setting and potential to develop different pedagogic and educational approaches based on "inclusion" and less on selection; however, she is more reluctant when it comes to the concrete capacities that current resources offer to implement such a project, "which looked good on paper":

> *"The* GMS *is great on paper. But the implementation is difficult. In my opinion, the building's capacity should, first of all, be increased... this means, that there are too few rooms here. And technically, the second building should have been constructed long ago. And it's not standing yet. And the means, which had been promised, were never provided. I also find the class sizes too large. In my opinion, 27 students in such a hetereogenuous classroom are too many; given this diversity, I would say 20 students are OK… I also find it important that there are two teachers per class. Always. This is GMS for me. And here I see how all teachers are now fighting to do their job… and it depends on the principal but the principal cannot do anything either; he would also like to have it differently but… all this is not simple. I would say, on paper it looked good" (Klein, p. 12)*[511].

This last quotation illustrates very much how every professional's room for manoeuvre to implement the principles of the *GMS* is highly constrained by the resources available. Klein's interpretations of the concept "*Schulverweigerung*" reveal a mixed judgement about the *GMS*. Clearly, the *GMS* does not live up to her initial expectations regarding this new educational format. While Mrs. Klein's first reaction is to imply the role and responsibility of school to be supportive and attractive enough, she admits that for some individual and isolated cases, school "cannot do anything". She refers in this matter to the medical conception of "*Schulverweigerung*". Such positioning reveals the ambivalence of her function torn between

[511] Original quotation: "Die GMS ist auf dem Papier toll. Aber die Umsetzung ist schwierig. Ich finde auch die Räumlichkeit müssen erstmal geschaffen werden... das heißt, hier sind zu wenig Räume. Und im Prinzip müsse das zweite Gebäude schon längst stehen. Und es steht noch nicht. Und die Mittel, die zugesagt worden sind, wurden nicht eingehalten. Ich empfinde bei der *GMS* die Klassen als zu groß. Ich finde, dass 27 Schüler viel zu viel sind angesichst dieser Heterogenität. Klassen mit 20 Schülern sind in Ordnung. Und was auch wichtig ist, man sollte immer zwei Lehrer pro Klasse einsetzen. Immer. Das ist für mich eine GMS. Ich sehe wie jetzt gerade alle Lehrer kämpfen… und das hängt stark vom Schulleiter ab, aber der Schulleiter kann auch nichts machen. Er sieht ja auch, er würde es auch gerne anders aber.. das ist alles nicht so einfach. Ich sage, auf dem Papier sah das gut aus".

support and emancipation of students and their normalisation according to school norms and values, as well as her solidarity to other professional groups.

4.1.1.3 When the school "cannot do anything"

In the chapter "*Schulverweigerung* from the perspective of different professions", Popp (2006, pp. 163-188) distinguishes between clinical psychology, child and youth psychiatry, and (school) social (youth) work. In the clinical field, the "phenomenon" of *Schulverweigerung* has been "identified for a long time" and corresponds to different forms of "anxiety disorders". More precisely, "*Schulverweigerung*" is classified as the "latest stage" within the category of "school fear" (with school as the place of parental separation). This is opposed to "school truancy", which is an "antisocial behaviour for which psycho-medical intervention is not really relevant". Popp describes the "field of activity of (school) social work and youth work [as] the attempt to reach every young person who fails to appear in school with the only acceptable reasons being ostensible somatic and psychological". However, these distinctions are still debated, with certain authors refusing the separation between school, family and social structures and environments. F. Braun (2006, in Gentner & Mertens, pp. 37-55) emphasises the role of youth social workers in supporting the development of "stable relations with the school professionals" through specific strategies that help to recover students' positive participation in school; the fact is that school social workers "do not see students as only recipients of teaching but as people with, to some extent, difficult history, issues and stresses, emotional needs". In other words, he argues that where individual ascriptions and externalisation triumph over a comprehensive view of "*Schulverweigerung"*, it informs us about nonexistent relations with youth social work. On the contrary, a comprehensive view of the phenomenon assumes that "concepts and methods of school social work "become a normal component of the daily routine of class (acquisition of social skills, learning techniques, measures to improve the school climate, widening of work with parents...), [the focus being] on support and integration rather than assessment and selection" (Braun, pp. 50-51; in Gentner & Mertens *op. cit*.). This perspective is shared by Herz, Puhr, Ricking (2005), who go further than issues of school environment and analyse individual cases of physical or mental absenteeism ("aversion", "weariness", "latent refusal", "reluctance", "sulliness"…) while looking at the configuration betweeen structures and agency. In doing this they identify coping strategies: "it does not seem to be the conditions under which children and young people learn, live and suffer that are crucial in the way they cope with their problems but rather the way they interpret the meaning of these conditions."

The mitigating or amplifying role of either successful or missed pedagogic prevention is as important as intervention (*ibid.*, p. 131). According to these explanatory models, we would expect that Mrs. Klein emphasises conditions that enable or prevent good cooperation between her and other school staff; as well as how able she is to implement youth work measures in the school. Yet she also brings forward the medical model in her perception of "*Schulverweigerung*". How does she make sense of this kind of discourse in the context of her other comments?

In previous subchapters, I showed how Klein emphasises close cooperation between herself and the teachers and principals, which allows the school to find quick solutions for dropouts. Still, her understanding of "*Schulverweigerung*" seems ambivalent insofar as she advances a medical-psychological definition of the phenomenon and supports its externalisation while simultaneously implementing activities based on her convictions and working towards improvement of school climate and individual empowerment. The persisting conflicting argument between the psychologisation of school issues on one hand and the conviction of a collective, institutional responsibility on the other hand can be interpreted as a means of admitting her own limits, or the limit of the school professionals in current settings, when faced with difficult cases. It may also inform of traditional existing forms of coping with "negative participation", such as the mobilization of youth medical clinics.

Klein distinguishes between different forms of "*Schulverweigerung*". Firstly she describes permanent absenteeism, when "the student does not go to school anymore and cannot be convinced to go to school. They *refuse* to go to school and parents are powerless, the school cannot do anything" (Klein, p. 9)[512]. "Fortunately," she has never experienced this kind of case in this school - although she is aware of it existing in "other schools" (p. 9). However it has "nothing to do with the school type" [513] according to Klein: *Schulverweigerung* is essentially "to do with the student personally" [514], "with the individual psyche" and must be

[512] Original quotation: "Ist wenn… der Schüler überhaupt nicht mehr zur Schule kommt und auch nicht zu bewegen ist, zur Schule zu gehen. Er sich weigert, zur Schule zu gehen und die Eltern machtlos sind, die Schule nichts machen kann. Solche Fälle kenne ich hier nicht. Zum Glück. …aber ich kenne das von anderen Schulen, dass es das gibt".

[513] In the German dropout research, this point is debated; several studies demonstrate a correlation between lower-ranked school types and absenteeism; others argue with different perceptions and definitions of this phenomenon according to the school type (???, last clause is not clear) (Wagner, 2007, p. 241). Cf. M. Stamm and the fact that the dropout phenomenon is rarely mentioned at the Gymnasium (see introduction).

[514] Original quotation: "genau. Also es hat mit dem Schüler selbst was zu tun"

understood in terms of "psychological issues" that emerged in the family environment[515]. She refers to specific institutions that come into play in this case, like the "paediatric and juvenile psychiatry" (*Jugendpsychiatrie*) or the "school clinic" (*Klinikschule*). In this institution, students attend classes and, after successful treatment, can gradually be reintroduced to ordinary school (Klein, p. 9)[516].

These institutions are often used to handle students who have difficulties in coping with the demands imposed by school. Furthermore, a veritable market is emerging where different institutions offer their services, such as the Hemera private clinic in Bavaria which offers its services to treat "youth with burnout symptoms". According to this clinic, the "reasons" explaining burnouts among youth can be related to "family issues" or issues in the "private environment" ("for example hostile relations, permanent conflicts, financial and health issues"). Interestingly a large section of the clinic's description is dedicated to school-related factors: "The development of burnout symptoms are mainly related to the increasing pressure to perform well at school, which leads to a considerable amount of stress" (…) "excessive social expectations with regard to the grades that are to be obtained " (…) "Other stress inducing factors that can be found at school [concern]: mobbing, permanent harassment through peers, perceptions of injustices committed by teachers … [they all] lead to high levels of stress and fearful situations as well as continuing emotional and physical strain"[517].

Another study that seeks to identify the characteristics of "school refusers" (*Schulverweigerer*) who have been sent to the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in Essen using the category of "psychiatric disorders", considers school and social factors as being more important than psychiatric disorders in explaining absenteeism. In other words, the apparent "psychiatric disorders" are interpreted as ways to overcome excessive demands

---

[515] Original quotation: "Das hat ähm, was mit derPsyche des Menschen zu tun. Das hat gar nichts mit dem Ort zu tun. Man kann das nicht an der Schule festmachen. Das ist dann... eher... ein familiäres Problem, dass ein Kind eine Blockade... eine psychologische Blockade, genau..."

[516] Original quotation: " […] und in der Regel müssen die Kids, also die Schüler, psychologisch betreut werden […] Da gibt es in T. die [Maßnahme] der Jugendpyschiatrie, und es gibt die Klinik Schule. Das heißt, dort werden sie eng psychologisch betreut und… unterrichtet. Vom Privat... also von extra Lehrern und es gibt nicht zu viel Unterrichtsstoff. In der Regel sind die Schüler so ein halbes bis maximal zwei Jahre an der Schule, bevor sie dann wieder in die Regelschule zurückgeführt werden.

[517] [https://www.hemera.de/behandlungsschwerpunkte/depressive-stoerungen/burnout-bei-jugendlichen/],14/05/19

in the context of family, school and peers (Knollmann et al., 2009, p. 446) [518].

The "Association for psychiatry, paediatric and juvenile psychiatry, psychotherapy, psychosomatic, neurology in Germany and Switzerland"[519] classifies the issue "*Schulverweigerung*" among "disorders and illnesses". However, such a categorisation admits that reasons for "school avoidance" are extremely diverse, encompassing environmental factors such as the environment at school or problems in the family. These elements reinforce each other and create a "vicious circle", which can be particularly "serious if the child does not receive proper support"[520].

These examples speak for the fact that even in the psychological-medical milieu, school settings, school professional practices and social norms and expectations play a crucial role in what is labelled "*Schulverweigerung*".

Klein confirms that sometimes teachers come to her when a student is "unwilling to learn", but if the student does not accept her help she "cannot do much" (p. 10). In general, "one makes efforts to be here for the student". She is asked to intervene when "they [teachers and principal] notice that the student's performances do not meet the necessary requirements to achieve the level for their year and then they organise a conversation with the parents. And I try… to be a support for the parents and for the students" (*ibid.*)[521]. In this situation, the school social worker is caught between the inclusive and selective role of the school (Aro et al., 2012, p. 1, referred to by Stauber et al., *op. cit*., pp. 104-105); as well as with the enforcement of the norm of school performance.
Despite the close cooperation between parents and professionals, some students – "unique cases" (Klein, p. 10)[522]- are not able to cope within the context of the *GMS*.

---

[518] The results are based on the study of 89 patients of a specialised school of the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in Essen.
[519] Berufsverbände und Fachgesellschaften für Psychiatrie, Kinder- und Jugendpsychiatrie, Psychotherapie, Psychosomatik, Nervenheilkunde und Neurologie aus Deutschland und der Schweiz.
[520] Official website: [https://www.neurologen-und-psychiater-im-netz.org/kinder-jugend-psychiatrie/erkrankungen/schulvermeidung-schulangst-schulphobie-schuleschwaenzen/schulvermeidung-und-schulschwaenzen/], 29.10.2018.
[521] Original quotatie: "Aber man bemüht sich... für den Schüler da zu sein. Also ich empfinde es so, auch... auf Schulleitungsebene, dass wenn sie merken, da ist leitungsmäßig kein Zeugnis mehr ausstellbar, dann führt man ein Gespräch auch mit den Eltern. Und versucht…. eine Unterstützung zu sein, für die Eltern und für die Schüler".
[522] Original quotation:"Also die gibt es jetzt auch in der 6. Klasse. Da sind wir auch eng, […] mit den Eltern eng zusammen, weil die Schülerin, es nicht schafft zu lernen. Sie schafft es einfach nicht hier in diesen großen Klassen zu lernen. Die ist auch bockig, ist nicht bereit, ist auch teilweise agressiv und da sind wir auch lange

She gives the example of a child (6th grade, 11) who is "simply not able to learn here in a classroom with so many other students […] she is not ready, she is moody and sometimes aggressive […] and we are working closely with the parents to convince them that this student should actually go to another school with a total of eight students per classroom. Well, there are such cases, but fortunately, only occasionally!" (*ibid*.)

In this context, the school social worker is in charge of finding a solution to externalise the students who cannot be supported sufficiently by the school and convince the parents of the merits of a solution which constitutes both an externalisation of the problem and a downgrading of the student (see Braun, *op. cit*.).

4.1.2 "Afternoon" educational assistants

The emergence of the all-day school as part of the *Gemeinschaftsschule* is a recent trend in Baden-Württemberg which has led to the creation of a new professional category: the educational assistants. As members of the "school theatre" they have to find their place and establish their role among all the other professions. At the Geschwister Scholl *GMS* the educational assistants perceive themselves as newcomers who for now remain in the background. This said, they are optimistic about the future, which has a direct influence on how they interpret the phenomenon of "*Schulverweigerung*".

4.1.2.1 The restructuration of the German educational and professional landscape

Four days out of five, the Geschwister Scholl *GMS* implements the all-day school, which has become a common phenomenon in Germany in general and Baden-Württemberg in particular only since 2012. Traditionally schooling in Germany used to cover only half a day. The ways by which the concept of all-day schooling is conceptualised, organised and implemented varies between the different Länder, between rural and urban spaces, and between different school levels (primary or lower/upper secondary education) and types of schools. This variation concerns both the overall number of days per week students will have to be at school in the afternoon and the nature of activities (homework or subject-oriented support, sport, culture, youthwork). The precise format depends on the number of students enrolled at the

---

dran, dass wir die Eltern überzeugen, dass diese Schülerin eigentlich woanders in einer ganz anderen Klasse mit maximal acht Schülern, oder 10, 8 bis 10 […]wir hoffen, dass wir das schaffen, ähm, dass sie ab dem 9. Schuljahr in die andere Klasse geht und da enger betreut werden kann. Also sowas gibt es schon auf alle Fälle, aber vereinzelt, zum Glück. [lacht]"

school, its geographical location, as well as the availability of material and human resources (Frankfurt a.M.: DIPF, 2016, pp. 13-15,[523] cf. Part 2).

All-day schools are embedded in a wider discourse about the establishment of an "educational landscape" (*Bildungslandschaften*), a "discursive metaphor implying the reduction of educational disadvantage, lifelong learning, holistic comprehension of education but also local economic security/dynamism, reproduction of human capital and compatibility of families and work" (Gschwind, 2015, p. 1, cf. Part 1). These discourses have led to a diversification of the professional body that assures children's education. The "all-day" concept targets a specific population, that is, "primarily schools where socially disadvantaged children as well as children with migration backgrounds are over-represented. It aims to balance the time these children spend in school and with their families, who were and are characterised as milieus with little cultural capital as regards their own education and attitudes towards education" (Cramer et al., p. 27).

Mechtild Veil (2002) notes the different traditions of French and German education, which is differently penetrated by private and religious interests. There is no equivalent French word for "all-day school" since education in France – from preschool (*maternelle*, from three years old) to the end of the higher secondary school (Veil, 2002)– is historically by definition all-day. In France, the "all-day school" can be understood as a political project participating in the historical process of state assertion and political centralisation against the influence of the Catholic Church (Troger & *op. cit.*). Therefore, according to Veil, the "all-day school" concept in France is clearly a political project rather than a "pedagogic one" (Veil *op. cit.*). On the contrary, pedagogy in Germany is a science taught at the university, which is categorised according to the different educational fields (school, youth and social work, alternative pedagogies….). In formal education, this diversity also reflects the emphasis on the differentiation of the school audience in a class-based structured school system. This cultural aspect of the school system is historically rooted and explains the disapprobation of Kristine Maute, the educational assistant at the Geschwister Scholl *GMS* (Maute, pp. 6-7 see hereinafter) about the dissolution of the schools for students with "special needs" (*Förderschule*) –who are integrated in the *GMS* that she is supposed to facilitate.

[523] For example, at the Geschwister Scholl *GMS*, students from the former *Realschule* benefit from extended teaching hours while *GMS*-students benefit from a supervised lunch time, activities and free time.

How does the educational assistant Kristine Maute, as a new professional who supervises a team of all-day educational assistants, define her role and those of her colleagues? Do these professionals have the capacity to improve the school experience and rebalance inequality of cultural capital in "inclusive" school settings?

4.1.2.2 "I was no educator" : finding one's niche in the context of the GMS-project.

Mrs. Maute is an ("afternoon") educational assistant at the Geschwister Scholl *GMS*. It is very difficult to find any information about these "new" professionals ("*pädagogische Fachkraft*"/ "*Betreuungsfachkraft*"), who emerged along with the all-day school in 2012. Individual schools design and publish the profile of the educational assistants they wish to recruit by considering professional qualifications and experiences and keeping in mind the activities they are developing as part of the all-day school curriculum (see box). Often, schools require specific qualifications, yet in the light of urgent recruitment needs, they often accept applications from people with "comparable education and training" as defined in the official "extended register of skilled personnel" ("*erweiterten Fachkräftekatalog* § 7 KiTaG"). According to this register, the additional work force in this domain are people who, because of their qualification(s) in other fields fulfil the requirements for educational work. Certain profiles are published under the status of a federal volunteer service (*BFD*, without age limit). The institution in charge controls the recruitment process. The box below contains extracts of two job offers published by two different all-day primary and secondary schools (2019, STIG gGmbH):

"[…] **Your missions**:
The supervision of free time during lunch, of educational activities and individual learning. Your working time is normally from Monday until Thursday for max. 16 hours, which makes up a 50% post. In the case of available qualifications, there may be a possibility to work additionally in one of our primary schools in the early, late or holiday supervision phase.
You implement educational activities on your own or in tandem with a pedagogically qualified employee. Specifically, to these thematic points, you bring your experiences and you are able to engage in the following domains: theatre, circus, pedagogy of experience, music or handcraft. Through these activities, you support the children in discovering and developing their aptitudes and interests. In agreement with the teachers in the school, you organise individual learning and practical activities for the students, free work phases as well as targeted support activities. During vacation periods, you take on, with your colleagues, the organisation and supervision of the holiday program.
Your qualifications:
An officially recognised diploma in pedagogy in line with the extended catalogue of skilled personnel. Knowledge about work with students and young people, as well as professional experiences are an advantage. […]

**

[…] Your profile as a skilled employee:
Your missions include, besides the organisation of educational activities, free time for games and learning opportunities, also the supervision of children in the late afternoon-supervision phase on Friday, as well as the organisation and cooperation including up to 10 holiday weeks.
You bring with you:
An officially recognised diploma in education (*Pädagogik*) in line with the extended catalogue of skilled personnel. Content knowledge about work with primary school students as well as relevant professional experiences is an advantage. Interest and enthusiasm for subjects such as language, literature or theatre are welcomed. […]

Kristin Maute has a positive vision of a professional trajectory, which is associated with a positive perception of her role and usefulness in the newly created *GMS*. This project offered her the opportunity to develop personally and professionally in accordance with her interests ("well, I would have never thought that I would find such a thing for me. I would have never thought. I really like coming here" p. 9)[524]. The condition of her recruitment is a recognition of her competences she did not gain at the university; indeed, she was recruited because she used to be highly involved in school activities when her sons were still studying there. She was quickly integrated into the current school. The director secured her contract and offered her the chance to be a driving element in the constitution of "afternoon time". In this function, she drafts grant proposals for additional funding from public authorities.

Maute is almost fifty. She has three children, who have now left the lower secondary education system. Originally, she was a sales manager. During our interview, she repeatedly states that she "was not an educator" (p. 1 and p. 15). She, however, regularly refers to her quality as "a mother" that gave her specific skills. Maute has been "learning by doing" and participating in additional training (p. 15). Before starting to work at the school, she was a highly active parent. Back then she was "asked by a lot of mothers" whether she "would like to lead a workshop (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft*) or something like that" . She received the support of a teacher and decided to quit her job and dedicate herself to the implementation of the "afternoon" concept. She informs herself "on the internet" and "came across the *Jugendbegleiterprogramm*"[525]. This official programme is an instrument of the Ministry of

[524] Original quotation: "Also ich hätte nie gedacht, dass ich mit sowas mal, dass ich sowas finde für mich. Hätte ich nicht gedacht. Ich gehe immer sehr gerne hierher".
[525] Original quotation: "Aber ich habe drei Kinder in einer anderen Schule. Sie sind auch schon weg von der Schule und durch die zwei jüngeren, […] bin ich praktisch so… habe ich mich engagiert an der Schule und habe AGs angeboten und dann kam die Frage auf… wie würde es mit der Schule weitergehen als offene Ganztagsschule... Man braucht Angebote, wer organisiert das? Und ich habe auch vorher... viele Mütter, haben mich angesprochen… also würdest du nicht, hast du nicht Lust oder möchtest du nicht eine AG hier anbieten.

Youth and Sport in Baden-Württemberg to support the development of all-day schools through the cooperation and networking of local school and out-of-school actors.

Indeed, Maute explains that subsidies depend on the nature of the project and cooperation as regards the actors involved. State grants do not cover all spending but "one has to look for other funding structures". To secure her job, she answers calls for proposals - so that the school "gets money"- and thus contributes to defining her project. Although the whole process is still on "shaky legs" ("*wackelnde Beinen*") (Maute, pp. 1-2)[526], in April she got a secure position. Previously, she used to be employed on a "mini-job" basis. This evolution is a recognition of her usefulness and good work ("this is great", p. 3). The project is advancing little by little since former Realschule-classes are replaced yearly by a new generation of *GMS*-students.

Therefore, Maute has a positive perception of her role in contributing to the implementation of the *GMS*-format, as well as in convincing other parents of its merits. She mentions the positive feedback that she now receives, despite the fact that at the outset many parents - herself included - tended to be suspicious of the idea of their children spending more time under the influence of teachers and educational assistants:

> *"Of course, we don't know this in Germany [smile] that children are supervised here until 15:45. Although there is really positive feedback. Parents say, my child comes back very… they say 'tidy', comes home very satisfied. And I find this actually the biggest compliment, or the greatest acknowledgement, that one can receive from the parents" (Maute, p. 4)*[527]

She mentions a group of "conservative" parents who are fundamentally against the all-day schools whereas she herself disapproves of the fact that other school types are disappearing

---

Und dann ist eine Lehrerin auf mich zugekommen und hat gesagt, das könntest doch du machen. Ich habe damals auch was gesucht was ich machen kann. Ich habe meinen alten Job aufgegeben und gesagt, also gut, ich kann mir das vorstellen, ich habe mich informiert übers Internet, was gibt es da".

[526] Original quotation: "Also ich bin eigentlich als Vertriebsmanagerin eingestellt, ich war keine Pädagogin […].Bin da auf das Jugendbegleiterprogramm gestoßen, das wir hier auch haben. Das heißt, man bekommt vom Land Zuschüsse, aber nicht eins zu eins, sondern sie möchten eigentlich, dass man Kooperationen... …man muss Kooperationspartner finden, man muss schauen wie man andere Geldgeber findet oder andere Möglichkeiten vom Land Geld zu erhalten. […][..]. Aber im Moment sind wir dran an der [GMS], dass wir solches Geld auch bekommen, auch wenn es noch auf wackelnden Beinen steht. […]Das entscheidet praktisch das Regierungspräsidium Bretonville. Wie viele Schulen sich da neu darum bewerben.[…] . Und unseren Bedarf geben wir an und wir hoffen, dass wir so viel Geld wie möglich bekommen, um diesen Bedarf zudecken".

[527] Original quotation: "das kennen wir in Deutschland natürlich nicht so [lächelt], dass die Kinder bis 15:45 hier betreut werden. Wobei es gibt wirklich positive Rückmeldungen. Die Eltern sagen, mein Kind kommt sehr... sie sagen "aufgeräumt", also kommt eigentlich sehr zufrieden nach Hause. Und das finde ich eigentlich das größte Lob, oder die größte Bestätigung, die man bekommen kann von den Eltern".

(*ibid*., pp. 5-7)[528]. In fact, a traditional model of education and traditional familial settings based on the paternal authority may have been encouraged through half-day schooling. Especially in West Germany, the conservative expression "*Rabenmutter*" (uncaring mother) used to describe the young women who choose to work instead of staying home and fulfilling her "educational duties" towards her children.

Kristine Maute and her colleagues –one of whom she explains that she was a "sceptical" mother before being employed at the *GMS* (p. 6) - see themselves as privileged bridges between parents - who are also potential "clients"[529] - and the school.

Maute emphasises the importance of her role ("I actually wish that in this matter the state supported the school more, that practically, through the support of a school operator, it created more…. jobs like these. This is very important", Maute, p. 13)[530]. She, however, remains careful about the stance she might adopt at a more political level given the new status of her position among established ones ("I don't know whether this is really wanted"). Still, her opinion "is actually sought after when it concerns all-day school" and "not only the supervision" (Maute, p. 14).[531] This demand might open future opportunities for Maute and offer her a role in educational decision-making:

Maute found her niche and contributes with enthusiasm to the "construction" of the *GMS* system ("yes, and this is exciting… to build it. Very nice. Well, I enjoy it greatly (Maute, p. 15)[532]. She benefits from a certain recognition, exemplified by the shift from her recruitment with a precarious status to regular employment as well as full integration in the organisational teamwork. She compares the Geschwister Scholl *GMS* with other schools where she "heard" from other colleagues that the working environment is not as favourable as at her own school.

---

[528] Original quotation:"die Realschule, die Sonderschule, mit Sonderpädagogik, die Werkrealschule, dass sie es weitergegeben hätte, denn ich denke, da werden die Kinder einfach nochmal, nochmal stärker gefördert. Und ich finde es eigentlich schade, dass unsere Politik da, […] so sagt ne, weg./ […]sehr konservativ denkende Leute hier, das ist ja doch sehr dörflich hier […]sie haben gesagt, wir wollen nicht, dass unsere Kinder den ganzen Tag betreut werden, wir sind zu Hause, wir können das, oder mit Oma oder also.. Großeltern oder. Wir können das irgendwie regeln, das wollen wir nicht".

[529] Maute mentions the fact that some parents do not consider social and especially ethnic diversity in the school as positive, ("Und, dass die Kinder dann eben so multikulturell, ähm..[…] multikulturelle Kulturen... Also die Kulturen hier sind einfach aus ganz vielen unterschiedlichen Länder, die hier zusammenkommen. Ich glaube davor haben sie Angst" (Maute, p. 7).

[530] Original quotation: "Ich wünsche mir schon, dass das Land da die Schule mehr unterstützt, dass sie praktisch durch einen Schulträger mehr solche… Stellen schaffen können. Das ist ganz wichtig."

[531] Original quotation:"Das weiß ich nicht, ob es gewünscht wäre, also von dem her.. wobei.. aber ich muss sagen, ich bin eigentlich…werde zu vielen Dingen einfach befragt. […]also nicht nur was die Betreuung betrifft sondern auch die angebotenen Kurse und AGs …"

[532] Original quotation: "Ja und es ist auch spannend... es aufzubauen. Sehr schön. Also es gefällt mir sehr gut".

In particular, the principal seems to be highly committed to the *GMS* project: "and here […] we have the support of the school head , we have the teachers' support , we can talk with them about what to do with school social work, well it is different here" (Maute, p. 7)[533]. This remark illustrates the diversity and specific configurations of individual schools, which also speaks for the differentiation of a public service which is assumed to provide the population with equal quality of educational services.

Her apprehension of her role as contributing to the development of the political project "*GMS"* explains her perception of the problem "*Schulverweigerung*" as being the responsibility of a school system that is obliged to ensure every child is given a place. Indeed, it is her role to ensure the integration of all the school's students and look after their well-being and conditions necessary for their positive participation.

4.1.2.3 "A distress call" : "one must find all possible ways […] to help the student."

Firstly, Maute is "not sure" she is the "most qualified person" to give an opinion about the issue of "*Schulverweigerung"* and if she "could help me" as she commented when I asked her if it were possible to have this interview. She feels that the opinion of an "ordinary" educational assistant might not be relevant to the discussion, which illustrates the hierarchical structure of the school ("I didn't have much to do... with children… until now…). Notwithstanding, her answer emphasises her institutional supportive role and adults' responsibility to help students cope with education:

> *"There are always reasons why a kid refuses to cooperate. Children are a lot of work, but they need it, practically they need that one helps them. Well, this is crucial. Yes. One must simply find all possible ways…to be able to help the student" (Maute, 2017, p. 9)[534].*

Maute understands "*Schulverweigerung*" as "students who don't do anything in class" but also, who "are at that point where they won't come to school at all" (Maute, p. 10)[535]. She

[533] Original quotation: "Und ich finde wir haben hier… hier sind die Schüler anders, es wird auch mehr geschaut (???). Wir haben die Unterstützung von der Schulleitung, wir haben die Unterstützung von Lehrern, wir können mit denen reden, was sollen wir machen mit der Schulsozialarbeit, es ist hier halt, anders".

[534] Original quotation: **"**so viel habe ich nicht so mit den... Kinder zu tun... bis her… was mir aber einfällt, ist natürlich schon [Pause]. Es hat immer Gründe warum ein Kind sich verweigert. Es ist viel Arbeit mit den Kindern, praktisch es ist, es ist viel Arbeit, aber die brauchen das, die brauchen praktisch, dass man ihnen hilft praktisch. Also das ist ganz wichtig. Ja. Man muss einfach alle mögliche Wege, die es gibt, sollte man die nutzen, um den Schüler helfen zu können".

[535] Original quotation: "also es gibt… zum einen gibt so... wie ich das denke, oder weiß, es gibt Schüler, die machen nichts im Unterricht aber es gibt auch Schüler, sie sind soweit, dass sie gar nicht mehr in die Schule können".

adds that this would not be an "issue" during the afternoon sessions. Firstly, because the activities organised by the educational assistants, even if they are "mandatory", present quite a different setting than the morning classes. Indeed, as a way to distinguish the two, she emphasises the non-constraining and benevolent atmosphere during afternoon classes (even if these are compulsory), namely the possibility to look at students' well-being individually. On the contrary, the "teaching time" appears as challenging for many children ("there is lots of pressure on the students", Maute, p. 11[536]):

> *"We want children to feel well here, that they have their place, have a rest, have a space where they can build or paint something, do some sports, have a community, and someone who is always here […] whom they trust " (Maute, p. 5)*[537]

Maute distinguishes between the "afternoon supervision" and teaching hours in the morning: both sessions are compulsory but, importantly, are not experienced the same way:

> *"We are in the position… where they don't have to learn. This is a totally different position but this is nice and students even say, 'I don't mind staying longer,… I can go home or… are you still here?', I say: 'of course'; 'ah then I stay longer as well' […], yes one would not believe it [….] sometimes they stay here even longer" (Maute, pp. 8-9)*[538]

The very nature of the "afternoon supervision" requires supervisors to take some distance from the opinions teachers may have about certain students. Maute presents afternoon time as a place where children are perceived in another way than this is the case in the context of the class. She does not want to be prejudiced. Maute emphasises the different pedagogic and relational approaches students benefit from, justifying implicitly why she has no problem with certain children who are deemed problematic by teachers:

> *"You know what? Actually, I want students to...I see students they way they are [thumbs the table with her fist]. […] There was also a teacher colleague, who is no longer here, he said: 'hey you, you'll have troubles with this one'; 'I tell you,*

[536] Original quotation: "viel Druck ist da für die Schüler auch dabei"
[537] Original quotation: " wir möchten auch, dass die Kinder hier in dieser Zeit sich wohl fühlen, ihre Nische sich mal haben, auszuruhen, mal was zu basteln, was zu malen, auszupowern draußen, drüben spielen, die Gemeinschaft daneben, und dass immer jemand da ist, [….] das Vertrauen haben auch mal was zu sagen oder was anzusprechen"
[538] Original quotation: "Wir haben natürlich, wir sind in der Position, die müssen bei uns nicht lernen. Das ist eine ganze andere Position, […] aber es ist so schön und, dass die Schüler sogar freiwillig oftmals sagen, ‚'[…] ich bleibe länger hier, ich gehe nach Hause aber… sind sie noch da?' Sage ich ‚klar'; ‚Ach dann bleibe ich noch länger hier' oder irgendwie so […] jaaaaaa. Man denkt das gar nicht. […] manchmal sie sind sogar noch länger da"

this one is difficult'; or 'She! Be careful…'; and I never told this to anyone, to the other colleagues as they came in February, because I thought, they should have their own experience, because I had totally different experiences with the students. I never have problems"(Maute, pp. 10-11)[539].

The good relationship she builds with the students, especially with those who have a reputation of being troublemakers, is a necessary element in the recognition of her usefulness and the establishment of her professional identity and legitimacy. She recalls another instance where she was positively surprised by some young boys, who - as it turned out - were well known troublemakers at school. She had to spontaneously organise an activity with them on her own and it went surprisingly well ("People told me, 'oh oh' and then the school social worker approached me after the course: 'Well, how did it go?' I say: 'good'. They answered, 'really? You managed to cope with the boys?' I said, 'of course' […] and then the deputy approached me: 'Well, how did it go with the boys yesterday?' I said: 'good'. She replied: 'really?' I said: 'yes', I told her that the school social worker already asked me, and it went well". (*ibid*., p. 11))[540].

Giving students a lot of attention and taking them as she finds them are the "trademarks" of Maute's conception of the afternoon supervision:

"Well, some students don't have… probably have the feeling that they are not taken seriously sometimes. They don't say it, of course: 'I'm not doing well, I cannot do it'. But actually, this is a distress call I think. And then follows Schulverweigerung to which one must respond […] of course, we talk with the student, what's going on, why you're not…. We already know who is friends with whom, and who does what and then it obviously attracts our attention and then we often speak with the student. Yes. […] " (Maute, p. 10)[541]

---

[539] Original quotation: ""Weißt du? Ich will eigentlich dass die Sch... ein Schüler möchte ich so-nehmen –wie-er- ist [patcht auf dem Tisch, betont]. [….] es war auch so einen Kollege, der nicht mehr da ist, er hat gesagt: ‚du, mit dem wirst du noch deine Schwierigkeiten haben'. ‚Du ich sage dir, der ist auch schwierig' oder, die! Ach pass auf...'; und das habe ich zu niemandem nie gesagt, zu den anderen als sie gekommen sind im Februar, denn ich dachte, sie sollen ihre eigene Erfahrungen machen, denn ich habe ganz andere Erfahrungen mit den Schülern gemacht. Ich habe kein Problem gehabt".

[540] Original quotation: "da hat man mir auch gesagt, oh oh, […] dann kam die Schulsozialarbeiter, […] der T. "wie lief's denn?" ich sage: "gut". "Wie? Bist du gut zurechtgekommen mit den Jungs?" Ich sage, "klar". […] Und ich habe gesagt: "ja, eigentlich gar kein Problem". Dann hat mir noch die [Konrektorin] angesprochen und hat gesagt: "wie lief denn gestern mit den Jungs?" Ich sage: "gut". –"wirklich?" Ich sag: "ja". Ich sagte, der T. hatte mir auch schon angesprochen, "es lief gut". Also".

[541] Original quotation: ""also manche... also die Schüler haben nicht ... haben wahrscheinlich das Gefühl, dass sie nicht ernst genommen werden manchmal. Sie sagen natürlich nicht: mir geht's grade schlecht, ich kann das nicht. Sondern eigentlich ist das, […] das einen Hilfeschrei denke ich. So Schulverweigerung. Und da muss man darauf reagieren Klar, wir reden schon mit dem Schüler, was ist los mit dir, warum bist du nett...wir kennen schon wer mit wem immer zusammen befreundet ist und wer macht was und dann es fällt uns natürlich auf und dann reden wir oft auch mit dem Schüler. Ja."

Maute mentions the close cooperation with the school social worker, who informs and includes her in the supervision of fragile students. The same is true for teachers. Educational assistants "address these issues in the team" and "observe the child and look how the child behaves, so that we can give feedback" (*ibid.*)[542]. The issue of "*Schulverweigerung*" is once again a means to illustrate good cooperation in school: "we always have good communication and we receive the information, because this is important to us. Then we understand better why a child reacts the way he or she does, so we can simply deal with it better (Maute, p. 5)[543].

The diversity of recruitment among the educational assistants is also used as a reason to highlight the "added value" of the pedagogic approach employed during the afternoon supervision with most of them not having any regular qualifications in social pedagogy. Maute mentions one of her colleagues with a Turkish background. For this reason she is able to solve some conflicts better and has a different and sometimes easier relationship with certain (Turkish?) children, even if her "method" (speaking with students in their mother tongue at school) might be looked at critically by some since "It is very clear, here people talk German but in such a situation one has to cope with it urgently, it works great" (Maute, p. 6) [544].

This example also speaks for the capacity of the educational assistants to agree with and follow the *GMS* guidelines ("take the children as they are"[545]), which emphasises the individualisation of support. The supervisors distinguish themselves discursively from the teachers as they consider parents as co-educators and take students' current situation into

---

[542] Original quotation: "Neulich ist die Schulsozialarbeiterin [name] gekommen und hat da mit mir geredet und hat gesagt, ich musste es dir sagen, seit Anfang der Woche, dem Schüler geht es grade gar nicht gut, warum. Und dann ist die Lehrerin dazu gekommen und hat dann auch informiert, also, zufällig und... ja, und wir haben das in dem Team noch gesprochen hier. Und dann beobachten wir dieses Kind, den Schüler. das ging um den Schüler und schauen wie entfaltet sich das Kind hier auch bei uns, um Rückmeldungen zu geben".

[543] Original quotation: "die Zusammenarbeit mit uns funktioniert sehr sehr gut. Schulleitung, Lehrer, Lehrerinnen, sehr gut./-auch mit der Schulsozialarbeitern?/-ja. Ja. Wir haben immer gute Absprache, wir bekommen immer Informationen, denn das ist uns wichtig. Dann verstehen wir auch warum reagiert so das Kind, warum ist das grade bei dem Kind? So wir können dann einfach besser darauf eingehen".

[544] Original quotation: "ah Bezug auf die Schüler. Ja. Ja. Ja. Und zwar grade weil sie türkisch spricht, ist es oftmals so, sie sagt auch den Kindern, ich bin auch, ich habe auch Migrationshintergrund, sie geht da ganz offen damit um, macht es auch.. ich habe es mal erlebt, hat das Kind schnell weggenommen, weil es zu einer Auseinandersetzung kam, und sagt sie: komm. Und […] dann ist sie mit ihm weggegangen und hat mit ihm türkisch geredet. Das ist ganz klar, hier wird deutsch geredet, das ist ganz klar aber in so einer Situation, man hat gesagt: ich kläre das [unverständlich] #17:53 und das war super. Und sie hat es gemacht, und dadurch hat sie vielleicht zu manchen Kindern einen anderen Zugang, weil sie kennt das von den Kulturen. Es kommt anders. Und versteht auch dadurch viel besser und sagt da oft: daher kommt es, oder das hat von dem und dem Hintergrund zu tun. […] es ist eine große Bereicherung."

[545] Original quotation: "nimmt alle Kinder so an, wie sie sind", Official Website oft he Kultusministerim Baden-Württemberg [https://km-bw.de/Gemeinschaftsschule].

consideration; although she admits that the individualisation of students support is a difficult "balancing act" ("*Spagat*") for teachers[546].

However the future of the *GMS* remains uncertain. Indeed, according to Maute, the *GMS* project "lives and collapses with the teachers" (p. 3)[547] but also "demands more work" from them. The work of educational assistants is also highly dependent on the quality of their cooperation with teachers. Furthermore, the *GMS* as school model "is good for some students but not for others" (p. 4), referring here to the differentiated tradition of the German school system. The project is also bound to the resources it receives. The allocation of resources is competitive. Another aspect regards the equality of children in the all-day concept. Until now, according to Maute, not all children "who want to have lunch in the *Mensa*" can afford it (p. 14). This aspect has been underlined by the latest report on the evolution of all-day school in Germany, particularly in the primary education where lunch time and other activities result in more costs for the families (Frankfurt a.M.: DIPF, 2016, p. 16).

***

In the three-year-old Geschwister Scholl *GMS*, former *Realsschule*, the school social workers and the afternoon pedagogic assistants are looking to find their niches. The *GMS* settings open new opportunity structures for them, in which they are able to define their pedagogic approach of support in line with official guidelines. While "*Schulverweigerung*" is not perceived as a big issue in this particular school, it is a means to highlight successful cooperation between the different professionals. Nevertheless, they speak from different perspectives. On the one hand, the school social worker's role is torn between socio-pedagogic approach and school solutions and capacity to integrate youth work approaches because of institutional traditions and lack of resources. She considers "*Schulverweigerung*" as an occasional phenomenon resulting from psychological issues although she is aware of the role of the family and school structures in students' relations to school. Insofar she is privileging activities addressing collective cohesion and individual self-esteem, as well as the relations with parents, but she also "helps" parents to accept school judgements, however invalidating these might be for their children. The afternoon educational assistants are

[546] Original quotation: "wie die Eltern auch bereit sind... sie müssen ja auch eigentlich... Rückmeldungen geben Mein Kind geht's grade nicht so gut, es ist ... und die Lehrer müssen darauf reagieren, aber auch so, dass sie das Kind als Individuum noch stärker sehen, und noch mehr sagen, OK, das Kind braucht das und das und das kann ich ihm geben. Das ist natürlich auch ein Spagat auch für die Lehrer. Ganz klar".

[547] Original quotation: "es steht und fällt immer mit den Lehrern"

working on defining their supportive roles and professional identities, which distinguishes them from the teachers. Maute, despite indications that the school wants to integrate her on a long term basis, still considers her position as inferior to school social workers and teachers. However, she is happy with the recognition she receives. The good relations that they are able to build with the students (particularly the difficult ones) and the parents are key aspects of the legitimation of these new professions.

In France, the "others" in the lower secondary schools, and particularly in "priority education", are more numerous and diverse. They will now be examined in the context of the perception of "*décrochage scolaire*".

4.2 La Balikan : the negative impact of hierarchies in the formulation of support

This section addresses the positioning of non-teaching staff at La Balikan regarding the issue of "*décrochage scolaire*". It points to the role of professional hierarchies that prevents certain professionals with a subordinate status from rethinking the problem and its solutions at the organisational level. Many of them aspire to play a role, which they do not want to see reduced to "walk-on parts" to take on the Goffmanian metaphor.

Actors mentioned in this section:

"School life" or because it makes more sense in English, students' life department (*vie scolaire*) - Principal students' advisor (Acronym in French: CPE) and educational assistants.	Maud Rousselet (CPE) (35); Annie (28), Thomas (28), Julien (29), Mohamed (28) (educational assistants)
"Assistants to the students' life office" (*auxiliaire de vie scolaire*; special needs assistants)	Odile Boulin (57) and Dominique Amadé (46)
Socio-medical staff	Valérie Pointeau (school social worker); Aude Caillé (nurse)
Officer for "prevention and security"	Fatima Zaoui (41)

Since the 1980s and particularly in "difficult" schools, the proportion of non-teaching staff has increased. They are in charge of numerous educational, social and pastoral tasks that - at least in theory - are complementary to teaching. Recent studies have shown the distinction

between teaching and non-teaching staff is mostly expressed in terms of “mutual ignorance”, “control of information”, “delegation of the “dirty work” or “encroachment on mutual action fields” (van Zanten, 2014, pp. 99-100). These aspects are “detrimental to the global efficiency of the school”, a concept promoting a holistic vision of education and educational settings, where the quality of relations and shared norms between their members is very crucial (Debardeux and al., *op. cit*.). These problematic relations are due to the difficulty in coordinating the horizontal and vertical division of educational work between 1) different statuses, prestige, and schedules 2) teaching activities and activities related to the “school environment”. In this research, the lack of recognition experienced by the lower professional categories was accounted for through wide-ranging interviews that sometimes spread over several meetings and “thankful” attitudes for having been listened to. This attitude led to “professional dropout”, which does not speak for improving the necessary collegial aspect of educational work.

How do these professionals perceive their supportive functions and the ways the school is using them with regards to the phenomenon and institutional category “*décrochage scolaire*”? How do they understand school policy and more generally the role of educational institutions in reproducing, exacerbating, and mitigating educational inequalities (Stauber and al., *op. cit*., p. 98)?

The first section introduces the non-teaching professionals at La Balikan, and the way they present and see their roles. The second section elaborates on their understanding of the problem of “*décrochage scolaire*” and the measures taken to address it. Finally, the case study of Mrs. Zaoui illustrates the relations and tensions between the social and institutional beings of each professional in the way they cope with their roles, particularly with regard to the issue “*décrochage scolaire*”. Zaoui’s “dropout” should invite us to reflect about the influence of microscopic humiliations some professionals experience regularly, in relation with the current institutional, social and economic structures and their impact on students’ experience of school.

4.2.1 The diversity of professionals involved in student support

The non-teaching and school staff at La Balikan are diverse. There are three main departments[548]: the "students' life" department, the "assistants to the students' life office" and the socio-medical school staff. In the following sections I situate these professions historically and show how these professionals understand their own roles, particularly in relation to teaching activity and teachers.

4.2.1.1 The students' life department : CPE and educational assistants

The students' life department consists of the Principal educational advisor, who manages the educational assistants. With regard to the historical separation and hierarchisation of teaching and non-teaching educational activities, but also the evolution of their recruitment, experiences and qualifications, the current attitudes of these professionals can be described as frustrated concerning persisting under-consideration of their educational role.

4.2.1.1.1 The principal educational advisor : perception of her role, between "what the texts say" and "what it is"

Mrs. Rousselet is the "principal advisor of education". She only recently arrived at La Balikan as a temporary civil servant[549]. She is the third principal educational advisor in two years. Given the nature of her contract, Rousselet is unlikely to stay long[550]. Nevertheless, she was put in charge of "dropouts" by Mrs. Madec at the beginning of the year. Rousselet regularly refers to her experience as a principal advisor in a lower secondary school, also located in a "priority area" in a Parisian suburb, where she worked for ten years. Since she arrived in Brittany, she has experienced working in different secondary school contexts in more or less privileged, rural or urban areas, welcoming different clientele and facing different sorts of issues. Rousselet believes that the local context frames the way the role of the principal advisor, whose supportive and disciplinary function is differently conceived and emphasised. In this respect, it reveals the gap between the official "texts" defining the job in a more supportive and complementary way and the way the job plays out in practice:

---

[548] I decided to consider the function of Zaoui as employee for the "prevention and security" separately at the end of this section. Particularlu because this function has been exceptionally created for particularly "difficult schools" (see hereinafter).
[549] Titulaire sur zone de remplacement (TZR)
[550] Actually, she left at the end of the school year.

"So well, my role at La Balikan, … as the principal advisor of education… is to ensure… well this is what the texts say… it is to ensure students' well-being, their fulfilment in school. It is to deal with everything related to students' schooling regarding behaviour and attitudes from a pedagogic perspective and to establish links between the head of school, teachers, family, students and to work with all partners… all internal partners, be it the social worker, the nurse and the teachers… well and external partners, the youth workers, the associations… it is really the centre of the school and almost everything gravitates around the students' life department… well, beyond this, it depends on the schools, it depends on the place of the CPE. There are schools for example, like the one where I spent 10 years in a Parisian suburb where… well the students' life department was essential for the school to work. Everything went through the students' life department. Actually it was an extremely difficult school […] it got all the labels, now one calls it REP[551]. Well, it was a very difficult school, with huge tensions, violence, actually the students' life department was permanently on the front line and as soon as there was a supervisor less, it could explode any time […] we were two CPE […] we are all the time in action, well nothing could be solved without the students' life department […] beyond this, there are schools where not much happens, it's more relaxing. The [CPE] […] will be less integrated in what happens in the class […] there are fewer demands because teachers don't feel confronted with very complicated situations […] easy classes, easy school, hence fewer needs [...] (Rousselet, 2016, pp. 1-2)[552]

This testimony is in line with the historical role of the supervisor – who used to stand for discipline, control, and the enforcement of the rules (Tschirhart, 2013), Rousselet repeats these themes when describing her function. However, the relevance of this control functions always depends on the school context, as shown by the research. Indeed, this aspect of the job might be more significant in "segregated" school contexts in underprivileged and "sensitive"

[551] *Réseau d'éducation prioritaire* (priority school network)

[552] Original quotation: "bon dans n'importe quel établissement scolaire, c'est de faire… donc conseillère principale d'éducation.. c'est d'assurer…, ouais ça c'est dans les textes… d'assurer le bien-être de l'élève, son épanouissement au sein de l'établissement voilà. C'est gérer tout ce qui est la scolarité de l'élève en ce qui concerne le comportement et l'attitude avec une approche pédagogique et puis faire le lien entre la direction, les professeurs, la famille, l'élève, et travailler avec tous les partenaires…. Toutes les partenaires internes, ça va être l'assistante sociale, l'infirmière, et puis professeurs... voilà et puis externes, ça va être les éducateurs, les associations... c'est vraiment le point central de l'établissement et tout gravite un peu à travers la vie scolaire. Après ça dépend les établissements, ça dépend la place du CPE. T'as des établissements où moi par exemple j'étais pendant 10 ans en région parisienne où ... bah la vie scolaire c'était primordiale pour que l'établissement fonctionne ; tout passait par la vie scolaire. En fait c'était un établissement qui était très très difficile, […] C'était tous les labels, maintenant on appelle ça REP. Voilà c'était un établissement très difficile avec grosses tensions, violences, et en fait c'était la vie scolaire qui était en première ligne tout le temps en fait donc tu sentais que dès qu'il y avait un surveillant en moins ça pouvait exploser à tout moment. […] on était deux CPE. On était continuellement sur le terrain et y avait … enfin rien n'était réglé sans la vie scolaire en fait. [..]Après t'as des établissements où il se passe pas grand-chose c'est plutôt tranquille, où voilà le CPE va être moins dans le comportement, moins intégré dans ce qui se passe dans la classe en fait. Donc voilà c'était plus des projets... y a moins de demandes parce que les profs ne se sentent pas confrontés à des situations super compliquées […] classes faciles, établissements faciles donc t'as moins de besoins".

urban areas, where socio-economic difficulties and ethnic minorities come together (Merle, 2012), thus creating an environment more prone to tensions and violence.

Rousselet sees the importance of her function, and more generally of the "students' life" department ("*vie scolaire*") in a school, which are in the centre of every other school bodies and at the "front line" (implicitly compared to more "comfortable" functions, who do not have to grapple with students' issues and/or misbehaviours). Their services are sought by teachers who "delegate" the "dirty work" to the "students' life department". For example, non-prestigious or non-gratifying work consists of registering and enforcing hours of detention, checking absences, seeing students over an argument with a teacher, warning families about reports of incidents that happened in the classroom and which "a majority of teachers just slip under the door before leaving" (Rousselet, pp. 3-4). She often sees her role as reduced to being the "Black Peter" ("*mère fouettarde"*) of the school, a role which she does not deem constructive:

> *"Sometimes I really have the impression… well not more than anywhere else, to be the "Black Peter" of the school […] I'm given the reports of incidents […] or am made responsible for all the miseries happening in the school [...] during the teachers' conference, one said: "well no, he is always absent". But it's not my fault if he is always absent!" (Rousselet, 2016, p. 17)*[553]

This is a role she does not enjoy. First, as a professional, who has just arrived in this school, she feels this is not the best way to create good relationship with the students. Second, she would prefer to implement more pedagogic and socio-educational projects, in line with the changing definition of the official job profile. Indeed, since the end of the 19th century, and particularly in the thirties, the institutional definition of the job of the non-teaching staff evolved under the growing importance given to conceptions of education issued from the New Education (Condette, 2013). The emancipation of principal advisors from a subordinate position to teaching and teachers was also aimed at, as above mentioned, by the alignment of their status to that of fully qualified teachers'.

Furthermore, according to Rousselet, the setting up of educational projects offers better conditions regarding cooperation with teachers (Rousselet, p. 3). In the context of educational projects, the non-teaching staff is in charge of structure and content which require a specific

[553] Original quotation: "moi des fois j'ai vraiment l'impression… alors pas ici plus qu'ailleurs, d'être la mère fouettarde du collège [..] on me donne les rapports d'incidents [..] ou d'être la responsable de tous les maux du collège [..] quand au conseil de classe on dit : ah non mais il est toujours absent, il est toujours absent. Mais c'est pas de ma faute moi s'il est toujours absent. [..]"

pedagogic skill-set. It is for these reasons that Rousselet experiences the cooperation between teachers and herself on projects as more rewarding[554] and constructive.

Research on "school efficiency" has shown that in underprivileged areas, obsession with discipline can be counterproductive. Projects that favour participative approaches and focus on creating the conditions for warm, fair and encouraging relations are more "efficient" (Duru-Bellat, 2001, p. 327). Mrs. Rousselet recalls an incident during a break in the schoolyard that speaks for itself, as she approached some young girls to ask them something:

> *"So, when I asked them... you see, these are girls I have already talked with... straightaway they tell me: 'what have we done, what happened?' and they couldn't understand... but I told them: 'but you can come to my office without anything being wrong [...]' and they could not understand. No, one just comes [to Mrs.Rousselet's Office]... in case of absences, lateness, and to be told off, like they say... there are no exchanges... there might be one or two that come to tell me about what they did outside but that's all [..]" (Rousselet, 2016, p. 2)*[555]

The girls immediately thought they had done something wrong. Such defensive behaviour should lead us to question the role of school and school professionals in triggering such reactions.

At La Balikan, Rousselet is dissatisfied with the primacy of disciplinary tasks over socio-educational ones. Disciplinary measures are accorded more attention than certain political aspects of education or school environment (Cadet *et al.*, 2007, p. 10 quoted by Condette, p. 110). Beyond historical considerations and traditions, which help highlight the unstable professional identity and function of principal educational advisors, the primacy of discipline and control calls into question the structural organisation of the division of labour in this particular school in relation with a zero tolerance policy towards absenteeism.

[554] Original quotation : "Alors on va bien travailler si par exemple y a un projet, qu'il y a une mise en place de je sais pas moi, d'un voyage ou d'actions sur la laïcité ou sur l'égalité filles garçons dans une classe tu vois ça va être fait mais sur le traitement des incidents et des entretiens avec les élèves"

[555] Original quotation: "Et bah quand je leur ai demandé... tu vois c'est des filles avec qui j'ai déjà discuté... tout de suite elles me disent: 'qu'est-ce qu'on a fait, qu'est ce qui s'est passé ?' Et elles comprenaient pas quoi... mais je leur ai dit: mais vous pouvez venir dans mon bureau sans qu'il y ait du souci […] et elles comprenaient pas. Non nous c'est juste… pour les absences, les retards et pour se faire engueuler comme elles disent … y a pas d'échanges… il va peut-être y en avoir un ou deux qui vont venir pour me raconter ce qu'ils ont fait à l'extérieur mais après voilà… ça fait même pas un an que je suis là…"

4.2.1.1.2 Educational assistants' professional frustration: "The main thing, the main mission, well, it still remains […] policing. We are here to play the police, security, discipline"

The role of educational asssitants derives from the former "supervisors", historical figures in charge of the regulation of discipline and order since the 17th century, when boarding schools dominated the educational landscape (Condette, 2014; Verneuil, Savoie, 2013) [556]. One of their functions as "supervisors of the study room"[557] derives from this history. As does the fact that they also tend to define their jobs as "disciplinary" ones. Because of these origins, they are commonly called the "supervisors" or the "*pions*" (pawns).They embody the "school life" office team and their hierarchical superiors are the Principal students' advisor (CPE) and the principal, both of whom hold civil servant status.

The role of the educational assistants is often described in terms of their relations with other actors, such as students or teachers (Duru-Bellat and van Zanten, *op. cit*., pp. 180 ff., van Zanten, 2001, pp. 175 ff.; van Zanten, 2014, pp. 99-100). Charlot et *al*. (2002), in their research on educational assistants emphasise the trend to recruit for these posts according to their assumed origins and socio-ethnic proximity with the students, particularly in the suburbs. Although they observe positive effects of such recruitment procedure in particular regarding the easing of existing tensions at school, they question the significance and long-term impact of such a privatisation of the regulation of school issues (Charlot, Emin, Peretti, 1999).

Caristan finds the conditions of their recruitment, definition of their missions, and their training have remained unstable and indefinite since then (Caristan, 2017). This can be questioned for its reasons as well as its consequences? Is this a question of budget? Or fear of the symbolic consequences for the institutional authority and superiority of teachers and teaching? Would it introduce a wider share of decisional power in schools and thereby make school governance more complicated?

Despite official attempts to add value to their function by creating the status of "educational assistants" (2003), the professionals working at La Balikan continue to be frustrated with an institutional setting that confines their roles to administrative tasks and discipline. This seems

[556] Careful, this staff was diverse according to the tasks they were fulfilling (supervision or monitoring); if they aspire to be future teachers or if their function confined them in their supervisory tasks.

[557] Contrary to Germany, in case of teachers' absences or "free space" between two classes, students usually go to the study room (while in Germany this time is covered by a teacher).

even more unbearable because of their precarious status and the discrepancy between their knowledge/competences and the way these competences are “misused” by the institution. Through their all-day presence, their role as intermediaries between students and the school staff, as well as the geographic position of their office in the entrance hall, they are in permanent interaction with the students, both on an individual and a collective basis.
The familiarity of their exchanges is double-edged: one the one hand students trust them and on the other they are the ones to enforce disciplinary measures. The educational assistants increasingly complain about the difficulty of their working conditions, using a language inspired by warfare: “we are at the frontline”, “facing violence”, “tensions”, “clash”, “withdrawal”. This state of dissatisfaction has peaked since their numbers were reduced by one colleague after the school lost the label “REP+” (cf. precedent part).

Their tasks are multiple and sometimes difficult to conciliate : to make students respect the school rules (disciplinary role) while building specific bonds with them (affective role) in order to gain their confidence and better solve conflicts with peers or other professionals.

Their office is located in the school’s main hall and is regularly visited by students for various motives. The reasons range from simply visiting to say hello, have some small talk or pick-up a ball to more complicated issues such as resolving a specific situation (lateness, absences), getting a stamp on the “pink ticket” to be able to return to the class, or enforcing a student’s detention.

Educational assistants are also in charge of the bureaucratic work of treating absenteeism. They are the ones who collect the “pink tickets” (on which parents have to justify students’ absences) and report absenteeism data in a computer program. This program separates justified from non-justified absences and produces the list that is ultimately discussed at the committee for student follow-up (*commission de suivi des élèves*), a meeting in which they are not allowed to participate. They also have to enquire about students’ absences by calling or sending a text-message to the parents and reminding them of the procedure (signing the reason for absence slip).

They open and close the metal gate in the morning, at lunchtime and in the evening, greet the children, and let them enter after checking that everyone has their “school diary”, which is the

main means of communication between school and parents and which contains school rules and the diverse punishments and sanctions.

They take care that no illegal object is introduced and used in the school (phones, cigarettes, arms)[558] and that students remove their hood on their sweatshirts and jackets so their faces can be seen when entering the school. When a teacher is missing, they supervise the "study period" (*heure d'étude*) during which students are supposed to do their homework and study their subjects. Most of the time, the educational assistants, together with Mrs. Zaoui, supervise periods of detention that have been distributed by them or by the teachers.

In this respect, educational assistants are the instruments of an institution that is implementing a strengthening of sanctions, the control of *bodies* and a better "management" of absences and supervision –the "disciplinary turn" (Douat, 2010).

The educational assistants see their functions reduced to the non-gratifying tasks of supervision and discipline (Louis, 2014) and suffer from a lack of recognition:

> *"We are just interchangeable pawns […] I have the impression that the others, our bosses, even the teachers, […] some teachers try… to see what we can do with them but there are others who are not aware at all of the important role that we have, or the work that we do. It is not quantifiable, it's always a bit complicated (Thomas & Annie, 2016, p. 1)*[559]

The educational assistants wish they could do something other than enforcing the rules ("Well supervising, especially supervising" -Julien, p. 2), which, as the school year goes on, appeared to be increasingly complicated[560]. In this respect, they argue that a redefinition of their

[558] Interestingly I have been told one day by M. Jardin (teacher, who took part in local study involving local students, cf. previous part) that drugs and cigarettes were not a problem assuming that the role of the Muslim culture would play a difference.

[559] Original quotation: "On est juste des pions interchangeables [..] j'ai l'impression que les autres, nos chefs, même les profs etc. [..] certains profs essaient... De voir ce qu'on peut faire tout ça avec eux mais y en a d'autres qui n'ont pas du tout conscience de l'importance que ça a, du travail qu'on fait. C'est pas quantifiable, c'est toujours un peu compliqué" (Thomas & Annie, p. 1)

[560]Julien, the 10th of March 2016 about the deterioration of the educational assistants' authority on the students: "ils font plus de conneries, l'ambiance est électrique en ce moment ici. Il y a des bastons en pagaille, tout le temps etc., donc le cadre je trouve que j'avais réussi un peu à gérer quoi. Il est pas train de s'émietter mais il commence à atteindre ses limites [...]" (Julien pp. 5-6). On the 19th May 2016, I have an informal discussion with Mohammed, educational assistant, who notices a kind of "easing off" among the educational assistants, saying that the function is not fully appreciated while they are permanently at the "frontline" (fieldwork notes). Educational assistants' discontentment and tiredness were more and more visible, for example this day in June where they closed their door and just communicated with the students through a little window. It was their way

missions would serve the interests of everyone:

> *"The main thing, the main mission, well, it still remains […] policing. We are here to play the police, security, discipline […] no one seems really motivated anymore; children feel it, there really is a problem, I think. Since we don't have the time to do anything else, like extra-curricular activities, well, more friendly things. Thus, they see that we are annoyed with spending the whole day shouting at them, but well, we have to, it is the foundation of the job…. We would like to spend more time with them to do nice things but since we have disciplinary issues to handle… (Annie & Thomas, p. 20[561])*

The lack of professionalising measures and training opportunities underlines the lack of appreciation for the work educational assistants fulfil, which is reduced, as much underlined by the educational assistants in place, to administrative and discipline tasks. Unlike teachers and other professional categories such as the special needs assistants or the security and prevention officers, educational assistants do not receive any training that would allow them to better adapt to the changing profile of their work. This is what Thomas and Annie emphasise while arguing that policy makers and the institution do not really care about the educational aspect of their job and empowering them (Thomas & Annie, p. 17). However, as regards to the discourses of the assistants to the students' life office and of Mrs. Zaoui, the officer for prevention and security (see below), professional training may not be the ultimate reason for lacking institutional recognition. Such a recognition has to be enabled from an organisational level as well, where measures look for equal appreciation of voices in decision processes. As for the educational assistants, their subordination is often experienced negatively with regard to their "titles". Most of them are highly qualified and hold either master's degrees or even PhDs, which furthers their discontent over the fact that they are often considered as mere helpers of the teaching staff. However, they do not feel entitled or

---

to protest against some students' increasing misbehaviour, which illustrated itself in robbery act in the educational assistants' office (26/05/16). Julien, like the other educational assistants –except Mohammed- quit the job at the end of the year; one of them was put on sick leave several weeks for burnout (22/06/16), fieldwork notes.

[561] Original quotation: "le truc principal, la mission principale ça reste quand même [...] fliquer. On est là pour faire la police, la sécurité, la discipline […] plus personne n'a l'air vraiment motivé; les enfants le sentent aussi, y a vraiment un problème je pense que c'est parce qu'aussi on n'a plus le temps de faire de choses un peu extra-scolaires, et un peu plus sympa quoi. Du coup, ils voient que ça nous soule de passer nos journées à gueuler mais bon on est obligé c'est comme ça c'est quand même la base du boulot quoi mais... on voudrait passer plus de temps avec eux à faire des trucs sympa mais comme on a les problèmes de discipline à régler …"

able, with regard to current organisational and policy settings of the school[562] to take initiatives in the domain of project-based education[563].

4.2.1.1.3 The student life department full of frustration

The discourses held by members of the school life department refer to a persisting hierarchical division between the teachers and their unit, between the teaching subjects and educational projects that focus on the development of social skills. Their irritation is proportionate to the importance that official texts have been giving to the creation of a real "educational community" since the end of the 1960s (Louis, 2014, p. 9).The development of a professional identity among the educational assistants is undermined by the subjectivity of their recruitment (at the discretion of the principal), temporary contracts, minimum wages, total absence of training, and the lack of professional development opportunities. As the next section and the discussion of "*décrochage scolaire*" from the perspective of the educational assistants show, they look for the recognition of the educational value they embody (Caristan, 2017, p. 220), especially regarding student support and a better comprehension by teachers of students' issues and negative behaviours.

So, despite being at the heart of school daily operations, they do not feel integrated in the school community. They suffer from other staff "withholding information" (Thomas & Annie, p. 5). In fact, they "are a bit alone" (Julien, p. 2), they are always "at the front line" but remain "simple [educational assistants]" (Mohammed, 09/05/2016)[564]. Being marginalised within the school, they particularly notice the lack of teamwork and compartmentalisation of educational activities: "There is the administration on one side, the teachers on the other, and the student life office in the middle and... each of us struggles, but we are not heading in the same direction" (Annie & Thomas, p. 4). There is "no communication between the three units" (Julien, p. 3)[565]. Presenting themselves as privileged intermediaries between the students and the institution ("well, if anyone can bring another vision of a student to the table, it's us", "we

---

[562] Thomas admitted that he even did not ask [to implement a non-formal activity he did in a previous school] partly because of the 'lack of time' due to a reduction in human resources and increase in bureaucratic work.
[563] Original quotation : " Mais pour ce qui est de rentrer dans un minimum de pédagogie active on estime qu'il faut que tu sois avec un prof "/ " en fait le gros problème je pense si on voulait plus de temps pour faire un peu plus de pédagogie avec les enfants il nous faudrait toujours un poste en plus en fait. Les dotations de l'IA et du rectorat elles sont pas réalistes par rapport aux besoins")
[564] Informal conversation, fieldwork notes.
[565] Original quotation: "Il y a l'administration d'un côté, les profs de l'autre et la vie scolaire au milieu et... Chacun rame, pas tous dans le même sens" (Thomas & Annie, p. 4)
"Il n'y a aucune communication entre les trois services quoi" (Julien, p. 3).

are able to differentiate students from each other/ “our attention is focused on the kid”/ “Solange is good at knowing each kid”/ “we have a protective role, they know it; they come to us to be reassured”), their professional marginalisation as well as the deficient communication and cooperation between all entities illustrates, according to Thomas and Annie, the extent of organisational dysfunction :

> *“If there are things that don’t go well in the student life department, it can change everything […] at the level of the children, directly, in their behaviour. Because a kid that cannot come to speak to [us] may isolate themselves… for sure, in the class, it will be worse […] the kids are very aware of the dysfunctional relations between adults. It has a direct impact. (Thomas and Annie, pp. 2-3)*[566].

This extract shows once again the lack of thinking the different professions as part of a system where there are supposed to complete each other in order to better support students to cope with their duties and issues at school.

Caristan (*op. cit*.) used the category “care” to better describe the role of educational assistants as an inclination to give particular importance to “singularities and vulnerabilities” (*ibid*., p. 110). If this category is debated, it is acknowledged that, in the domain of socio-medical care and home healthcare, the caring part of the activity is generally carried out by social groups occupying subordinated positions (women, foreigners, un- or low qualified, from the working or lower middle classes (Cresson, 2011)). Similarly, in the school, the closer adults are to the world of students' life, the lower the value accorded to their work.

Actually, the recent evolution (1970-2003) regarding the competences of “student life” assistants has induced a reclassification, enhancement and redefinition of missions and status including more educational and organisational tasks (Louis, 2014; Tschirhart, 2013) in order to overcome the historical separation and hierarchical division of labour between disipline, education and instruction. But even so, such a division is typical of the French school system (Louis, 2014, p. 8), while teachers are more and more invited to organise educational projects besides teaching. This contributes to the tensions between this department and the teaching staff, because it prolongs hierarchies in the domain of education. As shown in the interviews, this is especially true when the discrepancy between the official prescriptions and the concrete organisation at the school level reveals a persisting and pervasive division of tasks

[566] Original quotation: “si y a des éléments qui vont pas dans une vie scolaire, ça peut changer tout [...] à l'échelle des enfants, directement sur eux, leur comportement. Parce qu'un gamin qui peut pas venir parler à la vie scolaire et du coup qui va se renfermer etc. c'est sûr qu'en cours ça va être pire [...] les gamins sont très lucides à ce niveau- là: les dysfonctionnements des adultes. Ca se répercute tout de suite quoi”.

and status, confining educational assistants to the role of "maids of all work", after the words of their manager in La Balikan (Rousselet, p. 17). The low consideration granted to them by the institution explains why educational assistants, or rather their official representative, are largely absent from official bodies where their voices are represented[567].

Discourses held by the principal advisor of education and educational assistants about the teachers are particularly negative. In their view, the majority of teachers consider themselves as the "elite" and behave in particularly contemptuous ways (Rousselet, p. 19). They deem themselves as "gods" of the institution (Thomas & Annie, pp. 4-6), who impose sanctions and hours of detention but who take no responsibility for enforcing them. The educational assistants regularly complain about the time-consuming bureaucratic tasks (registration of absences, hours of detention and reports of incidents), which, in turn, must be having an effect on students since the atmosphere at school is gradually worsening (see above).
For example, the principal advisor of education in La Balikan, as well as the assistants report their difficulty in organising "democratic confrontations" of opinions in the context of conflicts between teachers and students and where unequal power relations already exist. In this context, the relations between this department and the teaching staff are tense. Recent studies show that while the official discourse and recent jurisprudence consider students as individuals with both rights and obligations, thus able to voice injustices, the school system remains extremely hierarchised and students' opinions are hardly taken into account (Merle, 2012, 2005). P. Merle shows how even the conception of "school violence" and its statistical definition juxtapose a society of violent students ("intrinsic unrest") to a society of irenic adults ("a wisdom that has been learned"; from the outset, this kind of definition introduces a bias in the way students' violence is represented (Merle, 2012, p. 97).

On the contrary, and in line with a more democratic conception of education that was at the basis of the evolution of their function in the 1970s (Condette, 2013, p. 110), the educational assistants and their manager, the principal advisor of education, wish to promote individual

[567] Thomas, as representative of the educational assistants, shared his surprise about a recent internal measure which necessitated the registration in advance of the school personnel, who wanted to participate in a "disciplinary trial". For this reason, he could not take part in the trial of A. and "take his defence", who was "absolutely different with us than in class" (Thomas, p. 13), a student who just wanted answers to "his relevant questions" (Julien, p. 1). Except for the final school board meeting at the end of the year ("to let go the grudge they had been holding all the year" and tell the principal "how much children are forgotten in this school", fieldwork notes, 29/05/16), otherwise Thomas did not participate in regular board meetings.

and collective activities that help socialise the next generation and teach them norms and values such as democracy, gender equality, or environmental awareness.

The principal advisor, Mrs. Rousselet, would like to have time to organise special training for class representatives (*délégués*) "so that we reflect together about things to implement in the school. That they really feel integrated, that they are not just class representatives who just attend class conferences but who feel like full members of the community, who are entitled to decide on certain aspects of the school life" (Rousselet, 2016, p. 5)[568]. However, as I will show below, the school policy on how to deal with "*décrochage scolaire*" does not leave her the time to organise such a project.

Thomas, in his interview, speaks about activities they organised in his previous Parisian school, which is also situated in a "priority area"and in which students with migration backgrounds were overrepresented. One of these projects gave these young people the opportunity to "express themselves about their daily life", their "origins" and "mother tongue". At the beginning, it was difficult to catch their attention because "they were very reluctant regarding any activity we offered outside of class", but "within two weeks, we had to turn people down [...]". They favoured participative settings ("actually you just need to listen to them and what they want it is often very clear and feasible") and the activities gave students the opportunity to "voice" their diversity: "[...] each student, one or two hours a week [...], taught other students some basics of their mother tongue… and it was very enriching for everybody [...] when I came to La Balikan it was a real project, I told myself, we will do that again". However, Thomas did not find the conditions that would allow for the implementation of such a project (Thomas & Annie, p. 12). In the tradition of the French historical model of integration, which supposed to "organise the oblivion of origins"[569], such a project may appear subversive from a conservative viewpoint.

Julien also thinks that students should be more "integrated", like "real subjects" and "actors" of the school and make of the "school" a "place for life and not only a place for teaching". The school should organise more activities that make them responsible for the "place they

---

[568] Original quotation: "Tu vois les délégués j'ai fait une réunion de l'AG des délégués je n'en ai pas fait d'autres depuis le début de l'année, et j'aimerais vraiment réunir les délégués qu'on réfléchisse ensemble à des choses à mettre en place dans l'établissement. Qu'ils se sentent vraiment impliqués, qu'ils soient pas juste délégués de classe, qui vont au conseil de classe mais qui aient vraiment le sentiment d'avoir une place à part entière dans une instance et qui peuvent décider sur la vie de l'établissement".

[569] Regarding the differences in the German and French models of integration, especially in relation to school trajectories, see (King & Müller (eds.), 2013). From an international perspective, see "National models of integration and the crisis of multiculturalism: a critical comparative perspective", Patterns of Prejudice, Vol. 46, No. 5, Décembre 2012.

visit every day", based on their contribution to maintaining the building or other projects through which they appropriate the place ("a vegetable garden for example"). These projects could be linked with gender education that break with prejudice and stereotypes (Julien, p. 12)[570]. These reflections follow from a tradition of "alternative views" of education, which want to break with the historical and long-lasting tension and hierarchy between cognitive and manual activities.

Finally, educational assistants are willing to be the educational support they think they could be but are met with an institutional and organisational setting that is not favourable because it favours a bureaucratic approach of "negative participation":

> *"Thomas: […] when we speak about the school climate, we are asked about numbers and how many absentees…. But this does not reflect the school climate! The school climate it's...*
>
> *Annie: how many students have stomach aches before going to school?*
>
> *Thomas: so they are not at ease or they aren't really feeling well going to school. Others come because they have their social circle, it socialises them but that's all. Classes are not their thing. All these things are part of the school climate. And we are going to respond to that with a number of absences, a number of incident reports and with reducing the number of absences. But how is it possible at our level???? It's nonsense. So again, one supposes that we have a power over the students' absences but otherwise nothing is done to support them.*
>
> *Annie: in fact, we have power over numbers. It's all we are asked for. You are not going to register this or that absence because it is not that dramatic.*
>
> *Thomas: one day I made the mistake of implying that numbers are manipulable. The principal pulled me back into line saying that I did not have the right to put their honesty into perspective… but still, this is how it is (Thomas & Annie, p. 19)[571].*

[570] Original quotation: " Ouais, puis surtout mêler les élèves, qu'ils soient pas sujets, qu'ils soient vraiment acteurs quoi, de la vie du collège et faire du collège un lieu de vie et pas seulement un lieu d'enseignement. Le coup du potager etc. Il faut les rendre responsables humainement et matériellement du lieu qu'ils fréquentent tous les jours "

[571] Original quote: Thomas: "[…] Quand on parle du climat scolaire et qu'on nous pose des questions sur des chiffres et de savoir combien y a d'absents etc. mais c'est pas ça le climat scolaire! le climat c'est…/Annie : Combien d'élèves ont la boule au ventre avant d'aller au collège ?/Thomas : donc ils sont pas à l'aise ou vraiment ils sont pas bien pour aller à l'école. Y'en a d'autres qui sont vraiment dilettantes quoi; ils viennent parce que ça leur fait un petit cercle, ça les sociabilise un peu mais voilà, les cours c'est pas leur truc. Tout ça ça fait partie du climat scolaire. Et nous on va répondre à ça par nombre d'absences, le nombre de rapport

Despite their criticism of absenteeism tracking, the educational assistants themselves use this system occasionally in their relations with students in an attempt to increase their authority over them (Crozier & Friedberg, 1977), resulting from their dominant position over the bureaucratic control of the school obligation. Sometimes they are caught out at their own game:

"In the morning. A lot of loud students in the hallway; yet at this time they are usually in class. […] the educational assistants are busy with the registration of absences and are regularly interrupted by students coming in and out […] Thomas tells me about an incident with a student I know and the fact that he is now applying to a zero tolerance policy: "now I'm writing everything down and I'm not letting anyone through. That's why they do not like me much now". "Me neither" (Solange)[572]*. "We only deal with the troublemakers, no time for the nice ones […] we are pissed off all the time" […] Before, I did not register all lateness so that they would not get into trouble. Now, I'm registering everything because they abuse of it (Thomas)" (fieldwork notes, 02/06/16)*

I will show how the professional frustration experienced by the "student life" department has a direct impact on educational assistants' and principal advisor's representations of the issue "*décrochage scolaire*". Indeed, this issue gives them the opportunity to address their own grievances towards the institution. In other words, if their own roles were better defined, recognised, and organised, they could implement better support for students. They tend to blame the institution for this phenomenon, which is not coping properly with it and even exacerbates it. This positioning is also the one shared by the assistants for students "with special needs" and assistants to the student life office[573].

---

d'incidents. L'année dernière on nous a demandé de réduire le nombre de rapports d'incidents et réduire le nombre d'absences. Mais comment c'est possible à notre stade??? ça n'a aucun sens ; donc encore une fois on sous-entend qu'on a un pouvoir sur l'absence des élèves mais par contre rien n'est fait pour valoriser./Annie : dans les faits t'as un pouvoir sur les chiffres. C'est tout ce qu'on te demande en fait. Tu vas pas rentrer l'absence d'un tel parce que c'est pas si grave. En fait on te le demande mais on te le demande pas. / Thomas: moi j'ai fait l'erreur une fois de sous-entendre que les chiffres c'est quand même manipulable. La principale m'a rappelé à l'ordre en disant que j'avais pas à remettre en cause leur intégrité… et pourtant c'est le cas […]".

[572] Another educational assistant, see tab at the beginning of the section.

[573] Assistant de vie scolaire (AVS). "Equal educational access for all" may have supposed, rhetorically, to take one's distance from a long history of "special needs education" (Belmont and al., p. 251); this might explain why these professionals are "auxiliaries" and not "*special need* assistant"

4.2.1.2 Unexploited resource : "if there were a willingness to change things, things could be changed, […] Because I think we're doing an interesting job"

Mrs. Boulin and Mrs. Amadé are assistants for students with "special needs" and assistant to the student life office. This profession emerged as a result of the norm of "inclusion" implemented in the 1960s, and particularly during the 1980s (Belmont, Plaisance & Vérillon, 2006). As part of an international convention against discrimination in education in 1960, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "forbids whatever exclusion or restriction in education based on perceived or accepted social differences such as sex/gender, social and/or ethnic origins, language, religion, nationality, abilities" (UNESCO). According to Belmont et al. (2006), the status "assistants to student life" was officially created by the Ministry of Education in 2003. It derives from a precedent socio-professional group in charge of supporting the integration of students with handicap which emerged in the 1980s following an advocacy campaign by parents and associations that wanted to support the opening of ordinary schools to children and young people with disabilities. Since then, the question of the economic, institutional and professional recognition of these professionals has been an ongoing thematic and cross-party issue (Damgé & Durand, 2018). Last but not least, the institutional definition of the role of assistants is torn between the individualisation of support aiming at "correcting", "normalising" and support defined as a collective project of integration, which assumes good cooperation with the other staff, and possibly changing pedagogical or teaching arrangements, or the elimination of barriers within the schools or the classroom (see Isaksson 2011, p. 113 in Stauber and al. 2016, p. 108).

Mrs. Boulin and Mrs. Amadé are unhappy that their roles are restricted to the first definition of support as being to normalise, to correct students behaviour and learning. This, they feel is to the detriment of individual students because it lacks the perspective of integrational work and building belonging and cohesion.

Indeed, for Boulin for example, the integration of students with disabilities/or particular needs in ordinary schools necessitates an understanding of class dynamics in order to better support individual student embedded in a web of relations with their classmates. Furthermore, she has to make herself accepted not only by the named student she is charged with (who may feel uncomfortable with the fact that they need special attention), but by all students in the classroom, as an adult sitting among them. Her authority has to be accepted and legitimate

("you must be integrated in the class […] part of their life"). So that inclusion works in both directions ("I should not be transparent")[574]. And the fact is that their institutional "transparency" directly impacts their margin of manoeuvre in the classroom.

Mrs. Amadé's support is divided between different classes and students since the student she was supposed to support permanently and individually could not accept her aid because "he felt a twofold stigmatisation". He had already been directed towards the "inclusion track" (SEGPA – a separate track for students "having persistant and considerable issues at school"[575]). In addition, he was identified as somebody who would need a special assistant at his side:

> *"and in SEGPA he thought 'I'm already included in SEGPA and, furthermore, I will have someone at my side to support me, so I'm truly stupid' […] this is how my contract evolved and I became an assistant whose support is distributed between different students [who don't need a permanent support] so we decided with the teacher to take some distance and when I saw that he needed me, or when we saw that he got stuck, I came to him. So we worked like this. This year I am even further away from him […] anyway our role it's not to stay permanently with the child, it's just to help him to find the way to manage their issues and become self-dependent" (Amadé, pp. 2-3)*[576]

Philip (2009) shows how this institutional prescription for autonomy (support the child to be self-dependant) is in contradiction with the precarious and undefined status of these assistants which generally places them at the bottom of the organisation's vertical hierarchy. In reality, their room for manoeuvre results from individual teachers' appraisal of their role ("we have some limits. It's the teacher, he is the boss of the class", Amadé, p. 3)[577].

In fact, this recent status suffers from diverse weaknesses: they are not considered as "real professions". After a first training session during the recruitment process, assistants for sutdents in special need of support benefit from continuous training on the job. But wages are

---

[574] Original quotation: " ll faut s'intégrer dans la classe, et forcément il faut être présent pour les 2 enfants dont on s'occupe mais aussi que tu fasses partie de leur vie. Pour que tu sois intégrée et en inclusion il faut que moi aussi je ne sois pas transparente, mais que les autres élèves aussi bah tiens ils reconnaissent une personne qui fait partie de leur vie maintenant quoi".

[575] Official website: [http://eduscol.education.fr/cid46765/sections-d-enseignement-general-et-professionnel-adapte.html], 08/11/18.

[576] Original quotation : " Et en SEGPA il se disait, "je suis déjà orienté en SEGPA et je vais en plus avoir quelqu'un qui m'accompagne, donc je suis doublement bête quoi" […] c'est comme ça que mon contrat a été basculé je suis AVS mutualisée […]Alors on avait décidé avec le prof de prendre un peu de recul, […]. Et que quand il avait besoin de moi, ou quand on voyait à un moment qu'il avançait pas, je venais vers lui. Donc on a travaillé comme ça, et puis cette année je suis encore beaucoup plus loin de lui […] Et puis nous notre rôle c'est pas de rester en permanence avec l'enfant, c'est juste l'aider maintenant à trouver les outils pour qu'il puisse s'en sortir et devenir autonome ".

[577] Original quotation: "on a des limites. C'est le prof, c'est le maître de la classe disons".

low[578] and contracts are generally part-time and temporary. A trained person can work for a maximum of six years under such a status. [579]. These structural arrangements cause high turnover and regular recruitment of beginners, who have to be trained again (Philip & Philbert, 2009; Belmont, Plaisance & Vérillon, 2006). I will show how these professionals argue about the loss of all that experience which might be preventing the role from developing into something really useful and highly skilled, in the interest of the whole institution. Furthermore, their affiliation to the "school life" department[580], reinforces the lack of definition of their field of intervention with the risk /fear to clash with the line of responsibility of educational asssistants :

> *"I've got 15 hours in class with two students and the rest of the time I'm in the "student life" department, my post is not very well defined because I cannot supervise study hours, I cannot…[…] but if they have much work, if they need me, if they need to leave the office, I can help them, I'm here to answer the phone […] but my function is not very clear. I would like to have a well-defined position, with specific tasks,. However, what is great is that I meet lots of children, because actually in the "student life" office there are always students hanging out or who come for their detention hours, etc. or waiting to see the principal advisor. So we talk, this is very enriching. And it enables me to get really integrated, everyone knows me a bit in the schoolyard, they come to me, they talk to me and this is enjoyable (Boulin, pp. 1-2)[581].*

One the one hand, their presence in the educational assistants' office might have positive consequences for that they are known by the students with whom they then have more opportunities to interact. However, it also contributes to the blurring of professional roles and identities, as Amadé notes:

---

[578] In priority education, they do not benefit from "REP-premium" neither, like educational assistants.
[579] Two years before the dissolution of subsidized employment contracts in 2018.
[580] Actually, the law distinguishes between individual AVS (individual supervision and support) and collective AVS (collective integration project). Only the first one, "fundamentally characterized by an individualized approach of educational support benefits from concrete precision regarding this function (Belmont and al., op. cit., p. 259).
[581] Original quote: "J'ai 15h de présence en classe, avec les 2 élèves, et le reste du temps je suis à la vie scolaire. A la vie scolaire, c'est pas très défini mon poste parce qu'en fait je ne peux pas faire d'études, je ne peux pas faire […] Mais je peux être là s'il y a trop de boulot, s'ils ont besoin de moi, si elle a besoin de s'absenter celle qui était au bureau, je reste là pour répondre au téléphone. […] Mais c'est pas très clair, ma fonction à la vie scolaire elle est pas très claire. Et ça c'est pas la partie la plus intéressante. Le fait que ce soit pas clair, ma fonction. J'aimerais avoir à la vie scolaire un poste bien défini, tel boulot tel boulot etc. […]. Mais ce qui est bien par contre c'est que je rencontre plein d'autres enfants, parce qu'en fait à la vie scolaire il y a toujours des enfants qui traînent, ou qui viennent faire leurs punitions, ou leurs retenues, etc. Donc qu'attendent de voir la CPE quoi. Donc quand on discute, ça c'est très enrichissant quoi. Et puis ça permet de m'intégrer vraiment, tout le monde me connaît un petit peu dans la cour de l'école, ils viennent me voir, ils parlent de moi et ça c'est plaisant".

> *"Finally, I'm in all classes. This year – last year I spent some time in the third grade, to support them in writing their internship reports and sometimes even their research. I intervened in the class for these occasional tasks. Sometimes I accompanied them on excursions as well … sometimes I am asked, there are a lot [of students] who have not understood my role because they see me in the office of the student life, they think that I'm a supervisor, while my contract states assistant to the student life', but I must repeat it again and again […] it's true because in the end, one never knows, most students do not know what to ask me finally. (Amadé, p. 4)*[582]

Similarly to the educational assistants[583] with whom they share a precarious status, a blurring role and institutional subordination, Boulin's and Amadé's interviews are characterised by a discourse regretting that the institution doesn't make "the most of their skills and presence" while they consider themselves as useful for the improvement of students' integration at school. Their actions are limited by traditional authority figures, such as teachers, with whom they have to negotiate their role without having a status giving them equal considerations[584]:

> *" If the school authority would say for example, as an assistant, one should write an assessing report on the support we provided, it would be better. It would involve the assistants and the students much more. […] but it's double-edged. Because if students understand assistants' explanations better, he [the teacher] might get offended […] when we meet other assistants during our regular training, many other assistants emphasise this point; they feel bad because they are not even considered by the teacher when they are working. One scarcely greets them; there are a lot of complaints regarding this. Because finally, there are some teachers who see the role of assistants like as mere supervisors. Because assistants can criticise some teaching approaches that they observe. Because assistants are witness of how teaching is done they might say: 'well, this teacher, I think the way he is teaching is bad'. Because it's not only the student who does not get it. It could be the whole class as well. And another adult present in the class could notice these details, which are not visible otherwise" (Amadé, pp. 4-5*[585]*).*

[582] Original quotation: "Finalement, je suis dans toutes les classes. Cette année -l'année passée aussi j'étais un peu avec les 3ème, pour les rapports de stage, et même des fois les recherches. J'intervenais dans la classe pour ces rôles ponctuels. Des fois dans les sorties finalement, où j'accompagnais... en tant que , maintenant c'est en double identité AVS ou ..des fois on me demande, il y en a beaucoup qui n'ont pas tout à fait compris mon rôle du fait qu'ils me voient en vie scolaire, ils pensent que je suis carrément surveillete. Alors que mon contrat c'est Auxiliaire de Vie Scolaire, et à chaque fois il faut répéter. […] C'est vrai parce que finalement on sait plus. Il y a des élèves qui sont perdus vis-à-vis de moi, ils ne savent plus quoi me demander "à elle on peut pas, parce qu'elle est quoi finalement" ils savent plus"

[583] And Zaoui, employee for "prevention and security", which portrait will close the whole section.

[584] Contrary to Italy where there are "support teachers" benefiting from equal wages and status (Belmont op. Cit.).

[585] Original quotation: " si l'autorité déjà scolaire disait que dans le rôle de l'AVS il y avait vraiment, à la fin un rapport qu'on doit faire. Et puis aussi évaluer exactement l'accompagnement. Ce serait mieux. Ca impliquerait

This extract illustrates that the presence of an assistant in the classroom may not be always accepted or easy to handle by the teacher who may feel assessed. In teachers' training, do future teachers learn how to work with assistants and do assistants learn in their training to distinguish between the various fields of intervention and make their criticisms understood, acceptable or debatable? Is there any procedure enabling traditional and new professions with highly unequal statuses to socialise with each other and or learn from each other? Actually, Boulin says about their trainers that they "know" about the communication issues assistants encounter with teachers, but they admit their own powerlessness: "integrating a new person in the National Education, well, it's not easy" (Boulin, p. 23)[586].

In sum, "inclusion", be it of students or of the assistants depends on the principal's initiative or teachers' good will. Assistants are mostly frustrated, as they desire to be recognised as both individuals and professionals:

> *"We should establish, from the beginning, for example together with the class teacher, or with the teachers in whose classes I intervene most frequently, a protocol concerning the child and my position. But this is not done at all. Well, there is nothing. It's my contact with the teacher which leads to good cooperation and to the fact that she might share her projects with me, the way she sees me in the class, etc. … there is nothing organised. If you wanted to, things could actually be changed, but as long as nobody desires this change, nothing is going to happen. So I think this could be improved. Because I think we're doing an interesting job (Boulin, p. 2)*[587]

Similar to the educational assistants, the "special need assistants", also assitants to student life office are all the more frustrated when they experience the gap between the established frame

---

beaucoup plus les AVS, et plus encore aussi l'élève. […] Mais c'est à double tranchant parce que le prof aussi peut se sentir mal. Parce que si l'élève arrive à mieux comprendre les explications de l'AVS, il risque de se sentir blessé aussi. […] lorsqu'on a des rencontres dans les formations, il y a beaucoup de ça qui relevait des autres AVS, qui ont beaucoup de mal lorsqu'ils ne sont même pas considérés par le prof alors qu'ils travaillent. C'est à peine si on te disait bonjour; beaucoup beaucoup de plaintes dans ce sens. Parce que l'AVS des fois finalement le rôle, il y a des profs qui le perçoit aussi comme un contrôle. Parce que l'AVS il peut dénoncer les choses qu'il constate. Vu qu'il est là; il peut dire, "bon ce prof je trouve aussi que la manière de transmettre n'est pas bonne". Parce qu'il n'y a pas que l'élève qu'il accompagne qui ne comprend pas. Ça pourrait être toute la classe aussi. Et un adulte présent dans son cours pourrait relever ces détails-là, qui sont des fois pas remarquables directement".

[586] Original quotation: " c'est un constat mais oui oui on sait bien les difficultés que vous rencontrez, on sait bien le non dialogue qu'il peut y avoir avec certains profs, on sait bien tout ce que vous rencontrez le long de l'année mais voilà. […] mais faire intervenir une nouvelle personne dans l'éducation nationale eh bah c'est pas facile".

[587] Original quotation: "On devrait mettre tout de suite un protocole pendant le début de l'année, avec la prof principale par exemple, ou les profs chez qui j'interviens le plus souvent. Par rapport à l'enfant, ma position, qu'est-ce qu'il préfère, en discuter etc. Mais c'est pas du tout fait. Il n'y a rien quoi. C'est mon contact avec la prof qui fait que ça se passe bien et qu'éventuellement elle parle de choses qu'elle voudrait mettre en place, comment elle me situe dans la classe etc. Ça ça peut se faire mais il n'y a rien d'organisé quoi. C'est vraiment, si on a envie ça peut bien se passer mais si on a envie qu'il se passe rien il se passe rien quoi. Je m'installe à côté d'une enfant et ma journée se passe, et puis il n'y a pas d'échanges avec le reste de l'éducatif, le personnel éducatif quoi. Donc ça je trouve que ça pourrait progresser. Parce que je pense que c'est un métier intéressant"

of reference that is meant to give them a "real" pedagogic role and legitimacy, in which they see opportunities to develop and concretely take part in the educational activities as one of them says (Boulin, p. 23)[588]; and the reality, where they cannot implement the principles they have been taught.

As many comments from non-teaching professionals in La Balikan show, teachers act as a catalyst for resentment and are the implicit benchmark against which all others assess their institutional recognition.

Mrs. Amadé and Mrs. Boulin blame policy makers who just "want to improve unemployment statistics" (Amadé, p. 21) by creating state funded positions without a real project to improve inclusion:

> *"I think it is purely financial. Do you know how much I cost them here per hour? 1, 50 €[589]. Because I'm an old hand now, I can tell you that. A better pay would also have positive effects on the perception of our role. There would be more people who would ask themselves what we really do. And we would have to account more for our work. And as long as the Ministry of Labour subsidises our jobs to 75 percents…we don't carry any weight (Boulin, p. 24)[590]*

Since their contracts are time-limited, Mrs. Boulin and Mrs. Amadé do not have any prospects for professional growth (Philip *op. cit.*; Belmont *op. cit.*). Mrs. Amadé, from Guinea, especially emphasises the fact that she can even not apply for the internal competitive examination in the domain of public education because the appointment requires French nationality (Amadé, p. 6).

Finally, they perceive their roles as interchangeable while the relation they have built over months with the student may end brutally :

> *"There will always be someone….. There will always be someone. There is a long list of unemployed people waiting. No competences are needed to apply. For example you don't have to have this or that diploma to apply for these posts. Everyone can do it. And nobody really, like I already said, controls the work we do. […] everything which had been done [with the kid] will be lost[591]. It was ill-conceived. Apparently there is a possibility to get a permanent contract, but*

[588] Original quotation: "Il y a vraiment un référentiel d'AVS […] Et ça c'est très bien ce qu'ils ont sorti, sur la pédagogie etc".

[589] The amount the school pays towards her salary thanks to state subsidies.

[590] Original quotation: "Je pense que c'est réellement financier quoi. Vous savez combien ça leur revient, ici, mon taux horaire? 1€50. Alors on est considérées, parce que j'ai quand même de la bouteille maintenant je peux vous le dire, ici si on était mieux payées on serait plus considérées et on aurait plus de gens qui se demanderaient ce qu'on fait réellement. Et on aurait plus de comptes à rendre. Et tant qu'on est subventionnées à 75% par le ministère du travail, bah voilà quoi. On compte pas vraiment dans la balance non plus".

[591] Her contract was limited to two years.

there are so few... [….] It's a dead-end street. [….] So for me it's impossible [….] The main reason is because I don't have [French] nationality" (Amadé, p. 6).[592]

At the school level, Boulin and Amadé feel that they "don't count" insofar as they are not integrated in the "important" commissions where students' cases are discussed[593], while they think that "it could be interesting for them [the school]":

"There is never a meeting we are invited to, just to exchange, to know to understand, how people perceive what we do…" (Amadé)

"I don't know why they would not like it. […] Well, it could be really interesting for them as well. I've got a problem with that. A lot of good intentions but… (Boulin, p. 26)[594]

The lack of institutional consideration triggers attitudes of disengagement by these professionals. Regarding the subject of this research, it invites to reformulate the issue "*décrochage scolaire*" in systemic terms as attitudes of disengagement triggered by certain institutional structures which do not enable /empower all actors to take part in a community project in which they find their place. It would help to broader views of the problem that affects professionals as well as students. Then it put into perspective the definition of such an issue focused on the certification, which may not be the only necessity of the educational project, especially from the view of educated professionals who already have many titles. The fact is that professional dropout may impact negatively students' engagement:

"So well, we don't make a huge effort either because we tell ourselves, what for? […] If we were motivated, we could really contribute to the success and try to bring dropouts back to school again (Amadé, p. 24)[595]*.*

[592] Original quotation: "Mais il y en aura toujours. Il y en a toujours. Il y a une liste de chômeurs qui attend. Il n'y a pas de compétences qu'on demande au départ. Comme par exemple vous devez avoir tel diplôme pour pouvoir accéder à ces postes. Alors tout le monde peut le faire. Et personne finalement -comme je vous le dis- contrôle réellement le travail qui est fait [...] Ce qui a été fait pendant deux ans va être cassé. Ils ont mal réfléchi à ça. Mais il paraît qu'il y a une possibilité de CDI, mais c'est un nombre tellement ...[…] c'est carrément fermé. […] donc pour moi c'est impossible; pourquoi? La première raison c'est que je n'ai pas la nationalité. Je ne suis pas française".

[593] Cf. (Commissions *de suivi des élèves, commissions éducatives, conseils de discipline*). Except if it includes a student that a special need assistant is supervising personally.

[594] The second part of the interview gathered both of them. Original quotation: "Il n'y a jamais de réunion où on nous convie, pour juste échanger savoir comprendre, comment on perçoit ce qu'on fait et ...il y a peu de réunions"/ " Je comprends pas qu'ils n'en aient pas envie. [..] Après, ça pourrait être très très intéressant pour eux aussi quoi. C'est ça qui me pose problème. Plein de bonnes intentions mais... ".

[595] Original quotation: "là on se donne pas non plus à 100% parce qu'on se dit ça sert à quoi à près. […]Alors que si on était motivées on pourrait vraiment […] contribuer à la réussite et puis à essayer de récupérer des personnes qui ont décroché "

However, the energy these professionals wish to invest is hindered by the weight of organisational and statutory structures. The issue "*décrochage scolaire*" do not represent an opportunity for them to clame for more responsibility and assert their professional identity and legitimacy:

> *There is a kind of resignation, this is how I feel it, to say well, we all were very hopeful, we wanted to do good things but it is not exactly… but one should recognise that today we are actually here because of school failure, to contribute, through our job, to reducing it. And well, I think at least all the people I met, Mrs. Amadé and the assistant from the last year with whom I worked, I think they are motivated, he. And they are ready to do interesting things (Boulin, p. 24)*[596]

Contrary to their German counterpart Mrs. Maute, a new profession in charge of the afternoon supervision in the *GMS* under the motto of "inclusion", the assistants Mrs. Amadé and Mrs. Boulin do not feel part of the institution. Despite the fact that they believe to have a role to play in the school, the lack of professional growth and the weight of statutory and organisational structures in an already highly divided professional landscape discourage them to "make a huge effort". While both the German school social worker and educational assistant want to contribute to the establishment of the *GMS* and its pedagogical prescriptions, the French assistants to the student life office and for students in need of special support already state the weakness of a French project that lacks coherence. As Mrs. Boulin notices, specialized institutes continue to exist, as well as separated school tracks parallel to the ordinary system; their role would be to embody the norm of inclusion, but they cannot really perform it in the current system: "a clear project is lacking. It lacks finality in every instance" (Boulin, p. 12)[597].

This extract can be interpreted in the light of the specificity of 'integration' *à la française*" according to which many and new created measures overlap with each other" (Belmont et al. *op. cit.*). The authors compare this situation with Italy, where "special classes or special schools do not exist" and where "integration is a radical measure" [...] involving necessarily

[596] Original quotation: "Il y a une espèce de renonciation, de ce que j'ai ressenti, de dire voilà, […] mais on avait plein d'espérance, on voulait faire des choses mais c'est pas exactement...Mais faudrait reconnaître aujourd'hui qu'on est là aussi pour justement, l'échec scolaire, pour contribuer à travers le boulot qu'on fait justement à intervenir là-dedans et faire en sorte qu'il y ait moins d'échec scolaire. [..] Et là je pense qu'on aurait pour le moins tous les gens que j'ai rencontrés, Amadé et puis l'AVS de l'année dernière avec qui j'ai travaillé, moi je trouve qu'ils sont motivés hein. Les gens. Et ils sont prêts à faire des choses intéressantes".

[597] Original quotation: "On a l'impression que finalement il y a encore des instituts, il y a de l'inclusion avec les AVS, mais il n'y a pas vraiment de projet. Enfin moi je trouve que ça manque de projet. Ça manque de finalité en tous les cas".

the presence of children with a handicap in ordinary classes as well as 'support' teachers" – who have got the same status as "ordinary" ones. In contrary, the French model is said "reformist" because "it adds the model of inclusion to former modalities of specialized schooling" (*ibid*., pp. 249-252). The conditions for inclusion are not specified, which prevents assistants to better integrate students with disabilities In France and specifically in La Balikan, the project "inclusion" is not reflected, debated and implemented with teachers and the assistants, which render it a hollow shell. This is what Mrs. Boulin means by differentiating the "intellectual project" from the concrete community project.

> *"And it's true that 'inclusion' is an intellectual approach, one must really reflect about disabilities as well. And we should talk about it. With teachers, how they see it, the inclusion of a child with a disability in their class. And what do they plan to do with that. What project they have with this child [….] (Boulin, p. 6)*[598]

4.2.1.3 Socio-medical school staff : the social worker and the nurse

The social and medical school staff (doctors, social workers, nurses) has a long history that dates back to the end of the 18th century. Although Tricoire et *al*. consider the year 1969, with the publication of "general instructions about the functioning of school health care", as a modern turning point regarding their integration in the institutional and organisational landscape." (Tricoire and al., 1996, p. 259). Since the end of the 1960s and during the 1970s – which is also the period of the publication of the first research highlighting the role of school structures in the reproduction of social and school inequalities – policy-makers supported the development of a legislation promoting measures aiming to support children and youth with social and economic difficulties but also with disabilities in ordinary school settings (see above).

In the following section, I will investigate the views of Mrs. Valérie Pointeau the school social worker and Mrs. Claude Caillé the nurse. How do these professionals see their roles in the particular context of La Balikan and larger school settings? How far does their positioning distinguishes itself from the members of the student life department and their assistants, Mrs. Boulin and Mrs. Amadé? Do they have the feeling that their supportive roles are better enhanced by the institution? Do they communicate with each other?

[598] Original quotation: "Et c'est vrai que l'inclusion c'est une démarche intellectuelle quoi aussi, il faut vraiment réfléchir au handicap quoi. Et ça on devrait en parler en fait. Avec les professeurs, comment ils voient ça, l'inclusion d'un enfant handicapé dans leur classe. Et qu'est-ce qu'ils comptent en faire. Quel projet ils ont avec cet enfant-là"

4.2.1.3.1 The school social worker[599]

Mrs. Pointeau has been working for one year and half at La Balikan. Like her German counterpart, she works part-time in two different schools (although most of her working time is spent at La Balikan). Both lower secondary schools, although being in the same area, are very different from each other as regards the socio-economic and ethnic composition of the students and parents. Pointeau describes the other school nearby as consisting of "85% wealthy population. It's an entirely different world 500 metres away from here" (Pointeau, p. 2)[600]. She considers the support she provides families with to get social benefits and school grants as the first highlight of her role, meaning as well that this economic preoccupation is priority to educational ones ("The most pragmatic and that which speaks to the families, it's money" (p. 2)[601]). This also explains why she considers the payment of school grants after students have confirmed their regular attendance as a good measure against absenteeism (see below).

As she says herself, the biggest aspect of her work concerns students' individual case management "[602]. Her role also consists of collective prevention activities. This aspect of her job is not really developed, "because individual case management takes too much time". She gives the example of a workshop they implemented together with teachers and the nurse addressing "self-esteem" issues: "it was about organising small games, which help them to regard themselves in a different light, to regard the other differently, to reflect on their way of communicating as well..." (Pointeau, 2016, pp. 2-3)[603].

Pointeau enjoys working at La Balikan where students' issues are particularly "heavy, rooted and stigmatised" (Pointeau, p. 12)[604]; this gives meaning to her job as she feels useful by

---

[599] Assistante sociale en milieu scolaire

[600] Original quotation: "avec 85% de population favorisée. C'est le monde à l'envers à 500m d'ici"

[601] Original quotation: "le plus pragmatique et qui parle aux familles c'est le financier".

[602] Original quotation: " Et le plus gros des trois axes en fait c'est la prise en charge individuelle, l'accompagnement social, donc je suis à disposition des élèves, de leur famille, mais aussi de l'équipe, quand un souci vient perturber la scolarité " (Pointeau, 2016, p. 3)

[603] Original quotation : " Il y a le collectif, où je peux intervenir sur des actions collectives, alors cette année c'est pas encore au programme parce que les prises en charges individuelles prennent assez de temps, mais l'année dernière on a réussi quand même au printemps à mettre en place une action autour de l'estime de soi, avec l'infirmière et la CPE, donc on a travaillé par demi-classes, autour des 6ème sur l'estime de soi donc on avait toutes eu la même formation […] L'idée c'est des petits jeux, qui leur permettent d'apprendre à se voir autrement, à regarder l'autre autrement, à réfléchir sur leur façon de communiquer aussi ".

[604] Original quotation: "j'ai vraiment l'impression [...] d'avoir un public différent, avec des problématiques plus... plus fortes, plus ancrées, plus stigmatisées"

trying to find the "small thing" that might trigger positive or negative "change" in their attitudes towards school (Pointeau, p. 13)[605]. At La Balikan she also enjoys good cooperation with other school staff (pp. 12 ff.). Working in "priority education" has been a "real choice" and is part of an an ongoing career plan: "However, I've got the opportunity to apply for a competitive state exam this year but I also consider sitting the exam and refusing the post if there is no professional interest" (*ibid*., p. 15)[606].

One could say that Pointeau identifies with the institution, which is particularly visible in the way she pessimistically talks about the improvement of parents/school cooperation. She is convinced that school ought to "substitute" to parents (*ibid*., p. 16)[607]. Speaking of this, she refers indistinctly to privileged and underprivileged milieus, although she describes parents with lower socio-economic backgrounds as more docile. This fact can be explained by their dependence on social welfare; on the contrary, issues about education can be a cause of greater tension when dealing with privileged parents (a "thicker glass ceiling"): "In the other school they are all doctors, journalists, you don't address things the same way. […] I think that there is more contact but let's say relations are, less sincere" (Pointeau, p. 15)[608].

According to this testimony, school as an institution should become even more encompassing -in the Goffmanian sense of the "total institution". Pointeau claims that relations are difficult with parents from both privileged and underprivileged backgrounds, however, only the latter are at the center of public attention. She defends the institution against external attacks, which in her view, are mainly launched by privileged parents. The socio-economic background determines parents' relations to school. Research suggests that better earning parents are not only the most demanding but also equipped to oppose certain demands by the school and influence the decisions at the school to pursue their own strategies, especially in the domain of orientation. On the contrary, working-class (and migrant) parents avoid contact with the school, particularly with teachers.

---

[605] Original quotation: "Et en tout cas ce que je garde en tête c'est que ça tient à pas grand-chose. Le changement... Il peut venir d'un tout petit truc en fait et inversement. Donc parfois il y a des choses à essayer de comprendre qui sont toutes petites finalement".

[606] Original quotation: "alors oui, sur le fond oui parce que c'est un vrai choix d'être venue sur de l'EP, sur un établissement dit difficile, c'est une vraie envie de ma part avec une volonté de travailler sur le long terme évidemment. Maintenant heu... j'ai l'opportunité de passe le concours cette année, mais j'envisage aussi d'obtenir le concours et de refuser le poste si l'intérêt professionnel ne le vaut pas".

[607] Original quotation: "et qu'effectivement le rôle de l'école c'est de plus en plus de se substituer au rôle éducatif des parents. C'est pas joli hein? Mais ça va nous donner du travail!"

[608] Original quotation: "Et ça c'est terrible parce que le mur est encore plus épais que pour ces familles qu'on essaie.. qu'on a mis dans une situation de précarité, dans des politiques sociales finalement, c'est encore plus dur parce qu'il faut faire le bon choix des mots, on y va beaucoup plus à tâtons –avec les familles favorisées il faut être très prudent. L'autre établissement ils sont tous médecins journalistes, vous n'approchez pas les choses de la même manière. [..] je pense qu'il y a plus de lien mais il est moins sincère j'ai envie de dire ".

I will show how the fight against "*décrochage scolaire*" is defined and organised at the school level and how this organisation gives value to Mrs. Pointeau's position. Most notably, she is involved in many commissions addressing "dropouts at risk". She assists the head of school in these commissions, while interpreting, diagnosing, and resolving individual situations.

4.2.1.3.2 The nurse

State nurses first appeared at the beginning of the 20th century and their professionalisation resulted from military, hygienist, and societal preoccupations (Henry, 2012, p. 48). Since the 1980s, the status of school nurses has been highly codified; most recently in a bulletin addressing "The Missions of Nurses in National Education" (NOR: MENE0003332C - Circulaire n° 2001-014 du 12 janvier 2001, 2001).) The promotion of "equal opportunities", embedded the wider discourse on "human capital", encompasses individual health as educational investment –and nurses are here to convey public guidelines and ensure they are enforced. "In the national policy on education, nurses are in charge of young people's health and should contribute to the prevention and education in relation to all health related matters" (NOR: MENE0003332C - Circulaire n° 2001-014 du 12 janvier 2001, 2001). A series of decrees aims to guarantee their independence and autonomy in the school organisational context (*ibid*.). Nurses are under the authority of the school director, but they also "advise them on any question concerning health, prevention, health education, hygiene and security. Nurses are also mediators between the individual and collective levels" (Berger, Nekaa, Courty, 2009, p. 641). They accomplish tasks related to individual health (vaccination, screening, administration, routine medical check-ups) as well as collective health promotion. In addition, they have to deal with emergencies, including child protection. As Pingoud (2004) notes, their actions are at the junction of "three universes, which can be a source of conflict". These universes are "Firstly professionalisation (knowledge and skills acquired in education and training, specialisation, lifelong learning), secondly the school system and thirdly the psycho-relational aspects between nurses and their "clients" (students, families). For these reasons, the representations and practices of nurses with regard to health promotion varies widely (Berger et al., *op. cit*.). Often, nurses are dispatched to different primary and secondary schools in the same area, as it is the case of Caillé, the school nurse at La Balikan. Against this backdrop, how does Mrs. Caillé see her role?

Mrs. Caillé is about to retire. After a long career, she has accumulated lots of experience in different institutions and professional environments. At the moment of the interview, she had worked at La Balikan for six years, ranking her among the more experienced employees of the school. She "has worked extensively in priority education" (Caillé, 2016, p. 1), be it in urban or rural areas, each of which have their specific issues. In rural areas the issues are different because one is far away from care centres", *ibid.*)[609]. Her working time is divided between several primary schools in the same area. She likes this arrangement because it enables her to "thoroughly follow students' evolution" over time as well as their families (Caillé, p. 7).

Caillé considers herself as a privileged interlocutor for the students. At la Balikan many students have already experienced serious problems and ruptures in their trajectories. Managing these ruptures in the context of adolescence, and especially in the transition "from the fifth to the fourth grade, which is particularly difficult in terms of knowledge requirements" (pp. 8-9), makes her job very challenging. The performance-oriented approach that most teachers follow conflicts with her own tasks and responsibilities. Individual supervision allows Caillé to follow a pragmatic approach. It is all about "taking the time to listen to them", "helping them go forward", helping them cope with "their past" and current difficult situation (p. 2). She sees herself as someone who "opens all the doors to find a solution" (p. 3). This approach requires time and patience compared to teachers, "who always seek quick solutions" (p. 6)[610]. Sometimes, tensions with teachers also result from the different perspectives they have on students' abilities, which in turn stem from their respective roles. Caillé remembers one teacher who judged students merely based on their performance and called them "simple" if they did not meet his standards. Caillé, who recalls her status as a mother as well –and by extansion, to these students as well- ("I would not like teachers to speak about my children like this"), vehemently rejects such an approach[611]. In fact, this speaks once again for the different perspectives teachers and the non-teaching staff take when assessing their work and setting their objectives.

---

[609] Original quote: "Bon après moi j'ai beaucoup travaillé en ZEP… j'ai fait un petit peu secteur rural, c'est autre chose, c'est d'autres difficultés parce qu'on est éloigné de tous les centres de soins et de prise en charge"
[610] Original quotation: "et ca c'est la difficulté avec les enseignants […] qu'ils acceptent qu'il faille du temps […] eux ils voudrait bien une réponse clé en main […]"
[611] Original quotation: "mais moi je me mets toujours à la palce des parents, je suis maman, et je me dis que j'aurais pas aimé qu'on parle comme ça de mes enfants!"

Caillé's work involves different strategies, from "making [parents and/or children] agree to have a meeting with a psychologist" (pp. 8-9) and enrolling children in the youth programme organised by the local police station to encouraging them to cope with institutional demands (pp. 1-3))[612].

Because of a high degree of proximity between herself and the students, which she has established during countless coaching and counselling sessions, she also aims to have an influence on students' educational aspirations by encouraging them to have higher expectations than these that their milieus frame. On the other hand, when she considers a student still fragile, she thinks that "cooling down" their expectations may be in their interests and avoid them experiencing future failure[613]. In analysing lower expectations than one could expect from "promising students", she often blames the lack of parental support, although she is aware of the negative effects social and institutional structures can have, as well as familial incidents (ruptures, material and familial issues). Also, she is aware of students' "great feeling of injustice in here" (Caillé, p. 3). But her discourse is highly ambivalent, which can be explained by her allegiance to the institution and her belief in the responsibility of individuals and families for their failures:

> *"we've got some of them who really succeeded but when the family is not behind, well, it's very rare, it's a big waste… and after that they are bitter and we hear, well what we hear through the media, meaning that in the quartiers they don't have access to this or that but it's wrong, they have all access to the*

[612] Original quotation : " bon y en a un qui a un super parcours, on est vraiment très fiers, parce qu'il s'est vraiment saisi, il est en terminale technique à Lorient cette année, peut-être qu'il va aller en prépa […]ouais il vient me voir, en fait quand il a besoin, en fait je suis sa personne ressource. Et donc quand il a besoin d'informations, ou d'un petit coup de pouce ou d'une aide soit il m'appelle, soit il passe me voir, donc là il est venu à la rentrée, on s'est vu cet été avant que je parte en vacances, […]donc pour le BAFA j'ai remué ciel et terre […] parce qu'il fallait les papiers, il fallait qu'il paie sa formation […] parce qu'en fait il faut avancer et après la CAF reverse [….] […] sinon moi et mon mari on l'aurait fait, honnêtement on l'aurait fait […] et quand il est parti faire son stage de BAFA bon bah il lui fallait un petit peu de matériel, voilà il lui fallait un sac de couchage enfin des petites choses comme ça, bon bah voilà on l'a dépanné, puis voilà quand il est parti, bon bah je lui ai donné 20€ pour qu'il s'achète un maillot de bain bon bah voilà des petites trucs tout bêtes, une père de tennis et un maillot de bain pour aller à st Malo, bah c me paraissait un peu le minimum ".

[613] She recalls the case of a young migrant she has been supporting emotionally, financially and with their network when he was in La Balikan, who got a grant to go to a general high school and with whom she is still in contact; he had been told there that he would have the capacity to go to a preparatory elite college (classes préparatoire) where expectations and learning rhythm is very high. She considers that this would put him in a risky situation because he is "still fragile" (*ibid*.).

same things and the French school is well-done regarding this but still […] they do not commit themselves to it […] (Caillé, p. 10)[614]

But eventually, it is difficult to sort out the different responsibility, guilty parties and contingence. This might explain why Mrs. Caillé refers to conventional wisdom to explain failure and success: Some students have their "lucky star" and can be "saved" – such as this boy who arrived illegally in France but who "kept going" (p. 1). Other students do not succeed. One boy arrived from Congo at the age of 12. His mother abandoned him. He was unable to "deal with the situation" and it was "impossible" to help him. All this, led to him failing school, which ended in a definitive exclusion:

"He became a delinquent and I don't know whether we saved him […] we worked with the CLPN and the police officer told us: ' well, no, you have to send him back [in his country], he is not adapting here' […] I remember spending two hours on a bench outside with him and an educational assistant. Both of us were trying to bring him back, to calm him down […] he had enormous outbreaks of violence and he started to steal and to break into houses. He also dealt drugs in the quartier. I am not sure we will get him back. So well a kid like this in a class, destroys the class" (Caillé, p. 5)[615]

But lucky or unlucky "destinies" have actually a lot to do with the impact of migration and political regulation (of welfare, migration, work, access to rights) as it appears in the many stories Mrs. Caillé recalls with the term "it's life": "I always say it, a child was not born mean, it's wrong. Actually, it's life that makes them… emotionally disturbed or mean"[616].

Caillé tries to influence the teacher-student interactions. The confidential information she possesses gives her some leverage over the teachers and allows her to offer active advice. Indeed, van Zanten (2001, p. 186) showed that such use of *professional confidentiality* is

[614] Original quotation: "c'est vraiment le regret de les voir comme ça sans ambition [….] alors on en a qlquns qui ont bien réussi mais quand y a pas la famille derrière c'est quand mm très rare, c'est un gros gâchis... et après ils sont amers et on entend, bah ce qu'on entend par les médias, c'est-à-dire que dans les quartiers ils n'ont pas accès à ceci ou n'ont pas accès à cela, c'est faux ils ont tous accès à la mm chose l'école française elle est bien faite là-dessus, mais […] eux ils s'engagent pas […]"

[615] Original quotation: "il était devenu délinquant et je sais pas si on l'a sauvé, on avait travaillé avec le ceclpn et le policier qui l'avait accueilli il nous avait dit, non mais lui faut le renvoyer là-bas, il est plus adaptable ici. […] moi je me rappelle avoir passé deux heures sur un banc avec un surveillant pour essayer de le calmer, de le ramener […] il avait des accès de violence énormes, puis après il a commencé un peu à voler, il mentait énormément et puis heu…. Il a eu un conseil de discipline chez nous, il a été ailleurs, nous après on a su qu'il visitait des pavillons, il faisait des trafics de drogue, il faisait guetteur dans le quartier et je suis pas sûre qu'on e récupérera. Donc un gamin comme ça dans une classe qui explosait, bon bah c'est une classe détruite".

[616] Original quotation: "Moi c'est toujours ce que je dis, un enfant ne nait pas méchant, c'est pas vrai, en fait c'est la vie qui fait qu'il devient bah soit caractériel soit méchant mais un enfant ne nait jamais méchant".

embedded in power games and specific work divisions and contributes to asserting a professional identity and autonomy. Mrs. Caillé recalls the story of a teacher "completely overwehlmed" by his students. She emphasises her supportive mission through the ways she helped to "canalise" some students and by "coaching" their teacher, who was really "suffering" (Caillé, p. 4)[617].

Although she blames some teachers for only focusing on their subjects and for failing to acknowledge students' social backgrounds in their way of doing classes [618], she also blames the regular system that allocates young and unexperienced teachers to the most difficult schools[619]: it "destroys" them (Caillé, p. 4)[620].

Against this backdrop, she presents her office as a "decompression chamber" for students who are "overwhelmed by their emotions" (p. 3). Her work also helps "ease" teachers' activities in the classroom. She is aware of the advantage of the "one-to-one meeting conditions" while in class, peers' looks, and reflections might exacerbate the tensions between the teachers and problematic students. However, in her opinion "teachers don't use [the possibility of conducting one-to-one meetings] enough" when they are overwhelmed by a student in class (Caillé, p. 7)[621]. But from teachers' perspective, it is pedagogically disapproved to "exclude"

---

[617] Original quotation: " Et donc il fallait gérer les élèves et en plus le coacher lui pour pas qu'il bascule complètement et voilà qu'on puisse travailler par rapport à certains élèves qu'il puisse accepter certaines choses mais des fois fallait le sortir pour le protéger lui pour pas qu'il craque parce que je peux dire que la première année ça a été un sac de souffrance ".

[618] I've shown in the previous section how such an attitude is difficult for teachers : rupture of the principle of equality, risk to be overcome with students' private issues, which in turn impact of the teacher/student relation as regards the activity of knowledge transmission, assessment, etc. …) : "I remember a young math teacher, a scholar, he just left school and well, he could not stop saying that, 'No Anne Marie, I'm a math teacher, I'm not here to do some…. Psychology, I'm just here to teach mathematics; and his class was horrible" (p. 4)/Original quotation: " je pense à un jeune prof agrégé qui est arrivé ici, il sortait de l'école quoi, et moi il arrêtait pas de me dire, non mais moi Anne-Marie, je suis prof de maths je suis pas là pour faire heu… de la psychologie, enfin, moi je suis juste là pour enseigner les maths. Et sa classe, mais c'était une horreur".

[619] On the contrary in Baden-Württemberg, teachers use to apply for vacant positions and directly by the schools. Of course, students with the best marks in both formal exam and training (*Referendariat*) have the best chances to see their application accepted but schools' benefit from great latitude in their recruitment compared to the French system.

[620] Original quotation: "mais c'est vrai que quand on met dans ces établissements là des jeunes, il faudrait trouver des profils de jeunes [….] là un jeune prof, enfin voilà, agrégé, tout jeune, qui a toujours été en réussite scolaire, bah non, ça le fait pas, ça le fait pas, parce qu'ils sont à dix lieux de nos gamins alors forcément qu'on vient les fracasser. [….] faut le reconnaitre quand même on a des enseignants on les fracasse bien".

[621] Original quotation : " moi je comprends aussi c'est facile parce que moi je les ai en tête à tête et […] ce qui se joue en classe c'est le regard des pairs qui est gênant, parce que moi je peux me permettre de leur dire des choses-là, on est que deux ; [….] alors que dans la classe un prof qui va dire quelque chose à un élève les autres peuvent réagir, ou ils vont se moquer de lui, voilà il va être vexé, ou... et donc voilà c'est là la différence en fait donc c'est beaucoup plus difficile pour les enseignants de travailler dans la classe, parce que du coup quand ils font une réflexion bah c'est leur amour propre qui est atteint et ça à leur âge c'est très très très dur, c'est violent pour eux. Et du coup c'est ce que je leur dis souvent aux enseignants, quand vous êtes débordés ou que vous voyez que ça le fait pas, quand je suis là mais faites les descendre, faites les descendre. […] et c'est pas du temps

someone from the class even if such an exclusion meant well "go speak with the nurse" (Prairat, 2011, 2014). On the other hand, as I mentioned concerning the student life department who complain that teachers delegate them the tasks concerning regulation of discipline and difficult students, they may be aware that these solutions are not always welcome.

Mrs. Caillé emphasises in her interview that throughout all these years, she used to collaborate with the different heads of schools (p. 2), which is a strategy to better support students and increases her margin of support regarding support. She also seems to have great influence over the outcome of disciplinary hearings (p. 4)[622].

Like her colleagues though, she mentions that the organisation of preventive and collective projects is underdeveloped compared with individual case management. The first constraint is the limited time she spends in the school (two and a half days per week). Furthermore, there are "a lot of [students who] need to catch up with learning standards" (Caillé, p. 7), which illustrates the dominance of teaching over educational projects. In addition to that, there are not many opportunities once she has done her compulsory programme on prevention. The second difficulty is "technical" and "political". Firstly, it is technically difficult to find the time to gather the different classes. Then, collective projects demand stable relations and sympathy with the teaching staff in the middle and long-term. Finally, it pertains to the principal's political positioning to consider the importance of such projects over others or even teaching time (Caillé, p. 7)[623].

Caillé underlines the importance of project-based activities for the students ("I think to some students these activities mean a lot") and the positive impact they have on the relations between teachers and students and the classroom environment, as observed in the research

---

de perdu. Parce que finalement c'est les remobiliser pour repartir en classe [….] et ça je pense qu'ils l'utilisent pas assez".

[622] Original quotation: "On avait discuté avec le principal et l'adjointe avant […] moi j'avais dit de toute façon on peut pas le mettre dehors, quelque part on lui signe sa condamnation, ça va devenir un bandit, il va se faire récupérer sur le quartier ".

[623] Original quotation: " une autre difficulté c'est aussi qu'il y a énormément de choses de proposées dans ce collège et ben ils ont quand mm un minimum de cours à faire aussi les élèves […] par ex. l'année dernière on a fait l'estime de soi sur deux classes de 6e bah ça déjà été difficile de mettre ça en place, on a fait ça avec l'AS et la CPE qui étaient en poste [….] pouvoir trouver des temps en commun avec des classes d'élèves […] c'est pas évident. […] je pense que pour certains ils mettent beaucoup de sens pour toutes ses activités là mais ils ont aussi énormément besoin de bases. Ou alors il faudrait vraiment faire ce que moi j'ai fait dans un collège où en fait sur une semaine on faisait des activités […]"

(Duru-Bellat, 2003, p. 188). Caillé also suggests that a positive correlation exists between these non-teaching projects outside of "classroom settings" and the knowledge students will acquire, as well as the acquisition of social skills which may also be useful in class (Caillé, pp. 7-8)[624].

The creation of collective educational projects depends mainly on the initiative of individual staff members. Developing psycho-social competences, for example, is a very important aspect of student life. However, the curriculum does not allow for specific training that would help students to develop these competences. She gives the example of an educational assistant who organised a collective painting of the schoolyard walls : "students came during the holiday!" (Caillé, p. 8)[625].

To conclude, this part emphasises the important supportive role of the nurse who benefits from a considerable degree of autonomy within the institution, which is reinforced by her proximity with the students and the director. In the specific context of La Balikan, her long presence at the school and neighbouring primary schools adds extra weight to her authority. At the organisational level, she is able to exert influence on verdicts resulting from disciplinary hearings, at the individual level, she is able to influence students' aspirations and capacities to cope with school demands and expectations. Beyond her institutional supportive role, she can develop a private support role for students she thinks may need her help. Her opinions on parenting are quite ambivalent. She knows that most parents at La Balikan face serious difficulties yet at the same time expects them to be more proactive and defends the institution and the opportunities offered by the state. Like her colleagues at the student life department, the assistants for students in need of special support, and the school social workers[626], she also regrets the little importance given to socio-educational projects and remains convinced of their benefits for the quality of inter-professional relations, for students' attitudes to the school and to learning in general.

***

[624] Original quotation: " Ça permet à tout le monde de les connaitre autrement aussi qu'en classe parce que j'ai bien vu quand j'ai travaillé avec les profs de différentes matières […] ils ont un autre regard aussi sur les élèves, de voir qu'ils ont aussi d'autres compétences, même si parfois en cours ça se passait pas bien de voir aussi que sur des choses qui les intéressait de voir qu'ils pouvaient développer aussi des compétences […] et ça aussi je pense que c'est important […] l'espace classe, c'est pas forcément évident pour les élèves et parfois on voit qu'on peut leur faire faire la même chose que dans un autre espace […] ".

[625] Original quotation: "donc moi en 6e je les vois tous, la prévention individuelle [….] ça c'est fait […] mais après plus développer des compétences psycho sociales c'est là qui y a moins de temps […]".

[626] Although the first two groups argue with more virulence.

This first subsection aimed to present the different professionals, who are embodying "measures" of educational support in the school. It looked at the way they conceive their role at La Balikan. It juxtaposed the French and German contexts of secondary schools, where the diversification of the professionals supporting the teaching activity and social education are embedded in and framed by different historical, institutional, organisational and local contexts. While the new *GMS* seems to open professional prospects for the German staff and offers opportunities to take on educational tasks which in turn foster their recognition, the French context remains a highly divided professional landscape. Status inequalities remain and are source of frustration. The professionals that interact most with the children are also the ones who are most frustrated, because of the lack of institutional recognition. As I will confirm with the next subsections, the distinction between "established" professionals and "challengers" explain professionals' positioning regarding the issue of "*décrochage scolaire*". Established professionals will tend to emphasise more the responsibility of individuals, families and private environments; "challengers" stress the responsibility of school decisions and settings; or, as the last example will show, they refer to a general crisis of a political system of integration. The following subsection addresses the ways these professionals apprehend the phenomenon and category of public action towards "*décrochage scolaire*". More particularly, it examines how they consider the way school is preventing, mitigating or exacerbating dropout attitudes. I will show how this phenomenon illustrates the tensions between their "professional being" and "social being" (Dubois, 2009, p. 11).

4.2.2 The "others": Different understandings of institutional measures, depending on their position as 'established' or 'challengers'

The *established* professionals mostly understand the fight against "*décrochage scolaire*" through the systematic tracking and follow-up of "illegal" absences; which is also the official measure (cf. part 2). Despite the many limits of this method, they don't really oppose it since they consider it as resulting from official prescriptions and gives them a useful role in the institutional distribution of educational work. They prefer to blame the families and the environment and locate the reasons for the students' failure outside of school. On the contrary, the professionals who, despite their proximity to the students, have a subordinate rank in the school organisation but aspire to take on more responsibility (the *challengers*), tend to blame the school system for the production of "dropouts". In this respect, the

educational assistants denounce a bureaucratic and technocratic approach to this phenomenon. Their own trajectories account for the obsolescence of a discourse linking school performance, certifications and economic and social integration/securing (1.2.2.5).

4.2.2.1 "We try to stick to the rules" : An institutional approach focused on the tracking of absenteeism and individual case management

> *"When we go to see the school commissioner, the big themes are trotted out again, for example at the moment it's harassment and radicalisation. So well, when we go to a meeting, they brief us well and like good little soldiers we must implement it. Except that we don't always have the appropriate tools, sometimes the tools are created….these can be decrees and bulletins that each department, each local authority, each institution will adapt to the way they work (Pointeau, p. 10)*[627]

Not without irony, the school social worker Mrs. Pointeau distinguishes between the role of policy makers who draw the public's attention to "recurrent" alarming "themes" the school has to struggle with and the real capacity of the professionals to deal with these issues. She perfectly illustrates the gap between discourse and practice, while political guidelines are "filtered" and reinterpreted by the different institutions according to available resources, current orientations, strategies and interests of core stakeholders, and current power configurations (Derouet, & Dutercq, 1997).

For Mrs. Madec, the principal at la Balikan, the fight against "*décrochage scolaire*" firstly consists of controlling absences according to a pre-established grid. These absences are then discussed in smaller committees ("*comités de suivi des élèves"*) consisting of the principal Madec, the deputy Mr. George, the social worker Mrs. Pointeau, the nurse Mrs. Caillé, and the principal of education Mrs. Rousselet who is also "advisor referent for dropouts". According to Mrs. Pointeau, "[they] strictly carry out the instructions that M. T., our commissioner, put in place" (Pointeau, p. 3). "We are trying to conform with official instructions and to "maintain the framework", *ibid*. p. 4)[628]. The strict application of rules is

[627] Original quotation: "Donc oui, parce que quand on va à l'inspection, on nous ressort les grands thèmes: en ce moment c'est le harcèlement et la radicalisation, par exemple. […] quand on va en réunion, on nous brief bien et en bons petits soldats que nous sommes nous devons mettre en place; sauf qu'on n'a pas toujours les outils, que parfois les outils sont créés, bah d'abord après il y a les décrets d'application, les circulaires, bah voilà, après chaque département, chaque collectivité, chaque institution va réadapter et mettre au goût de son fonctionnement "

[628] Original quotation: "on a été très mauvais nous l'année dernière sur la chasse à l'absentéisme [...] et pour le coup cette circulaire nous a posé un cadre et on essaye nous en équipe de tenir le cadre"

all the more necessary as they "were very bad at tracking absentees last year" (*ibid*.). As a consequence of their past failure, they "did not get the label *REP* +", which comes with more resources than the label "*REP*". This "defeat" had a negative impact on cohesion among teachers (see Part 3). It also affected the "school life" department insofar as they "lost" an educational assistant. Most stakeholders, as Caillé notes, considered this to be unfair:

> *"We should have gotten the REP+ label, because we are working in a context of worse social conditions. However absenteeism figured among the criteria for the label and regarding this indicator we told ourselves that we had not been careful enough, we had not worked on these indicators enough" (Caillé, p. 11)*[629].

As part of the general competition for resources, schools have to pay special attention to official indicators, which are crucial when it comes to decisions over additional resources.

From an organisational perspective the management of absenteeism following a strict procedure as laid out by the "texts" also appeared as a "solution" that came at the right moment while the school seemed to be "overwhelmed" by troublemakers and "difficult cases". Caillé seems to agree with the current zero tolerance policy. She indeed thinks that the school became more lenient in their handling of troublemakers over the last few years when trying to keep the difficult cases in the school system. "We went through three very difficult years with very difficult, very particular profiles of kids, be it in SEGPA or in the ordinary track […] (Caillé, pp. 4-5)[630]:

> *"Ms C.: -And at that point we concluded that we could not tolerate anything and everything.*
>
> *Q: -Does that mean that you became more lenient?*
>
> *Ms C.: I think that this year, well at the moment we are fighting against absenteeism so each week we enforce roll calls. …as soon as we see a kid who seems in trouble we don't hesitate to organise an educational commission to*

[629] Original quotation: " Ça aussi été une analyse de notre part parce que y a eu une classification en REP et REP + et le collège L. a eu la REP + alors que nous, normalement c'est ici qu'on aurait dû avoir la REP + parce qu'on a des indicateurs sociaux bien plus importants mais dans les points en fait retenus pour la classification y avait de l'absentéisme et là on s'est dit on n'a pas été assez vigilants on n'a pas assez travaillé sur ces indicateurs-là […] "

[630] Original quotation: "On a eu trois années très très difficiles avec des profils de gamins que ce soit en SEGPA ou en ordinaire très très durs, très particuliers".

rectify things but also for the family to realise that the young person is drifting or doesn't have the codes the school expects" (Caillé, p. 5)[631].

This attitude is reminiscent of the "zero tolerance" policy that was introduced in New York in 1994 under the motto "*Quality of life* policy" (de Maillard & Le Goff, 2009)[632]. For certain authors, such as L. Wacquant (1988, 2004), such a policy is part of a longer evolution of the strengthening of discipline mostly targeting working-class and immigrants fragilised by the retrenchment of welfare and precarisation of work. In fact, many of these principles are reminscent of the political construction of the problem "school absenteeism" in the 1990s in France (Douat, 2010).

At La Balikan, discourses associated with the strengthening of reaction to and control of nonconforming behaviour (absences, lateness, misbehavior in class) also illustrates the implementation of a management culture that can be combined with a dominant vision of education based on principles legitimating the superiority of affection over authority, self-fulfilment over dressage, negotiation over constraint (Troger & Ruano-Borbalan, 2009, p. 57). Indeed, I have shown in part 1 how the involved actors discourses emphasise "meetings", "negotiation", not punishing but "finding the solution together"; solutions are also presented as not "punishing" but "comprehensive". Indeed, the management culture prefers "voluntary adhesion over the disciplinary sanction", "incentivisation over imposition", "reward over punishment", "responsibility over surveillance" (Gaulejac, 2009, p. 121). Mrs. Caillé justifies the uselfulness of "reactive" zero tolerance measures by "making students' maladjustment" "official"quickly. In the commissions, the professionals, together with parents and students,

[631] Original quotation: "Et là on s'est dit on avait un grand seuil de tolérance […] et du coup on s'est dit on ne peut pas supporter tout et n'importe quoi. / Q : -et du coup, là, vous avez abaissé le seuil de tolérance ?/-je pense que cette année, là on lutte contre l'absentéisme donc toutes les semaines on pointe et du coup ouais… parce que dès qu'on voit qu'il y a un gamin qui dysfonctionne on hésite pas de faire une commission éducative, la commission éducative ayant pour but de réajuste les choses mais aussi que la famille prenne conscience que le jeune est en train de déraper ou n'a pas les codes que l'école attend de lui et du coup ça implique les parents ".

[632] De Maillard & Le Goff (2009) elaborate on the diverse re-appropriations in the different political, institutional and cultural national and local systems of the zero tolerance policy. They recall the "several principles and action methods" the original zero tolerance policy is based on: (1) the restoration of the rule of law and security by responding systematically to any criminal act threatening the public order, however minor it might be. (2) A reorganisation of the police apparatus (more human resources, merger of different police groups) and its management (objective-oriented, decentralisation, responsibilisation of the local leadership) (3) the implementation of computer statistics on delinquency rates in order to identify the 'hot spots', target police action and assign quantified objectives for each local unit (*op. cit.*, pp. 657-658).

“analyse” the situation together, “everybody hears the same things” and it can be observed that “some of them succeed in reintegrating the codes” (Caillé, pp. 5-6) [633].

The official procedure against absenteeism favours individual case management, implying “finding the most adapted answer” for each student to “limit” or to “put an end to” regular absences. Depending on whether they face health related, social, or learning issues, students are orientated to either the nurse, the social worker or the principal advisor. This method reinforces the division of educational work and the isolation of the different departments, notwithstanding the fact that the official guidelines against “*décrochage scolaire*” promote a “comprehensive approach”.

In cases of repeated absenteeism with no improvement in sight, the professionals can decide to organise the above-mentioned educational commission. Rousselet explains that schools differ as to whether they emphasise the “punishing” or “educational” aspects of these commissions. But generally, she does not seem to be completely convinced of their positive effects because there remains “lots of things that you’ve got to take into consideration” (Rousselet, p. 9)[634]. The “solutions” that Pointeau refers to illustrate a vision of the issue “*décrochage scolaire*” in terms of “unsuitability”. They are based on the “externalisation” of dropouts (internships, externalised classes) or aim to compensate underachievement with a vocational orientation or homework support. Yet, some research has shown students’ and parents’ hold negative perceptions of these “solutions” because of their punishing character and the fact that they further stigmatise their differences, difficulties or/ and “inability” to cope with the general curricula[635]. However, this aspect does not seem to be acknowledged by the professionals who defend its non-punishing nature. Besides these institutional solutions, Pointeau can also resort to her network of welfare institutions, where some of the “families are already known”. Eventually, the local school authority is refered to when the

---

[633] Original quotation : “ […] moi je me dis que pour le jeune c’est officialiser ses dysfonctionnements et c’est aussi peut-être considérer ses difficultés aussi parce qu’en fait le punir souvent c’est pris comme une injustice parce qu’il n’analyse pas parce que quand on pointe les choses, qu’on analyse […] tout le monde entend la mm chose au même moment et là on voit bien qui y en a qui reviennent en fait, qui arrivent à réintégrer els codes, donc je pense que la réactivité en fait c'est ’e qu’il faut avoir ”.

[634] Original quotation: “Ouais remotiver l’élève. En fait tu vois tu vas passer par la méthode douce en remotivant l’élève en étant dans la discussion, dans l’aménagement, ça va pas fonctionner. Tu vas être quand même dans la sanction en disant bah ouais y a quand même la loi, tu as moins de 16 ans enfin voilà […] t’es inscrit tu dois venir. Voilà t’es dans la méthode douce, dans la méthode forte. Mais y a plein de choses qui rentrent en ligne de compte aussi “ (Rousselet, p. 9) ”

[635] M. Kherroubi, M. Millet and Daniel Thin have developed this aspect by investigating the relationships between parents and teachers and social worker regarding the externalizing measure and special classes “classes-relais” (2005).

“comprehensive” approach of the school professionals has been vain: the commissioner deals with it “more severely” (Pointeau, p. 4)[636].

It seems that both approaches (punishing/educating) targeting the individual (and not the organisation) are not perceived as fully appropriate responses.

In the literature, we can find a set of specific factors influencing phenomena of incivility and violence in school contexts, which “seem to be particularly linked with the concentration of students failing at school, with a disadvantaged and migration background in segregated schools” (Duru-Bellat and van Zanten,2007, pp. 87-88). While policy-makers always focus on students, these authors emphasise systemic and organisational factors, as well as lacking cooperation with different groups within the local school environment. In this respect, cases of violence are particularly numerous in “schools where conflicts within and between educational staff are not regulated by the principal”. For some schools, the research has shown that the “implementation of a model of case management based on 'a social supervision' consisting of negotiation according to a case-by-case basis, watchful control and lower demands in terms of school performance has had a negative influence on the reduction of violence and incivility. In addition, “other factors likely to increase the conditions for the emergence of violence are teacher turn over, their low commitment to the educational work and the absence of collegial regulation as regards discipline” (*ibid*.).

In fact, professionals’ criticism towards the zero-tolerance policy regarding “assiduity” echoes these conclusions and shows that the tracking of absenteeism at La Balikan has little to no effect on the phenomenon of absenteeism. The following section addresses the time-consuming aspects of this measure, the limits of the individualisation of solutions, and the feeling of playing a fool’s game.

4.2.2.1.1 A time consuming measure

Rousselet does not seem to be fully satisfied with the way the school copes with “*décrochage*

[636] Original quotation : “ L'idée de cette commission n'est pas de sanctionner mais de proposer des solutions: pour certains ça va être qu'on se rend compte qu'il y a certaines difficultés, on va parler d'orientation avec la conseillère d'orientation; pour d'autres on va peut-être faire un aménagement de l'emploi du temps avec, pour les plus grands, des temps de stage possibles, pour d'autres on a mis en place de demande d'entrée dans le dispositif classe-relais […}...Enfin voilà, on essaie de mettre un peu des choses qui sont censées limiter l'absentéisme. Si après ça l'élève est toujours absent il y a le signalement à l'inspection et si ça perdure bon voilà...il y a un deuxième signalement à l'inspection, qui je crois traite les choses de façon plus durement, voilà. En parallèle moi je travaille beaucoup en lien avec des collègues du conseil départemental, savoir si elles connaissent déjà la famille, s'il y a déjà d'autres difficultés qui n'ont pas été identifiées pour nous...Enfin, souvent c'est des familles connues”.

scolaire", even though she only enforces existing rules. Indeed, the tracking of absenteeism "is good and it is very bureaucratic" (p. 12), "it's purely numbers"; "but this is what the local educational authority [*Inspection académique, IA]* asks us to do" (Rousselet, pp. 10-11) [637]. As for the school social worker, Mrs. Pointeau, she may see more students because of this measure (students she "would not have seen otherwise", Pointeau, p. 3), but she considers roll calls and the registration of absent students less efficient than individual reports of teachers, primary school teacher, social structures, etc. regarding specific students. Students who have been labelled "dropouts" because they illegally skipped school do not necessarily need her support.

These critcisms refer to the time-consuming nature of this measure. Lists can be "absolutely impressive" and their dissection in commissions can take a very long time. Sometimes it takes hours for school staff to sort out and assess the lists, in particular if mistakes were made during the reporting of absences (teachers or educational assistants who forget to register or update certain students' absences, or students who are reported absent while they were on official excursion) *(Field notes report, 28/01/2016).*

The "inefficiency" of some meetings makes additional meetings necessary. Some actors try to escape from this time-consuming activity by limiting their participation to the cases that concern them personally, as illustrated by the nurse's initiative: "and I said to the social worker: 'maybe you should meet with the principal advisor of education if you are in charge [of pre-sorting the absences] and then I can see whether there is a health problem or something else, but if it's about counting absences..." (Caillé, p. 11)[638].
The tracking of absenteeism frustrates the principal advisor of education Ms. Rousselet who considers this to be a practice that leads to countless meetings ("*réunionite aigue"*). In turn, they do not have enough time for their collective projects (see previous section): "Yesterday, the first educational commission began at 9am and it ended at 12pm. Well, it lasted the whole

[637] Original quotation: "-Alors euh... comment on l'aborde [le DS]. Ben... euh… bah on l'aborde… déjà en commission de suivi des élèves. C'est là-dessus… bah je sais pas si t'es... 'fin… on l'aborde ouais… c'est là qu'on demande aux commissions avec les différentes personnes, l'infirmière, l'assistante sociale, cheffe d'établissement, adjoint puis CPE. […] Moi je sors les absences sur le mois. Des élèves qui ont plus de quatre (accentue) ½ journées d'absence non justifiées dans le mois. […] ouais. C'est purement des chiffres. Mm. C'est purement des chiffres parce que… ouais c'est purement des chiffres, c'est quatre… Mais c'est ce que te demande l'IA. C'est bien… dans les textes c'est bien explicité quoi. Dans les textes c'est quatre demi-journées d'absences […]" (Rousselet, pp. 10-11).
[638] Original quotation: "et moi je disais avec l'AS il faut peut-être qu'avec [la CPE] vous vous preniez un temps là-dessus si c'est vous qui travaillez ça moi après je peux voir si y a un problème de santé ou autre, mais de savoir si ça a été régularisé ou pas… "

morning and was of no use" (Rousselet, pp. 5-6)[639]. Beyond its time-consuming aspect, the tracking of absenteeism focused on individual case management is not perceived as really solving the problem of "*décrochage scolaire*".

4.2.2.1.2 Limits of the individualisation of solutions

For Mrs. Pointeau, the school really proceeds "on a case-by-case basis" (Pointeau, p. 5) but the problem is that there are not "as many tools as there are solutions" (Pointeau, p. 8). Institutional measures are unequally efficient: "for some of them, we think it will work. For others, we know perfectly well that it's just hot air and that the student will continue being absent [...]"; because solutions have to be found for each individual case, sometimes professionals suggest a measure that they know is not "compatible with the situation, but it is the one, which is the less distant from what [they] observe" (*ibid.*)[640].

This also applies to the "fiche de suivi", which should incite students to meet their obligations. Rousselet finds that this measure would be more effective, if it not only penalised students but also rewarded their good behaviour. She explains how she highlights teachers' "positive" feedback in green, "things to improve" in orange, and negative feedback in red. This procedure gives her the opportunity to play another role as the one of the "Black Peters" (see previously)[641]. However, like any other measures that address students' negative participation, "it will work for some" while for others "there won't be any impact" (Rousselet, pp. 8-9)[642]. For some particularly "desperate" cases, for whom the school "cannot offer anything", traditional measures, such as the exclusion or the moving up to upper classes, are interpreted as a way to "pass" these cases onto "colleagues" (or other structures). By saying

---

[639] Original quotation : "C'est heu…… y a une réunionite aigue [rit]. Non, j'ai jamais vu un établissement où y a autant de réunions quoi ! […]Tu vois hier, tu vois tu fais une réunion, à neuf heures quelque chose comme ça.. 9h15 la première commission éducative, on a fini il était midi quoi. Bah t'as toute ta matinée qui est fichue".

[640] Original quotation: "Et c'est vraiment au cas par cas en fait... il y en a on se dit oui ça va marcher, il y en a d'autres on les met en place on sait très bien que c'est du vent, et que l'élève continuera d'être absent [...] " (Pointeau, p. 5)/ " Alors ça ne veut pas dire qu'on aura bon à chaque fois, mais ...c'est peut-être enfin là qu'on cherche à coller à une situation particulière. Le problème c'est qu'on n'a pas autant d'outils que de situations. Donc, des fois on va se retrouver quand même à proposer un dispositif qui sera pas complètement en adéquation avec la situation, mais bon c'est celui qui est le moins éloigné de ce qu'on observe en tout cas" (Pointeau, p. 8)

[641] As I already explained, students have to take their tracking sheets with them and any professional of the school is able to write on it and report their bad or good behaviours.

[642] Original quotation: "La fiche de suivi peut-être plus parce que…. t'es dans la valorisation" "[…] et donc je pense que ça a quand même plus d'impact la fiche de suivi tu vois… Bon pour certains ça n'aura aucun impact parce que voilà quoi".

this, Rousselet identifies with the institution and the professionals who "do what they can at their level" (Rousselet, p. 13)[643].

Mrs. Pointeau's testimony shows that the professionals can be overwhelmed by the procedure focused on single-case management and how they develop their own isolated strategies. The procedure does not solve the problem of "silent dropouts" nor does it help to understand certain attitudes, such as the fact that students seem "turned off" but still "like" or even "prefer" to be at school, which is, for some, "a better place than home". Still, institutional expectations – presence in class, learning commitment, school performance - are not met. Notwithstanding, school remains a place of socialisation where students can meet their peers and experience juvenile life (Dubet, *op. cit.*); and students who reject the classroom continue to be in contact with "other adults", such as the educational assistants. The procedure of single case management appears as a method to keep the "school boat" afloat while it seems to take on water from all sides as the year progresses:

> *"So we work, let's say, the whole second term on the tough situations, we suggest solutions, for some of them it works, so we handle other cases and in April – May there are new situations popping up. This is always the same, in every school: And why are you only talking about this student today? Well, actually we were so busy with the others who were loud, rebelling, absent, who popped up through one indicator or another that finally, [we did not see] this student who has difficulties too […]" (Pointeau, pp. 13-14)[644].*

[643] Original quotation: **"**Donc ce gamin-là bah l'école n'a rien à lui proposer. On fait… je suis pas en train de critiquer du tout parce que je suis dans lot. On fait ce qu'on peut à notre niveau. Mais là il est en 3è, il est passé... peut-être qu'il est arrivé en 6ème ici il n'y a plus de redoublement bah on le fait passer on le fait passer. Moi des fois j'ai l'impression que vite on le fait passer comme ça c'est des collègues de lycée qui vont le récupérer. Mais qu'est-ce que tu veux qu'on fasse? il va pas faire trois 6èmes pour pouvoir bien parler français".

[644] Original quotation: " on va avoir une partie des élèves qui vont venir parce que c'est mieux d'être à l'école qu'à la maison finalement, parce que c'est leur lieu de socialisation. Je pense que c'est leur raison première en fait. Parce que sinon ils vont être hors histoires [rires]. Donc ils viennent mais du coup … soit ils sont éteints. Donc on en a qui errent dans les couloirs qui vont venir souvent à l'infirmerie, ou viennent me voir. Qui vont trouver des excuses ou discuter avec les educational assistants. Quoi vont être en lien avec l'adulte. Y en a qui vont être au fond de la classe et qui vont plus rien dire non plus. Y en a qui vont mettre un bazar de dingue. Et puis les autres qu'on va découvrir qu'au mois de mai en se disant: bah. Il fait pas ses devoirs? Ah bon? En fait l'année moi je la vois un peu comme ça, c'est cyclique. En septembre c'est la mise en route. En octobre y a déjà les grosses situations qui étaient déjà bouillonnantes qui ont explosé donc on a déjà passé notre temps à les gérer tout en se mettant en route. A la Toussaint on est vraiment dans ... le repérage. On a identifié, ça y est. Donc on travaille j'ai envie de dire tout le 2ème trimestre parce que c'est des situations de fond, on met des solutions pour les uns ça marche alors on passe à d'autres et au mois d'avril mai y a des nouvelles situations qui sortent du panier mais quel que soit le type de l'établissement c'est toujours comme ça. Et comment ça se fait que vous nous en parlez seulement aujourd'hui de celui-là? Bah en fait on était tellement préoccupé par les autres qui faisaient du bruit, qui manifestaient, qui n'étaient pas là, qui ressortaient par un indicateur ou par un autre que celui-là bah finalement il est en difficulté, ça a pas l'air d'être génial à la maison ou alors les parents sont en capacité de mais n'ont plus trouvé le levier pour déclencher un changement de motivation, de comportement. On

The professionals admit their powerlessness to deal with students who, in the past, would have been admitted to vocational tracks. They seem to mourn the time when students could be sent to train for a job through early vocational tracks[645]. According to them, it was a good solution for dropouts "who behaved poorly at school, who were not diligent, nor on time." (Pointeau, p. 10). Caillé argues that "actually, these young people already wanted to enter the professional world and one told them that they were not old enough to work and well, they ended up leaving school" (Caillé p. 11)[646]. The fact that these professionals focus on such an old institutional practice aiming to rid themselves of the students who are not meeting the requirements of general education, shows their difficulty or limited capacity to think of other solutions. The prejudice according to which "underachievers" at school would automatically be good manual workers is rooted but greatly debatable (Decreau, 2019).

The extension of compulsory education from 16 to 18 and a common curriculum that centres on school subjects (Troger op. cit., pp. 39 ff.) exclude those "who don't have the drive nor the capacities", as stated by the nurse (Caillé, p. 11)[647] to meet the requirements. Blaming "wrong" political decisions ("There were things that existed, and which do not exist anymore, and it was a failure to remove them. (Pointeau, p. 10)[648]), Caillé and Pointeau wished vocational classes still existed. Although research has shown that drop out rates were even higher in vocational classes and schools (Dardier, Laïb, & Robert-Bobée, 2013) and orientation in (pre)vocational education is very often experienced as a disqualification (Tauraud et al., 2015). Nevertheless, such comments question the (ancient and rooted) priority given to school subjects over manual work (Decréau, 2018), which may work as an excluding

---

est juste dans la difficulté scolaire ou un élève qui s'éteint. Ils font pas trop de bruit ceux-là et du coup ils apparaissent en avril mai et on n'a pas le temps de mettre en place tout ce qu'on voudrait. [..]Donc on a des nouvelles situations tout le temps. [..] Moi en fin d'année scolaire je me fais une liste de tous ceux qui sont à voir dès septembre pour prendre des nouvelles par exemple. […] De ne pas attendre qu'il y ait quelque chose qui va mal pour reprendre des nouvelles. [..] "

[645] With the integration of lower secondary tracks through the reform of the *Collège unique*, pre-vocational classes have regularly been (re)created and revoked to handle underperformers and prepare their orientation in vocational education. Some pre-vocational classes remain in apprentice training centres (*Centre de formation des apprentis*, CFA). In 2005 a reform plan to generalize pre-vocational classes in the lower secondary education through a progressive discovering of professions based on work release training but under school status. This "junior-apprenticeship" measure originally addressing 14-year-olds has been partly revoked in 2008 to address 15-year-old young people "who want to enter the vocational education or present adjustment problem at school" [https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F232], official website, 29.09.2018.

[646] Original quotation: " en fait ces jeunes-là avaient déjà envie de rentrer dans le monde professionnel et quelque part on leur opposait qu'ils n'avaient pas l'âge d'y aller et bah ils ont fini par quitter l'école ".

[647] "et qu'on arrête quoi, il y a certains ils n'ont pas l'envie, ils n'ont pas le niveau [….]"

[648] Original quotation: "il y a des choses qui existaient et qui n'existent plus et on a eu tort de les enlever. On a eu tort ".

process.

In his article entitled "the development of vocational education, a solution to school failure?", Zamora (2012) shows how vocational education might indeed offer a beneficial framework providing "underachivers" with more favourable material and psychological conditions to "reinvest" and "learn" basic knowledge and overcome school failure. However, this is undermined by the the "re-schooling" of vocational education/teaching[649], as well as current employers' practices and recruitment strategies, which pay more attention to degrees. Effectively, vocational education did not solve the issues at the lower secondary level.

The German "model" of dual education is often admired in France. However, it is also critised regarding its capacity to provide with apprenticeship places (Ebner & Uhly, 2016), to prevent ruptures –particularly for the youths with migration backgrounds - or fight against racism, to democratise access to general and further education and the dual system (Tucci, 2015, p. 48). So it is still confronted with challenges – even if it seems to ease the economic integration of young people with migration backgrounds (King and al. *op. cit*. p. 44). Perhaps, in both cases, one should reflect on the relations between school performance and social selection (Cahuc et *al*. 2001) and provide the conditions for equal access to general and vocational education (including for performing students).

For many professionals at La Balikan, the school policy against "*décrochage scolaire*" appears as a loosing battle in which each one plays one's role regardless of the numerous critics they express.

4.2.2.1.3 The control of absenteeism : A fool's game

In the context of a zero-tolerance policy against absenteeism, "the capacity to identify breaches is the major issue, to the extent that not knowing about the absences seems to be worse than absences themselves" (Douat, 2010, p. 103), and their motives. In reality, the practitioners describe a procedure where everbody plays tricks on everybody else. Mrs. Rousselet concludes that foucusing on the tracking of absences is just a way to turn a blind eye on the many expressions of dropout, hiding behind the fact that such a measure is an

[649] This means that vocational curricula make a bigger place to formal knowledge and classical pedagogy (*ibid*., pp. 86-87).

official demand ("I think it's a bit like, burying one's head in the sand, but […] it is what you are asked for, it's the law (Rousselet, p. 11)[650].

It becomes a legal obligation to track down students, and there seems no other solution than looking the other away. The "silent dropouts", "who are not registered by this or that indicator" (Pointeau, pp. 14-15), can still be identified by experienced practitioners who have worked long enough at the school to know the students and maintain relations with them (Rousselet, pp. 11-12). This is not the case at La Balikan. Most practitioners are only there for a short period, except for the nurse, who after six years at the school has a broader picture of the students and the families.

Rousselet politely suggests that this might be a way to not face the reality of the immensity and complexity of the dropout phenomenon, which challenges the institutional authority of every school professional and representatives of the state[651]:

> *"even if we send a letter to the parents to remind them of the principle of school diligence, parents have the right to say: 'well yes but everything is justified': 'sickness', 'sickness', 'sickness', 'personal reasons', 'family reasons', ehm…, 'no motive', but it's justified well… so the local school authority taking that into account, stops counting much because everything is justified. So actually I find it necessary to do something like this in a school, for sure. To answer the school commissioner, to be where we should be, to conform to the rules, to fit in the frame" (Rousselet, 2016, pp. 17-18)*[652]

[650] Original quotation: "Voilà. et c'est exactement ce qu'ils disaient à la réunion l'autre fois, enfin ça a été abordé rapidement, que t'as les décrocheurs bruyants, [...] c'est ceux qui vont poser des problèmes de comportement en classe, qui vont se faire remarquer […] et puis tu as les décrocheurs silencieux qui vont avoir quelques absences mais pas tant que ça, et puis qui sont complètement perdus, qui se font tout petits en classe, on les entend pas mais ils sont là sans être là." […] mais comme on dit à la commission ah non eux on va rien faire ce sont des élèves qui ont oubliés de justifier […]. Mais peut-être que dans les élèves qu'on mentionne pas, peut-être qu'il y en a qui sont là en cours, qui viennent, qui ont quelques absences, mais qui sont là mais qui sont présents physiquement mais qui sont complètement absents quoi. Je pense qu'il y en a et puis je pense qu'il y en a qui ont plein d'absences, qui justifient car ils savent qu'il faut justifier, qui vont te mettre des " maladies " à chaque fois ou " raisons personnelles ", que la loi n'oblige pas à avoir un certificat médical […] enfin, je trouve que c'est un peu jouer à l'autruche. Mais c'est pas que là, c'est ce qu'on te demande, c'est la loi".

[651] She relates about a similar anecdote that happened as she was working in a similar school in a Parisian disadvantaged area; two employees from the local school authority told them about the fact that there, they were not able to "keep it up", so when parents did not commit with the summons, they did not "chase them up": "Enfin voilà. Parce que de toute façon ils disaient à l'Inspection Académique là, ils avaient pas les moyens de suivre de toute façon, il y avait tellement tellement d'absentéistes, tellement de signalements que... ils avaient pas les moyens de suivre donc quand les parents se présentaient pas ils ne relançaient pas quoi. Ca faisait tant de dossiers en moins quoi" (Rousselet, p. 8).

[652] Original quotation: "Même si nous on envoie un courrier aux parents rappelant l'assiduité scolaire, les parents peuvent très bien dire : 'bah oui mais enfin tout est justifié quoi : " Maladie " " maladie " " maladie ", " raisons personnelles", " raisons familiales", heu... "sans motif " mais c'est justifié donc… voilà. Donc le Rectorat après vis-à-vis de ces familles-là n'a pas tellement de poids pour pointer du doigt puisque c'est justifié. Donc en fait je trouve que c'est nécessaire de faire ça dans un établissement c'est sûr. Pour répondre à l'IA, pour être dans les clous pour répondre aux règles tout ça dans le cadre; mais après moi je trouve que c'est aussi un peu pour se

Mrs. Pointeau, the school social worker underlines that some students skip class so frequently that they do not even remember that they were absent. They will just come up with a random excuse.

In case of repeated and non-justified absences, parents receive a formal letter from the local (devolved) educational authority as a "reminder of the law". These letters also threaten families with a fine, which might "frighten them" (Rousselet, p.9). Sometimes, however, "it doesn't" and students continue to skip classes (Rousselet, pp. 12-13). The school social worker, who is regularly exposed to poverty, does not "believe" in the efficiency of such a measure. Beyond the fact that "fear" might be counterproductive and drag families further down, the time needed for such bureaucratic measures in addition to the "distance" between some families and administrative procedures widens the distance between both entities while the institution "makes a fool of itself": "It's nonsense" (Pointeau, p. 8)[653]. However, judging from the "misuse", by certain families, of state benefits and scholarship, Pointeau would prefer some "activation" principles, through which some families could be "educated" to "understand how our societies work": if the student effectively comply with obligatory schooling and their duty of "diligence" (see above), benefits and scholarships could be attributed or not (instead of before the school year is finished, as it is the case currently: "a kind of reward", Pointeau, p. 9)[654]. In other words, according to this position, parents in precarious situations could be effectively blackmailed, in line with the discourse describing unemployed people on social welfare support "who expect everything to be done for him/her". This would reinforce relations of domination that might not really contribute to improving relations between the institution and families.

The disciplinary way of dealing with "negative participation" tends to dominate while the creation of moments that bring together school practitioners, students and their families are

---

protéger parce qu'on passe à côté de d'autres élèves et si vraiment on faisait comme faisait M. George, sans filtrer, bah en fait tu fais que ça quoi. [..]"

[653] Original quotation: "Moi je n'y crois pas. En fait c'est pas des solutions, c'est de la réprimande en fait, donc pour moi à part déclencher de la crainte et de la peur, ou faire rire les familles parce que c'est très administratif, et que les familles elles sont loin de ça, bah voilà... […] En ce qui concerne notre population ici, c'est sanctionner financièrement des gens qui ont déjà pas de moyens entiers financiers, parce qu'ils vivent des allocations donc ça peut faire des grosses sous-sommes, mais ces grosses sous-sommes sont à mettre en face de familles nombreuses, donc le ratio il est quand même faible. Donc c'est peut-être les mettre dans d'autres difficultés encore. Je ne suis pas sûre que ce soit très pédagogue de dire à un enfant ou à une famille: 'bon bah votre enfant il ne va pas à l'école, donc on va vous mettre une amende […]' ; c'est une sanction qui arrive des mois et des mois après, donc le truc a eu le temps de bien s'enkyster ou pourrir. Il n'y a pas de sens. C'est pas en lien".

[654] Original quotation : " votre enfant a bien été présent donc pour l'année d'après on vou sdonne des bourses qui vont vous aider à financer sa scolarité [...] une espèce de travail-récompense [...] à un moment donné c'est comme ça que fonctionne notre société, vous comme moi on travaille pour avoir un salaire, on veut les amener à ça en fait [..] c'est un peu la carotte qui fait avancer l'âne mais bon [..]".

rare or inexistent, especially measures inviting them to reflect collectively about the issue "*décrochage scolaire*". Yet, these moments might be useful, as this testimony suggests:

> *"So well, we try to offer joint events, not all the time, of course, but the idea is that they see the school differently, that our message gets through other ways. So at the end there is some echo at home of what is done at school. Maybe this is the idea. (Pointeau, p. 15)*[655]

How can we summarise how school pratictioners perceive the phenomenon of absenteeism? Firstly, that tracking of lateness, absences and case-management based on individual issues to cope with school expectations, rules and norms is not seen as really efficient. Secondly, criticism is voiced with different intensity according to how integrated and institutionally acknowledged the practitionners are, illustrated on their roles and status. I will particularly show this when highlighting the virulence of critics expressed by the educational assistants and assistants for students with need of special support, who are educational subordinates.

According to the measure focusing on absenteeism and misbehaviours, problematic students are "distributed" between the principal advisor, the nurse and the social worker. Thereby, these professionals are entitled to an active role in the division of institutional educational work. Furthermore, they work together with the school head, which symbolically increases their professional recognition. The fact that they are able to express their criticisms against some teachers' practices in these meetings which include the school head, principal advisor, school social worker and nurse speaks for it. Still, their criticisms regarding the current focus on absenteeism and individual case management, as well as certain teachers' ways of doing needs to be put in relation with the value they place on teamwork and co-leading projects with the teaching staff.

Their discourses highlight the role of personal beliefs and the introduction of thinking frames which are shaping policies and measures addressing unemployed people. They also show their difficulty in thinking beyond the traditional distinction between the "fit" and the "unfit" students for general upper-secondary education. Their discourses also highlight their belief that their capacity to influence of the way we think about absenteeism is rather limited. In this respect, these professionals tend to locate the "dropout issue" outside the school.

[655] Original quotation: "Voilà on essaie de proposer des temps de partage, c'est pas tout le temps évidemment, mais l'idée c'est qu'ils voient l'école autrement, que notre message passe par des biais détournés. Pour qu'à la fin il y ait écho à la maison de ce qu'il se fait à l'école. C'est peut-être ça l'idée".

4.2.2.1.4 Missing the institutional self-reflection, blaming the outside

For Mrs. Rousselet, Mrs. Pointeau and Mrs. Caillé, reasons for "negative participation" of students are to be firstly found outside the school.

As for the first aspect, practitioners blame parental "incapacity", "educational resignation" or "lacking authority" (Rousselet, p. 9, p. 12, p. 19; Pointeau, pp. 5-6; Caillé, pp. 5-6, pp. 14-16). "Cultural" or "linguistic" issues are said to prevent parents from understanding school norms, rules and expectations (Rousselet, p. 8, p. 10, pp. 15-16, p. 21; Caillé, p. 7, p. 8; Pointeau, pp. 5-6, p. 10). They also explain their lack of adhesion (Rousselet, p. 13, Pointeau, p. 5) or even their opposition (Caillé, p. 3). The simple fact of living in such a *quartier* (spatial dispositions, models of socialisation, behavioural codes oppose to the state, illegal trafficking) (Pointeau, p. 2, p. 9; Rousselet, p. 9; Caillé, p. 9), speaks for parents' and students' unability to comply with school norms and expectations. So both parents and students are presented at the same time as conscient rebellious actors, and as victims of unfavourable conditions: multiple biographical ruptures (Caillé, pp. 9-10); social, familial and economic precariousness (Caillé, p. 1, p. 6; Rousselet, p. 15, p. 20; Pointeau, p. 3, p. 6, p. 8, p. 12). Some testimonies even refer to their awareness of the restrictive aspect of their beliefs about "dropouts": indeed, they know that they are "dropouts" in all social milieus (Rousselet, p. 10; Pointeau, p. 15); in La Balikan, students have a high feeling of injustice (Caillé, pp. 5-6) or defensive attitude (Rousselet, pp. 2-3) – against which school may be able to do something. Mrs.Pointeau even admits to mobilising "clichés" which, however, contain for her some truthful explanations (Pointeau, p. 6):

> *"This is what I mean when I say, "there is no dynamism: there is no parent who wakes up and sets an example. Maybe it is not their fault but…. And since those families – I'll refer to some clichés, it's not nice but it's my analysis – manage to have sources of income, either through social aid or other ways – I don't want to know how – but in this instance children see that other students can "have a phone, a TV" – because they have access to the cable network and everything - without working. So well when we try to tell them "you will want to have a job, earn your living" – we try to trigger some envy to move on. They respond: Why should I work? Because my parents have an apartment, we manage to eat, we all have a phone, a tablet", so for them the essential is guaranteed. So I'm not sure that it means something to them if we try to give them a boost. This, for me, is non-mobilization. So we ask the parents: "it would be great if you could make sure he goes to bed, so that it will be easier to wake up" – because those students go to bed very late. Well, there is no echo. We deal with families who live very precariously, who have half-European, half-native ways of living, who only understand every other word, well, I've got the feeling I'm drawing a*

caricature. But this is non-mobilization, this is it. So when we notice those indicators, we already know it'll be complicated" (Pointeau, p. 6)[656]

This extract reminds of the concept of "territorial ethnicity" (Lorcerie, *op. cit., see also part 3*). It highlights a subtle discursive shift of arguments explaining students' negative participation with reference to low parental mobilisation, bad educational habits, unemployment and "material idleness" (but "precariousness!") to the problematisation of "migration", "culture", ("otherness").

Some (timid) reflections imply, however, that the school could pay attention to certain phenomena and adapt its practices. There is a potential added value of a collective discussion in which these professionals engage in an institutional self-reflection on their practices and beliefs.

About to retire, Mrs. Caillé confirmed that the question of "trust" is very important in this school: "this is why I do not take any interns […] because there is already a large amount of mistrust towards adults" (Caillé, p. 10). Caillé can say that trust is a decisive element in the way students will apprehend their schooling and particularly parents' trust in the institution: "if parents trust the institution […] wherever the child comes from, they succeed […] this is really obvious" (Caillé, p. 8)[657]. However, the question of "trust" seems to be seen unilaterally and as an effort of the parents and students towards the institution while trust is a reciprocal phenomenon. For instance, professional turnover (or the way the school staff is regulated) and personal career plans may be in contradiction with the conditions favouring the establishment

[656] Original quotation: "L'autre partie c'est par exemple si on va repérer des retards constants le matin: on va dire "qui te lève, qui te réveille", on cherche à comprendre comment ça fonctionne à la maison. On s'aperçoit que l'élève doit se lever tout seul, puisque de toute façon, comme personne travaille, personne se lève, donc il n'y a pas de dynamique. C'est ça ce que j'entends quand je dis "il n'y a pas de dynamique": il n'y a pas de parents qui se lèvent et qui montrent un peu l'"exemple". C'est peut-être pas de leur faute mais ...et pourtant, ces familles-là -je vais rentrer dans des clichés c'est pas joli, mais c'est mon analyse...-ces familles-là arrivent à avoir des sources de revenus, ou par les aides sociales, ou par d'autres voies -je veux pas le savoir- mais pour le coup ça donne aussi l'image à l'enfant que "je peux me payer un téléphone, je peux me payer la télé -parce qu'ils ont tous le câble et le tralala" sans travailler. Du coup quand on essaie de leur dire: "tu auras envie d'avoir un métier, de gagner ta vie " -on essaie de déclencher une envie d'évolution. Du coup à quoi bon? Puisque mes parents, ils ont un appartement, on arrive à peu près à manger, on a tous un téléphone une tablette, donc pour eux l'essentiel est assuré, donc je ne suis pas sûre que ça fasse écho quand on essaie de les tirer vers le haut, en fait. C'est ça pour moi la non-mobilisation. Du coup quand on demande aux parents: "ça serait bien que vous surveillez l'heure du coucher, pour que l'heure du lever soit plus cohérente aussi" -parce que ce sont des enfants qui se couchent très très tard...bah, ça non plus il n'y a pas d'écho quoi. On est sur des familles qui vivent dans une très grande précarité, qui ont des modes de vie mi-européenne, mi-culture natale, et qui ne comprennent pas en plus un mot sur deux, enfin, j'ai l'impression de dresser une caricature. Mais la non-mobilisation, c'est ça. Donc quand on observe ces indicateurs-là, on sait que ça va être quand même compliqué".

[657] Original quotation: "[…] si les parents portent, font confiance […] l'enfant d'où qu'il vienne il réussit […] ça c'est vraiment flagrant. […]"

of trustful relations. Also, the professionals agree on saying that one scarcely sees parents (Pointeau, p. 6; Rousselet, p. 13; Caillé, p. 5) and while some are convinced that "school has no choice, it has to substitute for the parents" (Pointeau, p. 15).[658] This would be, in their perspective, a possible answer to the heavy economic, social, familial, affective, and educational precariousness some students experience, which they are not able to solve at their level (Caillé, p. 8). And Rousselet thinks that "today, school is asked to solve all societal miseries" and cannot "let everybody in"[659] (fieldwork notes, 10/01/2016). As if school should be preserved from the outside and world's troubles. But Mrs. Rousselet timidly suggests that "maybe we [the school] are not sufficiently involved in the *quartier*". Drawing on a previous experience in a Parisian suburb, she explains how they used to meet the parents outside school in diverse places (public spaces, local organisations). In that school, recruitment of school professionals better reflected the population's composition. For example, educational assistants and housekeepers could speak the languages of many inhabitants, which in many ways, eased contact between different groups (Rousselet, p. 14)[660].

Her testimony underlines the different positions and "ways of doing" in different schools, sometimes compromising their rules (parents coming "without appointment", for "little talks"). It also highlights the importance of a "professional mix" that mirrors the school population. Although, as I show below, in line with Charlot et al. (2002, 1999), the instrumentalisation of national, cultural, ethnic belonging does not solve the internal institutional and organisational contradictions which are supposed to support the claim for equal opportunities and general interest (Charlot, Emin, & De Peretti, 1999, pp. 173-174).

The "established" professionals are faithful to the institution, even if they are able to identify

---

[658] Original quotation: "Pour moi l'école n'a plus le choix elle doit se substituer aux parents; C'est comme ça que je le vois. Parce qu'il y a des parents qui font plus, qui ne savent plus faire, parce qu'il y a des parents qui abandonnent et … voilà. J'ai une vision assez négative de la chose. J'ai l'impression que le fossé se creuse de plus en plus".

[659659] These remarks happened after the meeting with the local street workers, mentioned in the second section.

[660] Original quotation: "Mais les parents venaient parce que… parce qu'ils arrivaient, 'tiens un tel m'avait téléphoné', [..] ils parlaient en arabe avec l'agent d'accueil, ou bien tu faisais un entretien, 'mais je parle pas français', bah c'est pas grave, est-ce que Tamsirle surveillant qui parle wolof est ce qu'il peut venir. Donc il venait faire l'entretien. Donc tu vois y avait pas plein de choses à mettre en place [..] parce qu'on avait un prof d'anglais qui était arabe, deux profs de français qui étaient arabes, le prof de techno qui était arabe heu… le prof de maths qui était arabe... les profs là ils décrochaient leur téléphone et hop ils parlaient avec les familles. Du coup y avait la barrière de la langue sans y avoir la barrière de la langue. T'avais toujours quelqu'un sous la main pour… voilà. Donc ils passaient, ils passaient pour te dire un truc... moi je voyais des parents, plein de parents dans la journée sans rendez-vous de pris, parce qu'ils venaient te voir, machin, tiens tu m'as appelé y a 15 jours et là je passais faire mes courses donc du coup... bah ouais ok d'accord, bah voilà, c'était comme ça. Puis on était énormément dans le quartier. En fait avec l'assistante sociale, l'infirmière, la principale et l'adjointe et les deux CPE chaque rentrée on allait dans toutes les associations de quartier".

institutional shortcomings and even admit, for some of them, mobilizing, in their discourses about the students and their families, stereotypes (but, like Mrs. Rousselet, stressing on the fact that she "is not racist", p. 13)[661]. I want to expose now the views of the "challengers", who tend to engage very critically with the school institution.

4.2.2.2 "Actually, it's terrible because myself, I am promoting a message that I, sometimes…well ; it's not that I don't believe in it but the fact that I became an educational assistant is rather telling […]"

While at school students should be convinced of the interest in committing to school and performing well and believe in the "meritocratic model"[662], educational assistants embody the obsolescence of such a discourse. Firstly, their education has made them aware of the many bias the meritocratic system entails (Duru-Bellat & Tenret, 2009, §15-16). Secondly, despite their diploma, they still fight for a professional recognition and socio-economic security. Their education as well as their experience make them particularly conscious of institutional shortcomings, in addition to structural inequalities.

For instance, Mohamed, one of the educational assistants, emigrated from Algeria to do his PhD in France. He is about to defend his thesis (in management sciences) and works part-time at La Balikan for the minimum wage. In April 2016, he added additional working time by taking on Sylvien's service, another educational assistant, who had been put on sick leave for "burnout" and "depression" according to his colleagues. From Mohamed's perspective, "one makes students understand here that they don't have good marks", "one instils defeatist discourses in them". He encourages them to give their best while students ask him from time to time why, with so many diplomas, he is working "here" as an educational assistant for 1000€ per month[663] (fieldwork notes, 09/05/2016). Mohamed is not an exception among the educational assistants in being highly qualified and struggling to find a job that would correspond to their education. All educational assistants have achieved a master's degree, some in social sciences and humanities that speaks for certain awareness of social questions but face precarious life conditions and no real perspective of professional recognition and

[661] Original quotation: "C'est pas péjoratif, c'est pas raciste [..] c'est rien du tout.. t'as l'impression juste de … plus être en France"
[662] As "a system based on the achievement of excellence, according to which the most deserving people get more advantages (titles, functions, honours…)" (Alpe and al., *op. cit*., p. 232).
[663] I will develop this point with the case of Zaoui at the end of this section.

evolution (see the beginning of the section). So, it is difficult for them to disseminate the institutional discourse:

> *"Actually, it's terrible because myself, I am promoting a message that I, sometimes…well it's not that I don't believe in it but the fact that I became an educational assistant […] is rather telling. Your message must be: 'well, you do have all possibilities open to you. Except that they are perfectly aware of the fact that this is not true; and it's very simple, when they ask me: 'what did you study' and I tell them I've got a master's but I'm an educational assistant, the message is distorted. They are far from being stupid. They are aware that with a master's you should have a job. The first reaction I get is: 'and you are here'? [..] Well, I don't know whether their vision is really distorted but it's sad. […] it is not exciting. So well, actually, if someone had shown me this during that time of the teenage angst: 'this will be your future' well… one must be highly motivated to get up in the morning" (Annie, p. 26)*

The trajectories of the assistants to the "student life" department are similarly precarious. Amadé sees relevant motives in this situation for dropping out of school:

> *"I've heard students with this kind of discourse as well: "what's the use of education, anyway, if you don't earn enough? My father he did a little training in construction and he earns more than you …." […] for sure it's not encouraging, it is this kind of example that makes people drop out as well (Amadé, p. 8)*[664]

As they suffer from a lack of (professional) recognition and inferiority, practitioners tend to blame the system first and foremost for causing phenomena of "negative participation" at school. They still aspire to implement more educational activities and/or take an active role in the definition of pedagogic approaches ("even those who just take this as an odd job, the thing that makes you want to do it, is helping the kids, it is the most reward part of the job", Thomas & Annie, p. 2)[665], but they are discouraged. Instead, they rather help students to "trick" in order not to be bothered by the system, for example regarding the control of absences: "We show them how to cheat on the system" (Thomas, pp. 10-11).

At La Balikan, we have already noted that educational assistants are charged with the bureaucratic treatment of absenteeism. They are the ones who collect the "pink notes" and report absences. The educational assistants also "inform" the parents with a phone call or a

[664] Original quotation: "J'ai entendu ce genre de discours aussi des élèves. De toute façon ça sert à quoi, puisque de toute façon vous gagnez même pas bien votre vie; moi mon père il a fait ça, un petite formation, aujourd'hui, dans l'habitat ou bien dans ça, et il gagne plus que vous hein...[…] ça ne pousse pas, c'est ce genre d''exemple qui fait décrocher aussi".

[665] Original quotation: "Même ceux qui passent juste comme un petit boulot le truc qui donne envie c'est quand même de s'investir avec les gamins, c'est quand même ce qu'il y a de plus sympa dans le boulot quoi"

text message that their children are absent from school and remind them of the subsequent procedure to follow.

Educational assistants are the professionals who, along with the "student life assistants" and Mrs. Fatima Zaoui (see below), interact the most with students both collectively and individually.

The educational assistants Thomas and Annie notice the human and technical failures of the procedure that tracks absenteeism on a daily basis. According to them, students notice these failures very quickly and eventually, this procedure does not fulfil its objectives, which is greater compliance to school rules and expectations, fewer absences.

> *"We started the year with a defective computer program […] it lasted a whole month […] students were not supposed to know. One one day we heard one kid saying to his peers 'anyway, their program doesn't work' and he regularly skipped classes" (Thomas, p. 5).*

When the spring term was around the corner, they felt overwhelmed with students' incivility and indiscipline while they were understaffed. They asked for a meeting with the school administration to draw their attention to the daily difficulties they were experiencing. The meeting did not lead to any action being taken. The following extract gives an idea of the content of the meeting, as well as of its dynamic:

"Madec nods and admits that a lot of teachers have been absent. Thomas, as the group speaker, mentions the students who are 'out of control', who refuse to stay in the study room preferring instead to roam the corridors. He mentions students who break the rules despite a regular sanctioning, incident reports and hours of detention piling up. He mentions students who arrive earlier, before classes actually start and do not want to go home because of difficult situations at home, students who wait 10 minutes so that their presence in class is refused (…) more and more students simply say 'no' to us. The principal advisor Rousselet agrees, admitting that students have been becoming more and more disrespectful: "so, well, we are becoming unfriendly as well, it's a vicious circle. Mohamed mentioned a lack of 'common practices' that contributes to the confusion of the perception of their actions. Madec's attention seems to be caught by Mohammed's words. Her next interventions focus on the need to have homogeneous responses and attitudes because, as she says, it's a 'common thing' that 'kids step into the breach' […]" (fieldwork notes, 17/03/16)

This extract illustrates the way the educational assistants want to make the head of school aware of their difficult working conditions, and especially point to the teachers who make this work harder: by distributing hours of detention, by being absent. They also point to organisational malfunctions, and how students are able to make a measure meant to reduce their absenteeism and lateness into a means to play truant without breaching the school regulations[666]. Their bureaucratic work does not give them enough time to deal with children. They speak of the negative results of the zero-tolerance policy, the inefficiency of sanctions, and students' strategies to avoid class. This in turn confines the eduational assistants to a disciplining role, which they are unwilling to perform. Meanwhile, if the principal admits that "a lot of teachers had been absent", she does not really question organisational malfunction prefering to focus on what educational assistants might do wrong, such as not having common practices and reactions in their interactions with students.

It is true that the subjective dimension of the relation between educational assistants and the students leads them to implement diverse relational strategies, where antipathies and affinities play a crucial role. This meeting is an illustration of how little importance is given to the educational assistants' feedback about organisational malfunctions and to their professional experience. Their frustration due to the lack of institutional support and recognition of their work, as well as their daily interactions with the children, have a direct influence on their perception of the phenomenon and issue "*décrochage scolaire*". They are likely to blame the organisation and the institution; whose settings are hard to move.

4.2.2.2.1 "Putting one's own house in order first"

Décrochage scolaire?

> *"There are so many ways to employ this term and still when they arrive [in the collège] you've got the impression they still have not embraced the idea of school" (Thomas, p. 26)*[667]

With these words, Thomas firstly implies the multiple dimensions of such a concept and phenomenon, and secondly, that it may refer to a general observation specifically concerning students in this school. However, instead of blaming students and their families, the

[666] The school regulation states that after ten minutes, students are not accepted to class and have to go to the study room under supervision of the educational assistants.

[667] Original quotation: "y a tellement de manières où on peut employer ce terme 'décrochage scolaire' et pourtant quand ils arrivent n 6ème on a l'impression qu'ils y sont pas accrochés à la scolarité quoi. Et il faut leur rappeler constamment que c'est obligatoire quoi".

educational assistants and student life department assistants emphasise the economic and social difficulties of families, and stress the role of the institution and organisational dysfunctions affecting the school climate and the classroom atmosphere ("We hide behind the fact; well, they come from quartier X, poor children. But actually, it has nothing to do with that", Annie, p. 18).[668]. They evoke defective relations and a lack of teamwork between the different staff members, a "teacher effect" in its positive but also negative consequences, the role of grading, the inefficiency of sanctions, and an old-fashioned approach to pedagogy ("nothing has changed" over decades, Boulin, p11). They also evoke institutional responsibility regarding management of orientation ("*cooling out*", "dead end" tracks, see above) and students' timetables, which are "badly" organised[669], teachers' absences, and compensatory measures "which only help those who are already holding on" (Thomas, p. 29, Amadé, p. 11). As for "linguistic and cultural" problems, their discourses tend to blame institutional and organisational settings, which automatically disadvantages newcomers or students with poor mastery of the French language: "So well, I put myself in their place, I arrive in third grade, barely able to read and write … obviously it will be complicated. Finally, I think we are creating the situations for the students to drop out. It's like, we go to school in another country, we should take notes in Chinese, well, do it!" (Annie, p. 28)[670].

Annie's testimonies refer to two different aspects. On the one hand, she evokes weak students who have reached the last grade of the lower secondary school but still have important shortcomings in reading and writing. On the other hand, she evokes newcomers (foreign children recently arrived in France), confronted with a new language, culture and school settings, and who are sometimes inserted into separate classes or structures. For these populations, current settings work as mechanisms of differentiation / exclusion, as school performance depends on "mastery of the language" (mostly in its written form)[671]. They point to institutional contradictions, for example the regulation of class repeating, which has not

---

[668] Original quotation: "et alors on se cache derrière le fait; bah oui mais ils viennent du quartier X les pauvres. En fait ça n'a rien à voir".

[669] I was not able to analyse how students' timetable or classes are organized. The only thing I witnessed was that at the end of the year, teachers provide the head of school with their "preferences", i.e. how they would like to have their timetable arranged: "When students see that, when they see their timetable well, they are pissed off. And if they are pissed off in September, don't dare to think that you'll have them under control before the year ends […] especially if meanwhile, the timetable changes" (Annie, p. 6).

[670] Original quotation: "En même temps je me mets à leur place, t'arrives en 3è tu sais à peine lire et écrire bah... ouais forcément c'est compliqué. Au final je pense qu'on créé les situations de décrochage. […] c'est comme si nous on allait suivre des cours dans un autre pays, fallait prendre des notes en chinois, bah vas-y fais-le!"

[671] "The language that one should master does not pertain to the ordinary communication but aim to participate to the appropriation of elaborated knowledge of which the written form is the principal vehicle" (Vigner, *op. cit.*).

solved the problems of underperformance on school trajectory and self-esteem. Indeed, since 2013, the number of students repeating a year has been drastically reduced in accordance with national guidelines. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the number of underperforming students has been reduced[672] (Merle, 1998, p. 568) but rather that they have been simply admitted to the next grade.

According to the educational assistants, the procedure of tracking absenteeism, in addition to being perceived as useless, seems at odds with the autonomy and "maturity" many students have gained in other social situations – as for example helping their parents to complete administrative forms (social aids, residence permits, tax returns). Because of the social, economic, and personal issues that affect many students, many students prioritise issues other than the bureaucratic regularisation of their absences. More virulently than their colleagues who are higher up in the school hierarchy, Annie and Thomas stress the above-mentioned "fool's game" aspect of the tracking of absenteeism, especially when it is well-known that students sometimes sign the pink ticket themselves –"even parents tell you that!"-, or make their parents sign tickets in advance (Thomas & Annie, 2016, p. 26).

> *Annie: "I end up telling them: 'you see, if you don't bring me the little pink note, which is in your school diary […] I cannot close your absence. I explain them that it might not matter to them, but for the administration, it does […] but if I put myself in their place, age 12, a piece of paper, you don't care! Your mother does not speak French, you fill it in, well, why do we care? It's like again playing the game of the official paper, but it's so far away from their realities… Some of them are even willing to play along, all their excuse slips are already signed but they don't bring them because they just don't care!*
>
> *Thomas: - well yes, you explain all these things to them. But actually the funniest is that you show our students how their system works, how to overrule it, how to thwart it; so finally they make their parents sign blank notes in advance and because the parents don't get it, well they sign. We are producing future fraudsters […] 'So well, actually you've done something wrong here but in fact, it's faster so ok'. And at that time, we have to lecture them while sometimes we kind of agree with them, well, we understand what they do, it's totally logical actually; but it should not be like this…*

[672] Between both PISA-studies in 2000 and 2015, the percentage of French 15-year-old students having difficulty in reading increased from 15,2% to 21,5 % (Fumel, Keskpaik, Salles et Verlet, 2016, in Viriot-Goeldel, 2017). The gap between the most performing and underperforming students is increasing as well as the influence of social determinism (OCDE, 2012, referred by *ibid*.).

Annie: - they live in a world, well, they are kids living in underprivileged areas […] a lot of them have quite hard lives and who are you to tell them to bring their pink note back. They get mad. And it doesn't concern them and it'll never touch them because they have a life outside, they translate their parents' tax return, they are far beyond that actually. They understood that this semblance of school is not that important actually. So finally, it's not completely the fault of the administration, it's also linked to the evolution of a society in which they are not the same children as 10-15 years ago; they are not children anymore" (Thomas & Annie, 2016, pp. 10-11).

From their positions, educational assistants have many reasons to see public education critically.

4.2.2.2.2 Disillusioned and critical professionals: "So well teachers, they are like us, they do what they can. However, I think that the institution still has some responsibility"

The educational assistants are subordinate employees who perform a public service but do not have the advantage of a secure job. Lack of recognition and weak integration in the institution as well as a precarious status might explain their critical attitudes towards "a closed system made of corporatist teachers and an understaffed student life department" (Julien, 2016, p. 10). Their observations and experiences of organisational dysfunctions and domination make them feel in solidarity with students ("those students need a school that works because their life is not that simple", Thomas, p. 5)[673]. They present themselves as the only ones "who really care" about the children ("and the higher we are in the hierarchy, the less we focus on children, which should be the principal objective", *ibid*.). Their experiences at work are in discordance with the idea, after the ideas of Condorcet, of a public authority responsible for realising the project of the Enlightment (Troger *op. cit*., p. 17), according to which education is supposed to be liberating and emancipating as well as accounting for justice when "human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". Since the public services seem unable to fulfil such an ideal because of bureaucratic dysfunctions, some employees even consider "sending their future children to private school" despite personal "convictions" about the public good (But it's like, difficult when we see how it works, like this" (Thomas, p. 15).[674]

[673] Original quotation: "c'est des élèves qui auraient besoin que le collège ce soit un truc qui roule parce que dans leur vie à côté déjà c'est pas simple quoi […] et plus on monte dans la hiérarchie et moins les enfants sont le problème principal".

[674] Original quotation: "quand t'as 20 ou 30 ans et que tu bosses là et bah tut e dis mes enfants ils iront dans le privé; ça dégoute un peu du système scolaire. [...] quand on voit de l'intérieur tu te dis mais moi je veux pas que mes enfants soient soumis à un système comme ça. Et c'est quand mm dur car de par mes convictions on s'est

The public school is also a source of disappointment for Julien. Before working at La Balikan, he was looking for a professional (re)orientation. One of the reasons he applied for the job as an educational assistant was to familiarise himself with the educational system and perhaps become a teacher. At the end of the year, he has reconsidered his project and decided to return to his job as a travel guide. He also blames the "responsibility" of the school institution for being unable to organise teamwork bringing together its different components, instead maintaining their compartmentalisation where each of them "do what they can":

> *"So, well, I think it's quite a sectarian milieu, pretty closed-minded, and I expected to find more openness from the institution and from the teachers. So, well, teachers, they are like us, they do what they can. However, I think that the institution still has some responsibility for this. It's kind of an immaterial person, but the fact remains that, collectively, the institution has a responsibility*" (Julien, p. 4)[675]

If the institution can be defined "as an ensemble of values, norms and common practices of certain groups of individuals who organise and structure stable relations" (Alpe *op. cit.*, p. 197), the last testimonies lead to a questioning of institutional conditions enabling such stability. At school level the diversification of profiles, status and "professions", accentuated by the internal, horizontal and hierarchical division of educational work and different working times is unsuitable ground for the establishment of a common vision of (public) education.

At La Balikan, professionals who "don't find their place" still aspire to contribute to the transformation of the institution and contribute different views and discourses, such as the mainstream subject of "diversity". Julien, for example, put into perspective how structural policy shapes "priority education" as well as the categorisations school produces internally (the "deafs", "the segpa") He admits that he does not like the term "communitarianism" but still admits that "Turks" and "Kurds" tend to form distinct groups (which also refer to current geopolitical tensions).While many teachers refer to the rhetoric of the "school mix" as the ultimate solution, Julien's opinion addresses the current structure of inequality: "there should be fewer rich people and fewer poor people rather than school mix. I think that this is the

jamais dit moi mes gosses ils iront dans le privé […] pace que ça devrait marcher, le public. Faut faire confiance à notre gouvernement. Mais c'est un peu difficile du coup surtout quand on voit le fonctionnement comme ça".

[675] Original quotation: "Oui, bah voilà je trouve que c'est un milieu assez sectaire déjà, c'est assez fermé quoi, et je m'attendais à rencontrer beaucoup plus d'ouverture de la part de l'institution et des professeurs quoi. Alors les professeurs, ils sont comme nous, ils font ce qu'ils peuvent quoi. Par contre je trouve que l'institution elle a quand même une responsabilité quoi. C'est une espèce de personne immatérielle, mais il n'empêche que collectivement l'institution elle a une responsabilité".

point" (Julien pp. 10-11)[676]. In fact**,** structural inequalities have been increasing alongside the influence of school titles on people's social and economic integration (Observatoire des Inégalités, 2018, Dubet and al., 2010).

The assistants for students "with special needs" in charge of realising the concept of inclusion also show some scepticism as regards the categorisation of children they look after – which can even be counterproductive to supporting them:

> *"Well I'm working in the SEGPA and they end up here because there was this handicap, for example language for foreign students. They get oriented here directly.. But they have the capacity - if they knew the language, they would be able to catch up with the ordinary programme. What can we do about this? Not much. We notice it but after all, the decision is made. The system has orientated him and finally he stays here because he has no other choice (Amadé, p. 20)*[677]

> *"There are people who are not, who are not disabled, [their orientation in special classes] doesn't pertain to their psyche and mental health, it rather pertains to cognitive problems linked with… societal, detachments for multiple reasons, and it's not really linked to dyslexia or… they are a bit dyslexic. But in fact, a handicap that would be recognised, approved by the medical staff, that's a whole different ballgame, well (Boulin, pp. 20-21)*[678]

The analysis of how these actors thought as "educational support" or even "complementary" to the teaching activity, are positioned with regards to the concept "*décrochage scolaire*" is useful for reflecting on how the school, as an institution, gives them a voice, or rather silences them. At La Balikan, their positioning highlighted their restricted influence on the development of school policy and understanding of education and educational relations despite their will and feeling of their legitimacy to do so. Reconsidering existing approaches

[676] Original quotation: "C'est absolument à travailler parce que du coup […] je pense qu'ici les classes favorisées sont sous-représentées et les classes défavorisées surreprésentées quoi. Je pense pas que ce soit vraiment un panel, par exemple, des statistiques de la ville sur la question quoi. Donc ouais carrément il faut faire plus de mixité etc., après franchement j'en sais rien. Il faudrait peut-être juste moins de riches moins de pauvres, que de la mixité scolaire quoi. La question elle est peut-être plutôt là, je trouve. […], parce qu'ils sont mixtes entre eux mais il y a beaucoup de ...je n'aime pas ce mot là mais il y a beaucoup de de ... de communautarisme quand même, tu vois. Il y a les Kurdes d'un côté, les Turcs de l'autre, il n'y a pas trop d'Asiatiques ici, les Sourds d'un côté, les Segpa d'un côté, donc il y a plein de petits groupes et tout mais c'est une mixité".

[677] Original quotation: "Moi par contre dans le SEGPA ils se sont retrouvés là dans le SEGPA parce qu'il y avait ce handicap, par exemple pour des étrangers, de la langue, pour directement les orienter hop...ces pauvres élèves ont la capacité de, en apprenant d'abord la langue, de suivre des cours général. […] Donc il y a ça aussi. Alors nous par rapport à ça qu'est-ce qu'on peut faire? Pas grand-chose: on le note, mais après la décision elle est comme ça; le système l'a orienté et finalement il reste là parce qu'il n'a pas d'autre choix".

[678] Original quotation: " C'est des gens qui sont pas, c'est pas des situations de handicap, ça relève pas de leur santé psychique et mentale, ça relève plutôt de problèmes cognitifs, liés à ... Sociétal, décrochement, pour multiples raisons, et c'était pas forcément lié à dyslexie, ou ...ils sont tous un petit peu dyslexiques. Mais réellement un handicap reconnu, approuvé par la médecine, ça c'est une autre paire de manches hein".

about "negative school participation" would imply organising a "real" inclusion of these subordinate professionals and reconsider traditional hierarchies but also its institutional possibilities. Meanwhile, "the kids are nice, but often angry"(Boulin, p. 3).[679]

4.2.3 An examplary portrait. Thinking the problem "*décrochage scolaire*" in its interactive dimension.

The following portrait of Fatima Zaoui who is responsible for "security and prevention" at La Balikan, summarises the interplay between educational structures and individual agency as regards the production and perceptions of an institutional category and social phenomenon: "*décrochage scolaire*". More specifically, it refers to the way the legitimacy of institutional power is put into question. Her trajectory can help us understand the distrust students hold towards a discourse about education that promises social justice, self-fulfilment and economic security. The experience of professional isolation as well as the specificity of her relations with students based on a "sense of belonging" as regards their origins rooted in the history of European colonisation, some biographical elements and her residence in the *quartier*, explain the particularity of their close relations. In none of the students' interviews I was unable to find anyone who was talked about with so much affection as Mrs. Zaoui.

Zaoui's long and emotional interview reflects her disillusion about education and the hopes placed in a social and economic ascent as she thought she had completed a most successful educational career. Although she is professionally isolated at the school, it is not the school itself but policy makers who are at the heart of of her anger. Zaoui, or "Fatima" as everyone calls her, shares with many students much more than a similar biography and knowledge of life in the *quartier*. She shares with them a consciousness of exclusion and disqualification.

4.2.3.1 "You may have heard things about me, people told you 'oh, we don't like her' […] 'she doesn't work', you may have heard this. But they did not walk in my shoes ; they did not judge me well"

In 2016, Mrs.Zaoui was 41. She was embarking on her fourth year at La Balikan as an "assistant for prevention and security" (APS), a status which was recently created for schools

[679] Original quotation:" Bah je trouve que les enfants sont gentils. En colère, beaucoup".

with a particularly "deteriorated school climate" (Zaoui, p. 1)[680]. Her contract is renewable annually for a maximum of six years. While these professionals are supposed to help "improve the school climate" (Education Nationale, 2012), foster "*togetherness* and lower the number of punishments, sanctions, exclusions, violence", her role seems concretely restricted to individual case management of students' "maladjustments" (Zaoui, 2016, p. 3)[681].

A few minutes into the interview (in what can be best described as a monologue[682]) she reveals her own frustration with regards to a perceived failure of social and economic upward mobility. She mentions the "difficulty" in "finding her place" in the division of the educational work, which is already divided between many other practitioners. "One must be careful not to step on one's colleagues' toes" (Zaoui, p. 4)[683]. This act is all the more difficult to maintain, given the precarious conditions of her employment status (low wage, temporary and part-time contract).

Fatima Zaoui is isolated in the professional school landscape. This was confirmed during the different interviews and observations with other actors, from Mr. Jardin who has worked for eight years at La Balikan as a French teacher, and admits that he "didn't know much about her …and never thought about the relation" he could have with her (Jardin, 2016, p. 4)[684] to Mrs. Pointeau, the social worker, who "doesn't work much with her…" (Poiteau, p. 12)[685] and Mrs. Madec, the school principal, who wishes that teachers and "Fatima would work together more closely" as regards the measure of "exclusion inclusion"[686] because it "could be interesting for the teachers to go to Fatima and ask how it's going" (Madec, 2016, p. 8)[687].

---

[680] 500 posts are created in 2012 for particularly difficult schools ("les établissements les plus sensibles") - (MEN, 2017).

[681] Original quotation: "améliorer le climat scolaire, d'améliorer le vivre-ensemble et de faire baisser le chiffre des punitions, des sanctions, des exclusions, de la violence…"/ "Moi mon travail il est plutôt dans la gestion individuelle des élèves; C'est à dire que c'est quand un élève dérape, quand un élève dysfonctionne, quand un élève va pas bien, je le prends en charge".

[682] I scarcely intervened during the interview, as if she knew the questions in advance, for example about her role in the school, the story of her biography, the relations with other colleagues, and her understanding of the issue "*décrochage scolaire*".

[683] Original quotation: "Et donc un peu de tout ça fait que voilà c'était difficile à trouver sa place, une entité et une identité professionnelle car il ne faut pas aller sur les bancs de touche des collèges […]".

[684]Initial quotation: Q: "Est-ce que tu vois un peu ce que Fatima fait ? /J:- non pas du tout, c'est vrai que j'ai aucune visibilité là-dessus. C'est vrai que je ne me suis pas interrogé non plus sur ce lien".

[685] Original quotation: "Et comment je travaille avec elle.. bah pas beaucoup. On se croise plus qu'on ne travaille ensemble".

[686] Students are excluded from the class and the ordinary school routine (breaks, etc.) but remain in the school in the remote room under the supervision of Zaoui.

[687] Initial quotation: "Il faudrait qu'il y ait un lien qui se fasse entre le professeur qui a exclu de son cours et même les autres professeurs dans le travail à donner, et puis de savoir et bien comment, avec Fatima, et de savoir et bien le professeur irait voir Fatima, et bien voilà je voudrais qu'il fasse se travail là et une fois que Fatima

Zaoui is a former top-level athlete who obtained her PhD in 2005 in sports. She still gives some classes as a teaching assistant and athletics instructor at the local university. Her wish was to become a lecturer and researcher at the university, but she failed to obtain the certification after two attempts. Her narrative occasionally points to a feeling of unfairness although she does not dwell on it: "I considered that I had a good scientific record but I was not co-opted"; "I was a bit frustrated because I satisfied all the conditions"; "I found it a bit unfair" (Zaoui, p. 4). She eventually "gave up", saying that it was "her destiny, that's all". Afterwards she worked for the university "monitoring centre for student life" where she "mainly dealt with statistics" and "wrote reports". It was not "her thing". She missed working in "the field". Thanks to an official validation of her experiences, she qualified as a "specialised educator"[688] three years later (pp. 4-5). Three years later, she got her current post at La Balikan. In the meantime, she cumulated jobs, such as "cleaning lady" where she actually met many of the students' mothers and had to "hide her doctorate" (p. 10). Today, as a single mother, she has to work different jobs in order "to provide for her two children" (p. 17).

As the the interview progressed, she became louder and angrier. Her anger and frustration were mainly directed at the "Ministry of Education" (p. 3, p. 5, p. 6, p. 9, p. 12, p. 17, p. 19), her employer in one role or another "for 20 years" but which "doesn't give her enough to live properly" (p. 12, p. 15, p. 17). As regards the precariousness of her professional life, she considers that she has not been fairly rewarded with in terms of the effort she invested in gaining her academic and professional qualifications. Her frustration is further exacerbated by the low status that her job has in the division of the educational work as well as in terms of decisional power and power of initiative. It is difficult for her to distinguish herself from the educational assistants, who formally have a lower position. Indeed, if her job differs, in its functions and qualification requirements, from the work of the educational assistants', they both share the same precarious status: temporary contracts that pay minimum wage and which are renewable each year for maximum period of six years. Like her colleagues, she expressed resentment and bitterness towards the teachers. She pointed to the privileges they enjoy when compared with her own situation and denounced practises of "opportunism" (a "cushy job"),

---

travaille avec l'élève ce serait intéressant que le professeur aille voir Fatima et demande alors comment ça se passe".

[688] Le "diplôme d'Etat d'éducateur spécialisé" like it is referenced by the MNE, consists in training professionals to accompany people with "special needs" in the daily life and support their "integration" in the society.

which undermined the idea of educational "vocation". She claims that teachers put their own interests before that of the children:

> *"they don't care, they have their diploma, their qualifications…and all these children will end up at the job centre" / "Here they are, paid three times more than I am, with holidays, with this and that. They have their thing, their promotion, their little private insurance company, and I am struggling to pay everything on my own. I'm sorry. So [the school] doesn't even pay for our lunch meal whereas we are working during the lunch break. Well, if you like, I'm still motivated but it is limited now", p. 18*[689].

As it is the case for many of the educational assistants and assistants to the student life department Mrs. Boulin and Mrs. Amadé, this frustration prevents her from giving her best ("I will finish my contract… but I did not give my best because the state did not give me much" (Zaoui, p. 17) [690].

Zaoui did not participate in the numerous and diverse meetings I sometimes observed. She was not in the weekly commission for students' follow-up either. If she has a seat on the school board (*conseil d'administration*), she did not take it up, just like the educational assistants (except in the last one, to vent their anger). As she says in her interview, she considers all these meetings as "blathering", which she no longer attends "because finally, they don't change anything" (Zaoui, p. 12)[691].

I could observe that the relations were not good between her and the majority of educational assistants. Zaoui was accused of allowing students to use their mobile phones in the "*foyer*"[692] or "offer students tea" when they were "supposed to be in for punishment". One can make different hypotheses to explain her attitude and how others see her: Zaoui may use a different pedagogy to establish a dialogue with the students. She may want to show some

---

[689] Original quotation: "[…] c'est plus un métier de vocation. C'est un métier entre guillemets pour certains de planque. […] c'est plus du tout la vocation de l'enfant qu'on veut faire. Ils s'en foutent, ils ont leur diplôme ils ont leur formation, ils ont leur truc. Et tous ces gamins-là qui vont se retrouver au pole emploi. […] Ils sont là; payés 3 fois plus que moi, les vacances scolaires, ceci cela. Ils ont leur trucs leurs avancements, leur petite mutuelle, et moi je suis en train de galérer à tout payer à côté. Je suis désolée. Donc même pas le repas on nous le paye alors qu'on est sur notre temps de travail. Alors moi si tu veux la motivation je l'ai mais voilà limitée maintenant ".

[690] Original quotation: "Je finis mon contrat... voilà. Moi j'ai pas donné le meilleur non plus de moi-même parce que de toute façon l'Etat ne m'a pas donné aussi. Moi j'en veux pas forcément au collège. Moi j'en veux pas au collège c'est que depuis 20 ans je suis dans l'EN je suis toujours pas titularisée".

[691] Original quotation: "des blablablas de réunions auxquelles je ne vais même pas parce que finalement ça n'avance pas […] ".

[692] A separated room with music and a soccer table, mostly open over the lunch break and under the supervision of Zaoui.

autonomy and distinguish herself from the educational assistants, whose job essentially deals with discipline and enforcement of rules. This is her way to assert a certain degree of freedom from the rules of an institution which she thinks has not integrated her but instead treats her unfairly. Zaoui wants to signal that she is aware of the bad atmosphere insofar as she mentions the "people", who say "bad things about her". "Those" people, however, have not "walked in her shoes", "they" do not know she has "endured", which makes her go "berserk" when she tries to reconcile herself to the fact that despite her PhD she only earns 1000€ a month (Zaoui, p. 12)[693].

The example of Fatima Zaoui is relevant of the "effect of instruction" on the internalization of the norm of justice as framed by the meritocratic ideology (Duru-Bellat & Tenret, 2009, §15-16). She is particularly critical. She refers for instance to Bourdieu to blame on the school institution as an instrument of domination of "always" the same populations. Notwithstanding, she is in a delicate situation since her role consists of motivating students to attend school. She has to be particularly inventive when students confront her with her own case, which seems to cast doubts on the meritocratic system. She recalls an anecdote where she told a student that he may not get rich or hold any high social rank but he might be able to "choose" his work, unlike "not like your father who didn't have a choice about working on construction sites", "who comes home exhausted" and with a "backache" (Zaoui, p. 9). However, is this discourse actually working? Some of her reflections suggest that in reality it does not.

Zaoui's office is situated in the entry hall on the other side of the educational assistants' office. The door is always closed, and students have to knock. No one seems to know if, at any given moment, she is in her office. Students often ask, "is Fatima here?", "can I go to Fatima?" The common answer from the educational assistants is, "I don't know, knock on the door and check for yourself". Sometimes when passing the office, I saw lots of students inside and it would have been really interesting to see what was happening more closely.
In answer to her professional isolation and failed social and economic integration and mobility, she posits her proximity with the students, illustrating the Goffmanian concept of

[693] Original quotation: "Bon ici, je sais pas peut-être que t'as eu des échos sur moi, les gens ils t'ont dit: oh, on l'aime pas, je sais pas elle bosse pas on t'a peut-être dit ça. Mais les gens ils ne se sont pas mis à ma place, ils m'ont mal jugée. Parce que s'ils savaient en fin de compte que moi je suis obligée de faire certains trucs et que moi finalement dans ma tête je peux pas me contenter de me dire j'ai fait un doctorat pour gagner 1000€, je vais péter un plomb dans ma tête".

"reversal of the stigma"[694] as a way to avert the exclusion and social disqualification (Gruel, 1985). Indeed, she creates an advantage from her biography, life experiences and origins (over other professionals) that enables her to understand and deal with the students and their families better than anyone else. It is a central reason for the special bonds between herself, students and their families (p. 9, 10, 12, 16, 17-19):

> *"… beyond that, I'm much closer to the students and teachers don't like it … […] well, is there some kind of jealousy, some kind of ownership maybe? Is that some kind of, finally…. I don't know… well, because the students always say "Fatima, Fatima, Fatima". I think there is some form of jealousy on the part of certain people here. But they do not know that I've got a pied-à-terre in the quartier, I know the families and I go to the same quartier as the parents, I am in the same places, hence necessarily I know their parents and everything. So finally there is some link I've got with the outside world in addition to being in the school […]" (Zaoui, p. 16)*[695]

In this regard, students and Zaoui seem to be united against a system they see as excluding them.

4.2.3.2 "This is why I can understand the kids, because of what I've experienced."

I could observe that students appreciated and interacted with Mrs. Zaoui in a different way than with the other professionals. Zaoui emphasises this proximity, giving herself a reassuring role for the students, who can find "an ally" in her: "I feel like the big sister here […] the grandmother, the mother of the school"[696]. She interacts with them in a way that might irritate other professionals, particularly when she shows some signs of cordiality and complicity in moments when they would expect a more severe attitude or a homogenous enforcement of school regulations (see previously). Nevertheless, in comparison with the other professionals Mrs. Zaoui seems to be "special" in a positive way in the eyes of the students. (see boxed text).

---

[694] Goffman E., 1963. — Stigma, Prentice Hall. (French translation and publication: Stigmate, Paris, Ed. de Minuit, 1975).

[695] Original quotation: "Après moi je suis beaucoup proche des élèves et ça les enseignants n'ont pas trop […] Alors est ce que c'est une forme de jalousie, est-ce que c'est une forme de posséder? Est-ce que c'est une forme finalement de… je sais pas... voilà ... parce que les élèves et tout ça c'est "Fatima Fatima Fatima ", je pense qu'il y a eu un peu de forme de jalousie de certaines personnes ici. Mais ce qu'ils savaient pas c'est que moi j'ai un pied à terre dans le quartier, que je connais les familles, je vais dans le même quartier que les parents, que je côtoie les mêmes endroits donc forcément je connais leurs parents et tout. Donc forcément moi y a du lien que j'ai à l'extérieur du collège en plus d'être dans le collège ".

[696] Original quotation: "moi je me sens comme une grande sœur ici, c'est-à-dire comme une éducatrice de dire voilà, la grande mère, la maman du collège… " (Zaoui, p. 18)

Students' perspectives about Fatima Zaoui:

Bruno, in the 3ème, is famous for skipping school regularly. Both of his parents are ill. He lives in the quartier. He "knows" Fatima, "everybody loves her here" because "she is the only one who really listens to them": "We often see her in the quartier, we play soccer together, we do a lot of things with her, outside of the school and everything. Everybody loves her [...] we talk about a lot of things" (Bruno, 2016, pp. 18-19)

Faïda (3ème) gives the same message - she tells me that she "gets on well with her. She is very kind. She is very kind Fatima. She understands us better. [...] she walks in our shoes. Sometimes we are late and for sure we are wrong [...] and she says so. She tells us to stop and everything and after that we stop. Because she is kind and she understands us, when she tells us to stop, then we stop immediately. […] she understands us Fatima. It's like she has grown up like us. Like us she once was in our shoes. So I don't know how to say it. […] we can laugh with her and we can tell her about our life, simply, while the others they start to be aggressive and tell us, « no, it's not our business » ; while Fatima she speaks to us like this and tells us about her life and we like it..." (Faïda, 2016, pp. 12-13)

*Lisa and Irina (3ème) say Mrs.Zaoui "is nice but when she has to be severe, she is severe (L). "She doesn't need to take the school diary, this is good" (I) (NB: in the school diary ("*carnet de correspondance*"), teachers report detention hours among other things). (Lisa&Irina, 2016, p. 19)*

« Everything goes well with her [...] She understands us. It's like she grew up on the street and so... while the others... (R) "we are on the same planet" ("elle a les mêmes délires") (M) "yes, actually, the way we think... she thinks the same [...] for example, when we are excluded from a class and we try to explain to her, she understands, she walks in our shoes. While the other supervisors... well..." (R) "They always put the blame on us" (Roukia & Maëlis, 2016, pp. 16-17)

These examples show that Mrs. Zaoui is particularly appreciated by the students. Zaoui talks and plays with them outside of the school, they meet up in the *quartier*. In return, she seems to benefit from a certain legitimate authority: students like listening to her and her "story",

they accept being lectured by her. A student, speaking for her classmates, says that they "immediately stop" when she asks them to stop doing something she considers wrong. Indeed, Mrs. Zaoui "listens" to them, hears their "versions" about an incident with other professionals in the school, "understands" them. That the students mention their need to tell their "version" of an incident which could be differently interpreted. On the one hand, it might suggest a need "to be heard" and "listened to" and measures whilst acknowledging students' opinions might be lacking. On the other hand, it could be related to the "injustice" thematic precedently mentioned by the nurse while students often tend to contest the *fairness* of school judgements and sanctions. The above mentioned study carried out by the United Nations Children's Fund (2016) shows that young people between the age of 6-18 years from underprivileged areas "have the feeling that they are not entitled to the same rights as the others very early" (Serge Paugam *in* Fache, 2016).

I already mentioned the analysis of Charlot and *al*. about the trend to recruit educational assistants according to their socio-ethnic profile "to manage the 'civic education' of these inner-city problematic youth. The pacification effects of such an approach can only encourage decision makers to continue along this path" (Charlot, Emin, & De Peretti, 1999, p. 174); although the "privatisation" of institutional authority raises many questions, beyond its consequence "in the long-term" for the values school is supposed to embody, such as legitimate violence, general interest, and universality against the singularity of individual belonging (*op. cit*.). For example, delegating the regulations of deviance to (subordinate) employees who share similar characteristics with students does not address the structural reasons for deviant behaviour at the institutional level, nor the reasons for a "disappointed relation to citizenship" by these young people who have been undergoing several processes of social, economic, political disqualifications (Castel, 2007).

From Zaoui's perspective, her migration background played a significant role in her recruitment: "it was an affirmative action". Her multiple qualifications, on the other hand, were not important. Mrs. Zaoui has Moroccan origins "but was born in France" (p. 16). She speaks Arabic (p. 17) and lives in the *quartier* (p. 8). For these reasons, she is frequently asked by the school principal and her deputy to support communication between school and families (p. 17). She also seems to be considered as a useful intermediary and facilitator between the "*quartier*" and the school[697].

[697] The precedent year, many students did not participate in the "socialization stay" gathering all new students and the teachers in a third place for two days. The intervention of Zaoui, who "personally called the families",

Zaoui likes to feel particularly "useful" (p. 5) in this district's school, even though, by her own admission, she could be even more. She enjoys working with young people who are "difficult", "hard to put in boxes" ("*incasables*"), who have "multiple problems" (p. 4), are very "agitated" and, for many of whom, "school has no meaning" (p. 7)[698]. She draws parallels between her experiences of unfairness and her frustration, as well as her lack of motivation and disengagement (p. 9, p. 12, p. 17, p. 19) and students' relations to school: "if we want them to invest in ... we should truly appreciate them" (p. 12)[699]. "This is why I understand the kids, because of my own experiences [...]"[700] (Zaoui, p. 17).

Her recruiters might have thought that, because of her profile, Fatima Zaoui would be able to "better" access and build stronger connections to the La Balikan children, and as such act as facilitator between them and school expectations, or find better arguments to convince them of their own interest in investing in school and learning. However, what do students think when she talks about her degrees (PhD production, books, articles ...)? Might it be counterproductive and reinforce their feelings of exclusion since even with these qualifications, Zaoui hardly earns a living and remains at the bottom of the hierarchy?: "I speak about myself often, I show them my books and diplomas, they are here in my drawer, I show them to the children and I speak to them" (Zaoui, p. 18)[701]// "[they] often they ask me: 'but Fatima, if you had been called Géraldine, and you had a doctorate, would you be here today'?" (p. 10)[702].

Together, they oppose the institution's assumed racism and more generally, of society through their geographic and socio-economic marginalisation. For Zaoui, who refers to mechanisms of "reproduction" elaborated by P. Bourdieu and J.-C. Passeron (1964, 1970), "*décrochage scolaire*" results from this organisation of domination over families particularly with migration backgrounds "who don't have an educational culture" and do not have the material conditions to support their children's education contrary to "teachers" who also "have the method". Moreover, many local families succeed in becoming economically independent and

---

enabled to make all students participate this year (-except two, three students put on sick leave; an incident reported by the deputy (Georges, pp. 5-6)).

[698] Original quotation: "Je trouve que ... ici le problème qu'on a c'est qu'on a des élèves qui sont agités. Qui ne mettent pas de sens à l'école. Pour eux l'école n'a pas de sens, n'a pas de signification".

[699] Original quotation: "Si tu veux que les gens se donnent, c'est comme les élèves aussi. Si on veut qu'ils se donnent à certaines… voilà. Prenons-les à leur juste valeur tu vois aussi, de pouvoir aussi voir les choses qui font que et travaillons vraiment […]".

[700] Original quotation: "c'est pour ça que je comprends les gamins parce que moi-même ce que j'ai vécu […]"

[701] Original quotation: "Souvent je parle de moi, je leur sors mes bouquins, je leur sors mes diplômes, ils sont là dans mon casier je leur montre je leur parle …"

[702] Original quotation: "Souvent ils me le disent: mais Fatima si tu t'étais appelée Géraldine, et que tu as un doctorat est-ce que tu serais là au jour d'aujourd'hui? ' ".

socially acknowledged through profitable family-run "plumbing firms", which is a "pre-ordained destiny" for many young boys: "[…] and as long as we are following such a pattern, we will be in what Bourdieu calls 'The Reproduction', the 'Heirs' (Zaoui, pp. 8-11)[703]. She refers to the need to implement other pedagogical approaches for certain students and to her wish to implement active projects for those who "go around in circles in class". However, she gave up as a consequence of the absence of future professional prospects within the school. Furthermore, what would be the point in encouraging students to engage in further studies if in her experience, having a PhD is worthless? Especially if you aspire to work in a field other than that in which you specialised:

> *"I would like to implement lots of projects. I wanted to implement …. Measures of accountability, to find partners for students to be more […] like Emmaüs, Secours Populaire[704]. Make them do things like this instead of being sitting in a class, going around in circles. [..] So I told Madec and she said ‚yes, yes' but … at the same time, it's frustrating to think that we're going to implement things we won't be able to follow through. We are just dealing with the most imminent problems. We are implementing occasional things but in some years, we will be in the same situation as these people[705], like, what are they going to do with us? In which box should we fit in? Especially, you know that when you are doing a PhD it's really narrow, very limited, meaning that if you are an expert of this thing and not of this other thing, but really of this thing. You're hyper specialised in your field so if you don't find any job in this field well, your PhD is worth nothing, you can tear it up, throw it away, trash it "(Zaoui, p. 19)[706].*

Here again, she identifies with the children, who are waiting to be "put in a box". Like her - and contrary to the Bourdieusien assumption of the internalisation of one's "legitimate" domination -, students are aware, according to Zaoui, of mechanisms excluding them from a positive educational success and upward social mobility:

---

[703] Original quotation: "[…] Et tant qu'on sera dans ce schéma-là, on sera dans ce que Bourdieu appelle 'La Reproduction'; 'Les Héritiers'".

[704] These are charitable organisations.

[705] Possibly referring to the young people school is excluding, with no qualification and unemployed.

[706] Original quotation: "moi je veux mettre en place plein de projets. Je voulais mettre des... mesures de responsabilisation, d'aller trouver des partenaires pour que les élèves soient plus […] au Emmaüs, au Secours Populaire. Leur faire des choses comme ça au lieu d'être ici dans une salle à tourner tu vois? Faire des trucs comme ça... [..] Bon j'en ai parlé à madame Madec elle m'a dit oui oui oui... bon en même temps. Bon je vais le faire. Mais en même temps c'est frustrant de se dire qu'on va mettre quelque chose en place et que nous on va partir et qu'on va pas voir ça dans quelques années. On est en train d'essuyer les plâtres. On essuie les plâtres et tout, on fait du ponctuel du machin mais nous dans quelques années on sera dans la même situation que les gens là en train de se dire bah qu'est-ce qu'on fait nous? Où, dans quelle case on se met? Surtout tu sais bien quand on fait une thèse c'est hyper serré, c'est hyper limité, c'est-à-dire que tu es spécialiste de ce truc-là pas de ce truc-là pas de ce truc là mais vraiment de ce truc là... tu es hyperspécialisée de ton domaine alors si tu trouves pas dans ce domaine-là qui est hyper rikiki bah ta thèse elle vaut rien, tu la prends tu la déchires, tu la mets à la poubelle".

> *"So well I think that today, given the situation in France, they know that anyway, even if they are going to study… there is a little fatalism, so to speak, they accept their position telling themselves that anyway… I call this elimination, auto-elimination. They auto-eliminate themselves knowing that anyway they are destined to fail, or that anyway they're going to fail more than the average person, because we know it very well, sociologists have shown it, if you are called Abdelhakim, you've got fewer chances of find a job than if you're called François. And why are CVs anonymous? And why do we consider eliminating the last name from the CV? So we know it, myself I had this in mind when giving my children their names. Because I know the statistics. There is this fatality, this burden they carry with regards to their existence, where they come from" (Zaoui, p. 10)*[707]

Such a testimony finds some resonance with Castel's work on the "negative discrimination" (2007) and with a recent study coordinated by Serge Paugam. In "*Grandir en France: un défi pour les 6-18 ans des quartiers prioritaires*"[708] conducted by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund in France (UNICEF, 2016), the results show that youngsters maintain a particularly close relation with the *quartier* as well as with their close and extended family. S. Paugam interprets this as a consequence of feeling constantly "looked down on" and "judged differently" at school and outside the *quartier*. "They seem to be trapped in a negative vision of themselves, which results from the [bad] image of these areas". Very early, they experience their difference in terms of disadvantage and stigmatisation. Thus, one can understand their reflex to favour relations in the *quartier*, which becomes a refuge against a hostile world". How does this broken relationship with the state affect the students' approach to learning? (interviewed by A. Fache, 2016)[709].

---

[707] Original quotation: "Donc je pense qu'au jour d'aujourd'hui, vu la situation de la France, les évènements et de tout ce qu'il y a; ils savent que de toute façon, même s'ils vont faire des études. Ya une part de fatalisme entre guillemets, d'acceptation de sa position en se disant que de toute façon... moi j'appelle ça de l'élimination. Auto-élimination. Ils s'auto-éliminent sachant que de toute façon ils sont voués à l'échec même si voilà ou en tout cas ils vont avoir plus d'échec que la personne lambda, parce que voilà on le dit pas mais on le sait très bien, les sociologues l'ont tous montré, si tu t'appelles Abdelhakim t'as moins de chance de trouver du travail que si tu t'appelles François. Pourquoi y a des CV anonymes? et pourquoi on était sur l'idée et voilà, pourquoi on en met pas le nom patronymique et pourquoi on met ceci cela. Donc on le sait, moi-même mes propres enfants je leur ai donné des prénoms en pensant à ça. Parce que je connaissais les statistiques. […] y a ça, y a cette fatalité, ce poids qu'ils portent par rapport à leur existence, et d'où ils viennent"

[708] ‚Growing up in France ': a challenge for young people (6-18) in priority urban areas.

[709] Initial quotation: "Ils semblent enfermés dans une représentation négative d'eux-mêmes, qui résulte de l'image de ces territoires. Ils font très tôt l'expérience de la différence, de la stigmatisation. Et quand ils sortent de leur quartier, ils sont souvent en difficulté, soit parce que leur valeur n'est pas reconnue, en raison de leur couleur de peau, soit parce qu'ils résident 'à la mauvaise adresse'. D'où leur réflexe compréhensible de valoriser les liens tissés au sein de leur quartier, devenu refuge face à un monde hostile […] quelle est la conséquence de ce lien de citoyenneté cassé sur leurs apprentissages? ".

Zaoui speaks of "self-elimination". The visibility of structural inequality is so obvious that it undermines official school discourses promoting equality. The issue is that, such a logic of "resistance" or resignation reinforces the logic of reproduction insofar as these young people are denying themselves access to knowledge (van Zanten, 2001, p. 208). However, this thesis argues that those professionals who are most likely to provide a critical view on the school's "ways of doing" or new perspectives do not have the symbolic and economic properties to participate in this transformation. Instead, they tend to withdraw.

4.2.3.3 "But concretely, what do policy-makers do for those young people?"

This background information about Zaoui, the way she conceives her role of "support", her professional isolation in the professional landscape, her empathic relations with the students and the knowledge of their universe are necessary to understand the way she analyses the problem "*décrochage scolaire*".

> *"So in fact, there was Valaud-Belkacem's[710] media buzz, there are 350,000… I don't know how many dropout children, blabla… but concretely? … we've got statistics, things like this; but I, who lives with the children, how many do I know who live in the quartier, barely 16 years old, who just turned 16 and who are struggling, and we bring them from one state-sponsored project to another […] we occupy them […] but concretely, what do policy-makers do for those young people"? (Zaoui, pp. 14-15)[711]*

The activation measures for early-leavers are perceived as an ersatz of solutions created by "incompetent" policy-makers who are hide their inaction behind the production of statistics. In fact, it does not really change anything in the *quartier*.

In 2013 the "national council for the evaluation of the school system" was created to advise policy-makers on radical reforms of the republican school ("*Refondation de l'école de la République*"). Since then, this institution keeps publishing studies attesting to the amplifying role that the school has on the increasing social and ethnic differences. Thus, giving the impression that policy-makers are not able to/ willing to really address such a societal issue while they themselves encouraged the creation of such an institution to guide "efficiency"in political action.

---

[710] Ministry of Education in 2014-2017.

[711] Original quotation: "Effectivement il y a eu l'effet d'appel de Valaud-Belkacem y a 350 000 je sais pas combien d'enfants qui sont en décrochage blabla… mais très concrètement? On arrive, on a des statistiques, des trucs comme ça ; mais moi qui côtoie les enfants, j'en connais combien qui sont sur le quartier, qui ont à peine 16 ans, qui viennent d'avoir 16 ans et qui sont là en train de galérer et on les emmène de mission en mission, [..] on dit on les occupe […] mais concrètement les politiques ils font quoi pour ces jeunes là ? […] ".

Commensurate with Zaoui's frustration and "hate", the educational system does not only reproduce social inequality but produces "children who are fed up with the system" (Zaoui, p. 16). JP. Delaye, former General Inspector of National Education and minister councillor, author of a report analysing the relations between "poverty" and "school success" spoke of "time bombs" (Delaye, 2015)[712].

This extract of Mrs. Zaoui's interview is particularly relevant with regard to recent events in France in the context of the "yellow-vest-movement" – although the heterogeneity of its socio-ethnic composition might not indicate the extent of involvement of a population disqualified by decades of "negative discrimination" (Castel, *op. cit*.) and that the yellow vests are not a movement that was born or has a particular clout in the banlieues. However, it points to a general aversion for the political power:

> *"So it won't be easy… because they don't know… they aren't people who get-up-and-go, they don't have any willpower…, furthermore, they haven't stacked all the odds in their favour to have these diplomas. So, what are they going to do? So I think, it will come to a point when it will explode. France is going to blow up. I see it being like, May 68… it is going to explode because at some point people are going to be really fed up. So well, I think it is going to explode because people like those here, multiplied on a national scale where, finally France won't be able to… things are going to disappear, subsidies… and children won't have any diplomas. So when we look at things, well, did school play a role in this ? When we see people who are drawing closer to political extremes, to behaviours, well, finally, did education, society... […] indirectly, wouldn't education and school have some responsibility in those phenomena? I think yes, except that nobody wants to face the truth, that's all. It's just that, at some point, I won't say "hate" because Ms C. [a teacher] told me it's too strong, but well, they have substantial feelings of anger, and anger is not good. When we are frustrated and angry, it's not good. It only produces generations… children… who are fed up with the system" (Zaoui, p. 16)[713].*

[712] Words collected during his presentation of the report in Rennes (France) on the 20th of January 2016.

[713] Original quotation: "Ah ça ne va pas être facile... parce-qu'ils ne savent pas…. Ils n'ont pas la niac, ils n'ont pas la volonté, ils ont pas l'envie de et en plus ils ont pas mis les chances de leur côté pour avoir tous ces diplômes là. Donc ça va faire quoi? Moi je pense qu'à un moment ça va exploser. La France va exploser de toute façon. Moi je vois comme ça, mai 68... Ça va exploser parce qu'à un moment les gens vont en avoir ras-le-bol du coup. Donc voilà moi je pense que ça va exploser parce que des gens comme ici, multipliés à l'échelle nationale où en fin de compte bah voilà à un moment la France ne pourra pas, y a des choses qui vont s'enlever, les subventions... et les enfants qui n'auront pas été diplômés. Quand on voit des choses aussi, bon, qui peuvent être voilà… est-ce que voilà est-ce que l'école n'a pas joué un rôle? Quand on voit des gens qui vont vers des extrêmes, vers des conduites, voilà, est ce que finalement l'éducation aussi, la société [..] et indirectement est-ce que l'éducation et l'école n'y est pas pour quelque chose de ces phénomènes-là? Je pense que oui sauf que personne ne veut regarder la vérité en face c'est tout. C'est juste qu'à un moment je vais pas dire le mot 'haine' parce que Me C. m'a dit que c'était trop fort, mais voilà ils ont un sentiment de colère important, et la colère

This extract leads us to conclude the importance "subordinate" professionals, especially close to the students by their role, status, biographies and knowledge represent for a better comprehension of the issue "*décrochage scolaire*". The fact that these professionals who do not feel sufficiently valued as professionals by the institution "drop out" and no longer believe in the promises of public education may be worrying, especially as regards their potential knock-on effects on students. As such, these professionals are also an unexploited but wasted resource for the institution.

***

This section dealt with the perceptions and interpretations of a constructed public issue and institutional category ("*décrochage scolaire"*/ *"Schulverweigerung"*) by the non-teaching staff thought of as a support to teachers and students. Their interpretation of these concepts ("*décrochage scolaire"*/ "*Schulverweigerung"*) cannot be seen as separate from the vision they have of their roles, the positive or negative perception of their professional identity, in relation with their "rank" in the professional institutional hierarchy, institutional recognition and thus the power they consider they have to be able to turn their practices into real support, especially for the students.

In France, the ongoing division of educational labour has favoured the development and autonomisation of certain professional identities together with the establishment of internal hierarchies. Efforts have been made by the successive national executive authorities to rebalance discursively, sometimes statutorily, this division between the activities of teaching and educating, without really succeeding: the numerous depreciative discourses about the teaching staff can be interpreted as evidence for this attempt. In Baden-Württemberg, the very recent introduction of the comprehensive and all-day school has disturbed the traditional professional landscape between "established" (teachers) and "challengers" (school social workers, pedagogical assistants), who aspire to having their place in the educational activity. This aspect has been mentioned by other studies addressing the new and diverse cooperation developed in the framework of the all-day school between the school and out-of school partners, particularly as regards youth work organisations. Until 2018, cooperation was "organised according to the model of service providers: the partners do not feel treated as equals with the school and their involvement in decisional structures is limited" (Berger; Labadie;Wittmann (eds.) 2018, p. 170). However, one should keep in mind that this school

---

c'est pas bon. Quand on a la frustration et la colère c'est pas bon. Ça ne fait que des générations... des enfants…. Très énervés du système".

form has only emerged and continues to evolve. Differences persist between Länder, municipalities, and schools. The future of the Geschwister Scholl lower secondary school is uncertain. Yet, central actors remain optimistic and hope for a better consideration of the contribution and work done by school social workers and educational assistants. Although they receive lower wages and status compared with teachers, they seem to apprehend the *GMS* as a school form granting them certain institutional consideration and opportunities to develop new and innovative pedagogic approaches. In this school at least, the school principal grants them support and makes them feel necessary and useful. They see how the "school" can help students to cope with their education and their private environment. They are particularly enthusiastic about the cooperation between them and the teachers, which they describe as a constructive teamwork.

This is what differentiates the French from the German schools analysed here. The ways the non-teaching staff feel integrated or not, valued or not, explain to a certain extent the way they "move the cursor" on the "one(s) to blame" for students' negative participation, respectively the responsibility of school and social structures or students' environments (families, location). Although they do not see the efficiency of the zero-tolerance policy but praise the educational collective projects they are able to implement with the teachers, the occasions are rare or even inexistent. Also, their discourses illustrate their feeling that they may be able to move or even change certain parameters in order to improve the interrelation between school and environmental factors on dropout attitudes (or perceived as such).

At the *collège* La Balikan, the testimonies account for the high vertical and horizontal division of the educational work and the importance of a path-dependent evolution of certain roles, such as those of the principal advisor and the educational assistants with regard to discipline. It also shows how the official policy against "*décrochage scolaire*" increases this division and individual case management at the cost of collective activities emphasising the development of social skills, political participation of students or even global reflection on school policies.

The example of Fatima Zaoui particularly illustrates some of the complex interrelations between macro/meso/micro factors in the way the issue "*décrochage scolaire*" can be apprehended at the school level. It shows how school, which is supposed to be based on meritocracy, does not live up to the standards of this ideology. Through the portrait of Mrs. Zaoui, I showed that the school walls are being eroded from the inside.

Conclusion

This PhD will be disputed early in 2020, which was the horizon set by "Europe 2020", following the Lisbon strategy, action and development plan for the period 2000-2010, for the advancement of a powerful "knowledge economy" based on "smart, sustainable, inclusive growth" and greater coordination of national and European policy, especially in education. Meanwhile, this period has witnessed increasing and strengthening Eurosceptic and even anti-European forces, from the far-right to the far-left of the European Union, the exit of Great Britain, non-solidarity migration policies and national withdrawals. It has also witnessed the urgence of the climate issue. In France as well as in Germany, green parties have to be thankful to the young generations, who were more to participate in European elections and voted in majority for green parties as reported by the newspapers Süddeutsche Zeitung (2019)[714].

School is challenged in its selective function, and as political project

France and Germany have increased the proportion of young people having achieved a tertiary education, particularly among women. Generally, across the EU-countries, the proportion of young people leaving education and training (too) "early" has decreased constantly[715] and concerns a small minority –who is thereby all the more disadvantaged though. Discussions in both countries today address the issue of how regulating the democratisation of university, which traditionally welcomed most students from a socially and economically advantaged minority. This explains recent measures aiming at introducing concurrence mechanisms through which candidates are sorted out, giving universities better room for manoeuvre in selecting their students. In France, the recent implementation of a computer programme (2018) enabling students and their families to apply on their own for further educational positions has revealed that certain universities and colleges demand the payment of application fees independently of tuition fees due if the application is accepted. Private initiatives also emerged which make money out of it by selling their services to students and families in order to help them with dealing with the programme and filling in their application. In Germany, federal and state support for schooling and further education (BAföG) is still bound to reimbursement of half the costs for participants in further education

[714] TAZ am Wochenende, 1./2. Juni 2019, pp. 4-5.
[715] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20170908-1.

although it was recently limited to 10 000€. Since then, the number of attributed scholarships has decreased even if there is no proven evidence linking both phenomena (BpB, 45 Jahre BAföG, 2016).

Fighting "early school leaving" but limiting the expansion of tertiary education, there is kind of a paradox. This perfectly illustrates the tensions in which education is embedded: promoting equal opportunities and realising the ideals of freedom and equality on the one hand, sorting out and selecting the "best", who often belong to higher social classes on the other hand. In France and Germany, education is still the vehicle by which inequalities based on social status, educational and even migration backgrounds are reproduced (Bpb/Destatis/WZB/SOEP, 2018; CNESCO, 2016).

Enabling the conditions for a collective politization of school issues

Embedded in the narrative of the "knowledge economy", and driven by the norm of "equal opportunities" likely to increase through more education, social cohesion, individual well-being and economic growth, did the fight against "early school leaving" succeed in reaching schools, triggering a change from the inside and tempered the tensions and conflicts the institution faces ?

Questioning the reception of the concept "early school leaving" at the school level invites reflecting on the conditions that made them formulate the problem in a "depoliticising" or "politicising" way (Jobert, op. cit., pp. 675-678). In the first case, one blames the principal in particular and ineluctable economic laws; or interprets problems individually. In the second case, one formulates the problem in collective and systemic terms, questions the legitimacy of norms and rules, especially when they reinforce the exclusion and domination of the weakest people. My research has shown that there is rarely an unequivocal interpretation of the problem, and particularly highlights that the institutional conditions do not often allow a collective reflection on the problem (and thus a collective invention and implementation of solutions).

First of all, different groups of professions hold different opinions, which undermine the possibility of the school community acting in the same direction. Secondly, it brought up the question of status and hierarchies, of prejudice and stereotypes, of professionals' critical

attitudes and abandons which reveals that each school would benefit from a debate on this subject.

Zaoui's case illustrates Norbert Elias's vision of society understood as resulting from individuals in interrelation and interdependence with other individuals, who have their own history and culture, these of their parents and ancestors, play their social role in the narrow framework of their function socially defined, embedded in more or less unstable but strong normative and domination orders: "and this is it precisely, the fact that people change each other mutually in and by relation to each other, form individually and transform indefinitely in this relation, which characterises the phenomenon of interpenetration in general" (Elias, 1991, p. 62). In Zaoui, her trajectory, experiences, affiliations, origins and more broadly the history of colonization and European domination are all united, which influences the way she interacts with other professionals and students at the school level. It reveals how humiliations experienced at the microscopic level can indirectly delegitimise a whole political narrative defending the positive effects of education for the individual as well as for the society, which in turn may undermine students' relations to school. It reminds us of Victor Hugo's warning words "everything that suffers accused, everything that cries in the individual bleeds in the society, no one is alone, all living fibres shake together and merge into one, the little ought to be sacred to the greats, whose duties are made of the weakest people's right" [716]. This professional symbolises the distance between the school, the "*quartier*" and its inhabitants, which is visible in many interactions and representations as it has been highlighted in this research. It also illustrates the intimate relations which unify society, school and state; and how the disillusions regarding the (negative) experience of meritocracy or social justice contribute to increasing resentment towards the higher representatives of political decision.

At the school level, I have shown how the ambivalence of many discourses about "early school leaving" in which prejudice, stereotypes and individual ascriptions are reactivated (like the old one of "sociocultural handicap") showing that the narrative framing the ideology of "equal opportunities" is unlikely, from the beginning, to represent a plausibly realisable horizon. Even if it seems to guide the actions of certain school principals, who see the problems in school and social structures and professional practices rather than individuals. However, these can be perceived as insurmountable, as the German example seems to illustrate.

[716] Victor Hugo, Paris, juin 1875, *Le droit et la loi*, extraits.

Stereotypes at the base of individual ascriptions are to be fought not only at school but at all levels of political decision making. Indeed, I have shown that they result from political positioning and decision in the domains of work, immigration, political representation, solidarity, urban planning and even school choice. Regarding this point, many studies have now provided evidence that deregulations in this domain boost phenomena of social and ethnic segregation in schools, which undermine the feeling of social justice.

Notwithstanding, the authors of the "governance of educational trajectories in Europe" mention a certain evolution regarding a "recentralisation of European systems of local governance" (Amos, Loncle, et al., 2016, pp. 78 ff.). The fight against "early leaving from education" can be seen as illustrating this, since it aims to coordinate local practices to realise more global objectives (through the dissemination of "good practices", indicators, assessments…). However, I have shown that schools, notably through the personnage of the school principal, reinterpret and make different usages of this injunction in the framework of specific local and institutional contexts.

The French example shows that Madec, the school principal in La Balikan, also has an influence on the nature of partnerships that will be made, and that the school might have "missed a rendezvous" with local street-level community workers to build a bridge with the inhabitants and foster mutual understanding between the world of school and that of the quartier, as well as explore mutual resources (while the "*quartier*" used to be apprehended in terms of deficits).

The case of La Balikan also shows the harmful effect of statutory hierarchies, amplified by the precariousness of many jobs. These (non-teaching) professionals aspire to be included in educational work and perceive their utility as under or badly exploited. The words of Odile Boulin, former secretary/bookeeper in a private firm, laid off for economic reasons and redeployed as an assitant for students in need of special support, saying that "she will be transparent for her whole life" although she esteems that her feedback and that of her colleague could be "useful" to the institution illustrates this very much. Instead, lack of recognition, by those who aspire to play a significant educational role within the institution, produce professional and institutional dropout, the perception of which by the students and the possible impact on their school experiences could be the object of future research. The division of work which characterises the official fight against "*décrochage scolaire*" in La Balikan actually strengthens professional and statutory compartmentalisation. It includes neither teachers nor educational assistants, who however spend most of the time with the

students. The tracking of absenteeism and the zero tolerance policy might present some advantages to reaffirm for these professionals, for instance, their institutional authority, keep students at a distance and thus avoiding having to interfere too much in their private lives (and issues!). However, these measures do not allow them to exploit their reflexive and transformative potential regarding this issue. Also, students may benefit from a collective reflection on this issue involving all professionals, reflecting their practices, experiences and prejudice. Finally, the effects of unstable professional landscapes could be interrogated as regards the precariousness of many social and familial situations that children experience very early (migration, separations and/or divorces, unemployment, moving…).

The German example shows that the question of "early school leaving" is not really on the school's agenda, although it is a federal and regional priority. In fact the school is busy with implementing the structural reform of the integrated all-day school form, which is conducted in the name of "equal opportunties" though thus indirectly with" early school leaving". The reform transforms the working conditions of their actors and aims to change their practices within the framework of a performance-oriented (*Leistungsorientiert*) and individualised educational approach. If the idea was to make the school professionals responsible for developing their own political concept of the project "*GMS*" in the framework of predefine and basic settings, I have shown how teachers and the principal daily struggle with it and scarely see in this new institutional project a response to their difficulties.
The ambivalance of discourses about "*Schulverweigerung*" reveals the difficulty to grasp its complexity; they mix arguments referring to the "adolescent nature" of their clientele, a "maladjustment" in the orientation and the choice of the type of school (which are no longer the ultimate prerogative of primary teachers) as regards the "potential" of the individual, which itself used to be explained by their social and often migration backgrounds (partitioned vision of social reality). I have underlined, several times, how the discourse about "students' intelligence" or their "capacities" reveals the historical elitist structuration of the German school system, particularly in the West. This discourse, according to which "people should know their place", can also be explained culturally in relation with one of the central dogma inherent to Protestant branches regarding the conception of "work", according to which there is only one way to live in a way that pleases God [….] by the accomplishment of one's wordly duties, which result for each individual from their positions and constitute thereby their *Beruf*" (Weber, 2017, pp. 134-135). Underprivileged categories who aspire to enrolling

in the *Gymnasium* (or other school forms more valued than the *Hauptschule* which delivers the minimal diploma) and hope to achieve the most socially valued diploma, which is also seen as a way to improve their future chances regarding intern places or further education, are not positively percieved by the teaching staff. The discourse of the principal regarding this aspect is illuminating, when he sees parents' and children's from lower social milieus educational aspirations through critical eyes, he refers to the decline of the attractivity of vocational education and apprenticeship -with great regret, but also "to the detriment of the society". Meanwhile, a "transitional system" has developed for those, among others, who failed to achieve their secondary education, haven't found an internship or have interrupted their internship contract. In this transitional system, there are "dropouts' classes".

The work overload that seems to weight heavily on the school principal and the teachers, as well as the emotional distress related to the reforms that some of them struggle to hide, changing clientele and the lack of material and human resources may explain why everyone is seeking to spare their energy.

The resignation of one of the teachers out of the three interviewed in a time when schools have trouble recruiting, while other teachers refuse to work full-time or to be class teachers, (which implies greater responsibilities and more work in addition to teaching and preparation), the fact that the school principal was put on sick leave before and until the end of the school year, are all signs of an institution which is tired, despite a reform that wants to make it better. A majority of discourses mention a lack of vision and means while the non-teaching professionals, through their new missions, try to realise the ideals of the reform because it also values their roles and opens new perspectives. Are these new actors performing a silent transformation of the institution ? In this respect, and despite the tempered enthusiasm of the German school social worker, the positioning of the German educational non-teaching staff differs greatly from thee quite disillusioned attitudes of the "school life" staff in La Balikan; future research could say whether the French school has missed the turning point for better distribution of educational tasks and approaches in secondary schools through better integration of the non-teaching staff and their cooperation with teachers. Or whether they will still be considered as second-class professionals.

In a conference given in Spain in 2012 based on his different research work (*op. cit.*), Robert Castel linked the process of desintegration of the collective spirit that supported western welfare states and social security systems with the idea of the decline of the French school

institutional project[717], which aimed to build up the concept of French citizenship based on universal ideals. It seems that my research provides elements that allow the confirmation of this hypothesis by showing that this project for cohesion collides with phenomena of social dissociation affecting not only students and parents from underprivileged families but also school professionals.

The fight against "school dropout" might be interpreted as a way of reaffirming the institutional authority in this context, while, paradoxically, school has become the most dominant socialising institution. In fact, the school issue is "first of all the legitimacy of an action and a power aiming at having an influence on someone else and transforming them" (Dubet, 2004, p. 24). Dropout issues challenge this legitimacy. On the one hand, Germany, and increasingly France implement regulations on pay and working conditions which foster the development of a precariat, boosted by the retrenchment of social protections. Meanwhile, in both countries, statistics show that education remains an institution reproducting social and school inequalities (see above), while dominant positions recruit their leaders from among their own class peers (Observatoire des sociétés, 2019; Bpb/Destatis/WZB/SOEP, 2018, pp. 262 et s.). If Loic Wacquant defends the idea of a transformation of the "social state towards a penal state [...] to contain the effects of the social insecurity resulting from the dismantling of the Welfare state" (recent events in France could be an illustration of this hypothesis) (Wacquant, 2004, 1988), political programmes and projects supported by public authorities target in priority these publics and notably through extending the time spent in school –the "all-day" school form in Germany, the "open school" in France particularly in "priority areas". As if they should contain potential dissociative effects.

Nevertheless, one can wonder whether, on the one hand, "more school" is necessarily an effective answer to "dropout attitudes", understood as a deficit of legitimacy of the school institutional authority, if at the same time one does not address social questions or racist issues; or the weight of "titles" in social integration. On the other hand, it seems to me that one does not question enough – a topic for research in itself - the gap between the high mediatisation of "early school leaving" in underprivileged milieus while it is poorly studied in privileged milieus –I mentioned a Germany study which deals with student "burnout" under the effect of school pressure.

It would rather address the question of meaning and utility of knowledge in relation with the transformations of the representations of work (Decréau, 2019). When the question of

[717] (Castel, 2012) Visionnable en ligne: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WiglZGVYUVM] 04/04/2019

“meaning” is relevant as well in the world of work, particularly when people are highly qualified[718], perhaps the problem of “early leaving” in lower education can be apprehended as the necessity to rethink these relations. Environmental issues, technical alienation and diversity are challenges to the cohesion of our societies. The international mobilisation of students for the climate shows that this question of utility emerges when the future appears so dark and uncertain (in fact, the “Fridays for future” deserve their own study); when school has become a synonym for permanent competition and struggle, which is the opposite of its finality (Jacquart, 2006).

The future is especially incertain for those who cannot afford the best titles, while inherited capital remains the most decisive factor in assuring access to good or better life chances.

The instrumental and individualist vision of “educational success” theoretically bound to self-fufillement, social and economic security, in a society that multiplies statuses and concurrence, where private schools flourish, collides with old Humanist ideals that have regularly supported and framed the project “School”, meaning the promotion of values in which the increasing diverse social body could believe and agree with (to be distinguished from an elitist humanist culture, which works as a tool of social differentiation). Emancipation, tolerance, reflection, dignity, respect, equal access to rights and dignity were at the heart of educational expansion in Western countries, which constitutes the discourse about education held by the youngest ever winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014, seventeen-year-old Malala Yousafzai from Afghanistan. On the other side of the Earth, the figure of sixteen-year old Greta Thunberg encourages her peers around the planet to skip school Fridays to force adults and policy makers to make sustainable choices.

School needs a new humanist project before its walls collapse. Is this what *Charlie Hebdo* (15/06/2011) meant when it ran the headline “Absenteeism is humanism”?

So what? The thesis, and after

The last example shows how the depoliticisation of education through the increase of its instrumental dimension has waken up attitudes of political engagement. School is also the place where young people’s political awareness develops and expresses, where they (should) find the knowledge and competences to be able to imagine and build the future society they

[718] Abordés notamment à travers le (récemment médiatisé) concept de « bullshit jobs » dans son ouvrage par David Graeber (2018), anthropologue, économiste et anarchiste; ou révélé par l’étude de Françoise Decreau dans son étude sur « L’élègance de la clé de douze: enquête sur ces intellectuels devenus artisans ».

want to live in. This is very crucial in a time that sees intolerant forces express (I think of the French movement “identity generation” and German young neonazi movements) and where the future of the planet also depends on the consumption attitudes of future generations.

For most of the last ten years, I was busy with better understanding the relations between formal and non-formal education (more specifically youth work). After this research, I am all the more convinced that formal education would greatly benefit from non-formal educational approaches, such as for a better articulation of formal knowledge, political awareness and engagement. My research has raised the question of “meaning”. Such a cooperation would help to reconnect formal education with the making of society.

I am also convinced that the differentiation of social statuses, which is observable in the world of school as well is dangerous and dissociative. Without strong policies that restrain such a development through more economic solidarity and social security, the school alone cannot lead to more “cohesive society”, as the motto of the “knowledge society”.

The restrictive educational criteria involved in becoming a teacher in Germany led me to explore other professional goals. I began working August 1st, 2019 in the domain of youth work instead. Perhaps, I will contribute to bringing these two worlds closer.

Bibliography

Introduction:

(2015). *Référentiel pour l'éducation prioritaire -"Enseigner plus explicitement"*. Paris: Ministry of National Education .

2001, N. M.-C.-0. (03 2001). Missions des infirmier(ère)s de l'Éducation nationale. *Journal du droit des jeunes*, S. 37-43.

Allmendiger & Nikolai. (23. 10 2006). *Bildung und Herkunft*. Abgerufen am 20. 08 2018 von Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (BpB): http://www.bpb.de/apuz/29445/bildung-und-herkunft?p=all

Alpe, Y.; Beitonne, A.; Dollo, C.; Lambert J.-R. & Parayre S. (2013). *Lexique de sociologie.* Paris: Dalloz.

Altinyelken, Demozzi, Boron, Taddia, (2016). Cooperation and problems of recognition between schools and parents in supporting young people's educational trajectories. In W. a. al., *Governance of educational trajectories in Europe. Pathways, Policies and Practices* (S. 161-179). London: Bloomsbury.

Altrichter, H.; Schley, W.; Schratz, M.. (1998). *Handbuch zur Schulentwicklung.* Innsbruck, Wien, Bozen: Studienverlag.

Amos, K., Loncle, P., Martelli, A., Barberis, E., Becquet, V., Theobald, U. (2016). Translation of policy instruments and negotiation of actors in local school spaces. In W. a. al., *Governance of educational trajectories in Europe* (S. 75-93). London: Bloomsburry.

Askoria. (2015). *Le déploiement en Région Bretagne de la lutte contre le décrochage scolaire.* Rennes.

Aust, J. (01-03 2009). L'École dans la ville. Ségrégation, mixité, carte scolaire Marco Oberti. *Revue Française de sociologie* , S. 186-189.

Baader, M. S. (30. 05 2008). *Erziehung und 68.* Abgerufen am 2018. 09 17 von Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung: http://www.bpb.de/geschichte/deutsche-geschichte/68er-bewegung/51961/erziehung-und-68?p=all

Barberis, E.; Buchowicz, I.; De Luigi, N. (2016). Producing accessibility through discretionary practices of educational professionals. In A. a. Walther, *Governance of educational trajectories in Europe* (S. 117-137). London: Bloomsbury.

Barrère, A. (02 2013). Un management bien tempéré : l'expérience des chefs d'établissement de l'enseignement secondaire français. *Education et Sociétés*, S. 21-34.

Barrère, A. (2006). Les chefs d'établissement face aux enseignants : enjeux et conflits de l'autonomie pédagogique. *Revue française de pédagogie*, S. 89-99.

Barrère, A. (2006). *Sociologie des chefs d'établissement : les managers de la République.* Paris: PUF.

Barrez, C. (06 2014). L'engagement en service civique : du rôle de l'éducation non-formelle dans les parcours de jeunes en « décrochage scolaire . *Mémoire M2*. EHESP.

Barrez, Célia in Josef Schmid, Karin Amos, Josef Schrader, Ansgar Thiel (dir.). (2017). *"French examples of subnational uses of the issue 'early-school-leaving': a reflective contribution on the appropriation of a European benchmark"*. Baden-Baden: Baden-Baden: Nomos.

Beaud, S. & Weber, F. (2003). *Guide de l'enquête de terrain.* Paris: La Découverte.

Beaud, S. (2003). *80% d'une classe d'âge au bac, et après?* Paris: La Découverte.

Becker, R. & Hadjar, A. (2009). Meritokratie – Zur gesellschaftlichen Legitimation ungleicher Bildungs-, Erwerbs- und Einkommenschancen in modernen Gesellschaften. In R. B. (Hrsg.), *Lehrbuch der Bildungssoziologie* (S. 35-59). Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften

Becker, R. (31. 05 2012). *Bildungsbeteiligung und Bildungschancen*. Abgerufen am 20. 08 2018 von Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (BpB): http://www.bpb.de/politik/grundfragen/deutsche-verhaeltnisse-eine-sozialkunde/138032/bildungsbeteiligung-und-bildungschancen?p=all

Becker, R. (31. 10 2014). *Entwicklung des deutschen Bildungssystems im Überblick.* Abgerufen am 2018. 09 14 von Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung: http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/194145/ueberblick?p=all

Belmont B., Plaisance E., Vérillon A. (01 2006). Accompagnement et intégration scolaire. Politique, pratiques et acteurs. *Contrate*, S. 247-266.

Ben Ayed, C. (05 2009). La mixité sociale dans l'espace scolaire : une non-politique publique [en ligne]. *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*(180), S. 11-23.

Ben Ayed, C. (2015). *La mixité sociale à l'école. Tensions, enjeux, perspectives.* Paris: Armand Colin.

Bentouhami-Molino, H. (2015). *Race, cutures, identités: une approche féministe et post-coloniale.* Paris: PUF.

Berger D., Nekaa M., Courty P. (06 2009). Infirmiers scolaires : représentations et pratiques d'éducation à la santé. *Santé Publique*, S. 641-657.

Berger, E.; Labadie, F.;Wittmann, Svendy. (2018). *L'éducation non formelle, chance ou défi pour le travail de jeunesse?* Paris: OFAJ/DFJW.

Bernard, P.-Y. (04 2011). Le décrochage des élèves du second degré : diversité des parcours, pluralité des expériences scolaires. *Les Sciences de l'éducation - Pour l'Ère nouvelle*, S. 75-97 .

Bernard, P.-Y. (2013). *Le décrochage scolaire.* Paris: PUF.

Berthet, T. et Zaffran, J. (dir.). (2014). *Le décrochage scolaire: Enjeux, acteurs et politiques de lutte contre la déscolarisation.* Rennes: PUR

Bertossi, Christophe ; de Wenden Catherine. (2007). *Les couleurs du drapeau: les militaires français issus de l'immigration.* Paris: Robert-Lafont.

Bertossi, Christophe ; Thouvenin, Vincent . (28. 02 2007). *Muslime, Frankreich, Europa : gegen gewisse Trugbilder in Sachen Integration.* Von IFRI: https://www.ifri.org/fr/publications/enotes/notes-de-lifri/muslime-frankreich-europa-gegen-gewisse-trugbilder-sachen abgerufen

BFSFJ. (2008). *Jugend und Chancen – Integration fördern Programm Schulverweigerung – Die 2. Chance Handbuch für Koordinierungsstellen 9/2008- 8/2011.* Berlin.

Bildung, B. f., & 2013, S. B. (17. 04 2014). *Schulbesuch nach höchstem allgemeinem Schulabschluss der Eltern.* Von BpB: http://www.bpb.de/nachschlagen/zahlen-und-fakten/soziale-situation-in-deutschland/183038/schulbesuch-nach-schulabschluss-der-eltern abgerufen

Bildungsberichterstattung, A. (2018). *Bildung in Deutschland 2018.* wbv.

Bohl, T. and Wacker, A. (dir.). (2016). *Die Einführung der Gemeinschaftsschule in Baden-Württemberg: Abschlussbericht der wissenschaftlichen Begleitforschung.* Göttingen: Waxmann.

Bohl, Thorsten; Budde, Jürgen; Rieger-Ladich, Markus (Hrsg.). (2017). *Umgang mit Heterogenität im Unterricht : Forschungsbefunde und didaktische Implikationen.* Bad Heilbrunn: Verlag Julius Klinkhardt.

Böhm, W. (2005). *Wörterbuch der Pädagogik.* Stuttgart: Kröner Verlag.

Bonelli, Laurent et Carré, Fabien . (2018). En finir avec quelques idées reçues sur la radicalisation. *Le Monde Diplomatique,* 12-13.

Boubeker, A. & Ottersbach, Markus. (2015). *Diversité et Participation Approches franco-allemandes de l'action sociale pour la jeunesse des quartiers marginalisés.* Paris : Téraèdre.

Boudesseul Gérard (dir.). (2013). *Du décrochage à la réussite scolaire, Expériences françaises et internationales.* Paris: L'harmattan.

Boudesseul, G., Grelet, Y. & Vivent, C. . (12 2012). Les risques sociaux du décrochage : vers une politique territorialisée de prévention ? *Céreq Bref n°304,* S. 4 p. p.

Bourdieu, P. (1966). L'école conservatrice. Les inégalités devant l'école et devant la culture. *Revue française de sociologie,* S. 325-347.

Bourdieu, P. (1997). *Médiations pascaliennes.* Paris : Seuil.

Bourdieu, Pierre & Passeron, Jean-Claude. (1964). *Les Héritiers. Les étudiants et la culture.* Paris: Le sens commun.

Bourdieu, Pierre & Passeron, Jean-Claude. (1970). *La Reproduction: éléments pour une théorie du système d'enseignement.* Paris: Editions de Minuit.

Bourgeais, A.-M. (03 2005). « L'enseignant fonctionnaire ». *Ela. Études de linguistique appliquée,* S. 285-292.

Bouton, P. (12 1999). Langue nationale et langues régionales à l'école : le débat politique de 1925. *Mots*, S. 29-48.

Bouveresse, J. (12 2003). La connaissance de soi et la science. Regards croisés sur l'anthropologie de Pierre Bourdieu. *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, S. 59-64.

BpB. (04. 06 2013). *Hauptschul- und Gymnasialbesuch von 15-Jährigen nach sozialer Herkunft*. Abgerufen am 20. 08 2018 von Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung: http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/162466/hauptschul-und-gymnasialbesuch-von-15-jaehrigen-nach-sozialer-herkunft

BpB. (08 2007). *Fünf Jahre Hartz-Reformen.* Abgerufen am 21. 08 2018 von Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung: http://www.bpb.de/politik/hintergrund-aktuell/69904/bilanz-hartz-gesetze-16-08-2007

BpB. (27. 11 2015). *Schulabbrecher – Wie hoch ist der Anteil der Schulabgänger ohne Abschluss je Bundesland (2013).* Von BpB: http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/216421/schulabbrecher-wie-hoch-ist-der-anteil-der-schulabgaenger-ohne-abschluss-je-bundesland-2013 abgerufen

Bpb/Destatis/WZB/SOEP. (2018). *Datenreport 2018.* Bonn.

Breidenstein, G. (2006). *Teilnahme am Unterricht. Ethnographische Studien zum Schülerjob.* Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Bréville, B. (02/2018). Intégration, la grande obsession. *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 12.

Briand, J.-P. (1989). L'apparition du « préapprentissage » dans les grandes villes au début du XXe siècle. *Formation-Emploi*, S. 42-64.

Britz, L. (16. 05 2007). *Bildungssituation von Kindern und Jugendlichen aus Zuwandererfamilien.* Von BpB: http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/dossier-migration/56491/schule-und-integration?p=all abgerufen

Brucy, G. (02 2003). “Désertion scolaire” et absentéisme dans l’école de Jules Ferry. *Cahiers de la recherche sur l’éducation et les savoirs [En ligne]*, S. 145-168. Abgerufen am 04. 03 2019 von http://journals.openedition.org/cres/1495

Buisson-Fenet, H. & Pons, X. (02 2012). « L'européanisation de l'École française en débat : le cas contrasté de l'évaluation des établissements scolaires . *Politix*, S. 129-146.

Buisson-Fenet, H. (03 2007). L'éducation scolaire au prisme de la science politique: vers une sociologie politique comparée de l'action publique éducative? . *RIPC*, S. 385-397.

Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. (2007). *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte: Hauptschule.* Abgerufen am 11. 09 2018 von BpB: http://www.bpb.de/apuz/30364/hauptschule

Cahuc, Carcillo, Galland, Zylberberg. (2011). *La machine à trier: comment la France divise sa jeunesse.* Paris: Eyrolles.

Caristan, C. (02 2017). L’expérience professionnelle des assistants d’éducation : de quelles pratiques éducatives sont-ils porteurs ? *Le sujet dans la cité*, S. 203-222.

Caron, C. & Soulière, M. (2013). “Jeunes à risque”: Généalogie d’un langage problématique. *Canadian Sociological Association/La Société canadienne de sociologie*, S. 430-452.

Carrié, F. & Bonelli, L., *La Fabrique de la radicalité. Une sociologie des jeunes djihadistes français.* (2018). Paris: Seuil.

Carvalho, L.M. & Costa, E. (2015). Seing education through one's own eyes and through PISA lenses: considerations of the reception of PISA in European countries. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, S. 638-649.

Castel R. & Haroche, C. . (2001). *Propriété privée, propriété sociale, propriété de soi. Entretien sur la construction de l'individu moderne.* Paris: Fayard.

Castel, R. (07 2012). La crise de la cohésion sociale: l'école et le travail dans un temps d'incertitude. *Conference* . Barcelona, Espagne.

Castel, R. (1995, reed. 2000). *Les métamorphoses de la question sociale.* Paris: Fayard.

Castel, R. (2007). *La discrimination négative. Citoyens ou indigènes ?* Paris: Seuil.

Castel, R. (2009). *La montée des incertitudes : travail, protections, statut de l'individu.* Paris: Seuil.

Cayouette-Remblière, J. & de Saint Pol, T. . (2013). Le sinueux chemin vers le baccalauréat : entre redoublement, réorientation et décrochage scolaire. *Economie et statistique*, S. 59-88.

Cayouette-Remblière, J. (2016). *L'école qui classe: 530 élèves du primaire au bac.* Paris: PUF.

Cayouette-Remblière, Joanie & de Saint Pol, Thibaut . (2013). Le sinueux chemin vers le baccalauréat : entre redoublement, réorientation et décrochage scolaire. *Economie et statistique*, S. 59-88.

Charlot B., Émin L. & De Peretti O. (2002). *Les aides-éducateurs.* Paris: Anthropos.

Charlot B., Emin, L. & De Peretti, O. (1999). Les aides-éducateurs: le lien social contre la citoyenneté. *Ville-Ecole-Integration Diversité, 118*, S. 161-175. Von http://www.revues-plurielles.org/_uploads/pdf/82/118/charlot118.pdf abgerufen

Charmes, Éric & Bacqué, Marie-Hélène (dir.). (2016). *Mixité sociale, et après ?* Paris: PUF.

Chevallier, M. (02 2017). Les troubles du comportement à l’école, de la prévention à la remédiation. *Enfances & Psy*, S. 148-154.

Clarke, A. E. (2003). Situational analyses: Grounded theory mapping after the postmodern turn. *Symbolic interaction*, S. 553-576.

Clarke, A. E. (2012). *Situationsanalyse. Grounded Theory nach dem Postmodern Turn.* Wiesbaden: Springer.

CNESCO. (2015). *État du redoublement en France* . Von Conseil National d'évaluation du système scolaire: http://www.cnesco.fr/fr/redoublement/ abgerufen

Condette, J.-F. (11 2014). « Ce « rôle tout négatif » d'un « personnel à part » ? Le surveillant général à la fin du XIXe siècle ». *Recherches & éducations*, S. 17-38.

Condette, S. (01 2013). État de la recherche sur le métier de conseiller principal d'éducation », Carrefours de l'éducation. *Carrefours de L'éducation*, S. 105-131.

Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (2008). Four strategies for qualitative data analysis. In J. &. Corbin, *Basics of qualitative research (3rd ed.): techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (S. 65-86). Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications, Inc.

Cortez-Rucker, Vance & Adams, Nancy. (06 2013). Principal as Instructional Leader: Did the States Lose Sight of the Dream? *American International Journal of Social Science*, S. 31-33.

Crahay, M. (2007). *Peut-on lutter contre l'échec scolaire ?* Paris: De Boeck Supérieur.

Cramer, C.; Litau, J.; Parreira do Amaral, M.; Wagegg, J. & Walther, A. (2010). *Governance of Educational Trajectories in Europe. Country report Germany.* University of Tübingen, Institute of Education.

Cramer, Bohl, du Bois-Reymond, "Comparative report teacher training", WP 3, GOETE,

2013 [http://www.goete.eu/project/work-programme/153-for-teachers].

Cresson, G. (02 2011). Le care : soin à autrui et objet de controverses. *Travail, genre et sociétés*, S. 195-198.

Crozier, M. & Friedberg, E. (1977). *L'acteur et le système.* Paris: Seuil.

Culture, F. (26. 01 2019). D'où vient le long dédain de l'école pour les matières techniques? *La Conversation scientifique par Etienne Klein (broadcast), with Laurence Decréau (2019) and Pr. Thierry Weil*. Paris.

d'Eurydice, U. e. (2000). L'éducation au centre des préoccupations européennes. *Revue internationale d'éducation de Sèvres [En ligne]*. doi:10.4000/ries.2411

Dale, R. and Robertson, S.L. (2012). *Toward a Critical Grammar of Education Policy Movements.* Retrieved from Centre for Globalisation, Education and Societies, University of Bristol: http://susanleerobertson.com/publications/

Damgé, Mathilde & Durand, Anne-Aël. (2018). Handicap : la promesse de Macron sur les accompagnants scolaires est-elle tenue ? *Le Monde [online]*. Abgerufen am 25. 02 2019 von https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2018/10/12/handicap-la-promesse-de-macron-sur-les-accompagnants-scolaires-est-elle-tenue_5368692_4355770.html

Danic, Isabelle et Loncle, Patricia (dir.). (2017). *Les labyrinthes de verre. Les trajectoires éducatives en France dans un contexte européen.* Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes.

Dardier, Agathe; Laïb, Nadine; Robert-Bobée, Isabelle. (2013). *Les décrocheurs du système éducatif : de qui parle-t-on ?* Paris: INJEP.

de Maillard J., Le Goff T.. (04 2009). La tolérance zéro en France. Succès d'un slogan, illusion d'un transfert . *Revue française de science politique*, S. 655-679.

Debarbieux, E., Anton, N., Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R., Bisson-Vaivre, C., Cohen, J.,Giordan, A.,Hugonnier, B., Neulat, N.,Ortega Ruiz, R., Saltet, J., Veltcheff, C., Vrand, R. (2012). *Le "climat scolaire": définitions, effets et conditions d'amélioration* . Paris: Rapport au Comité scientifique de la Direction de l'enseignement scolaire, Ministère de l'éducation nationale. MEN-DGESCO/Observatoire International de la Violence à l'Ecole.

Decréau, L. (2019). *Tempête sur les représentations du travail.* Paris: Presses des mines.

Delage, P. (05 2017). De l'obstacle méthodologique au levier analytique. Retour sur une comparaison asymétrique (From methodological hurdle to analytical advantage: making use of an asymmetrical comparison). *SociologieS [en ligne]. La recherche en actes, Penser les ratés de terrain*. Von http://journals.openedition.org/sociologies/6142 abgerufen

Delaye, J.-P. (2015). *Grande pauvreté et réussite scolaire, le choix de la solidarité pour la réussite de tous.* Paris.

Derouet, J.-L. (12 2000). L'établissement scolaire: des principles aux réalités. *Sciences humaines*, S. 28-32.

Derouet, Jean-Louis & Dutercq, Yves. (1997). *L'établissement scolaire, autonomie locale et service public.* Paris: ESF, INRP.

Desrosières, A. (2014). *Prouver et gouverner. Une analyse politique des statistiques publiques.* Paris: La Découverte.

Devaux, J.-M., Hamel, M. & Vrignon, B. (1989). L'école, les parents et la réussite scolaire. *Communication et langages*, S. pp. 40-53.

Didierjean, R. (01 2015). La pratique sportive des immigrées à l'épreuve de la comparaison : l'exemple des filles d'origine turque en France et en Allemagne. *Sciences sociales et sport*, S. 103-124.

Dijk, T. A. (04 2005). Le racisme dans le discours des élites. *Multitudes*, S. 41-52.

Dijk, T. A. (1993). Analyzing Racism Through Discourse Analysis: Some Methodological Reflections. In J. H. (Eds.), *Race and ethnicity in research methods* (S. 92-134). Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications, Inc.

Dijk, T. A. (1993). *Elite discourse and racism.* USA: SAGE.

DIPF, & Konsortium, S. (07. 02 2019). *StEG – Studie zur Entwicklung von Ganztagsschulen* . Von DIPF: https://www.dipf.de/de/forschung/aktuelle-projekte/studie-zur-entwicklung-von-ganztagsschulen abgerufen

DIPF, F. a., & StEG-Konsortium. (2016). *Ganztagsschule: Bildungsqualität und Wirkungen außerunterrichtlicher Angebote. Ergebnisse der Studie zur Entwicklung von Ganztagsschulen 2012-2015.*

DIPF, F. a.-K. (2016). *Ganztagsschule: Bildungsqualität und Wirkungen außerunterrichtlicher Angebote. Ergebnisse der Studie zur Entwicklung von Ganztagsschulen 2012-2015.*

Döbert/ Hörner/ Kopp/ et al. . (2010). *Die Bildungssysteme Europas.* Schneider Verlag.

Documentation Française, (07. 06 2016). *La mobilité sociale en France.* Von La Documentation Française: https://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/dossiers/d000561-egalite-inegalites-comment-construire-une-societe-plus-juste/la-mobilite-sociale-en-france abgerufen

Douat, É. (02 2010). Au nom de la lutte contre l'absentéisme scolaire. L'Extension du contrôle des corps à l'épreuve des contradictions de l'institution scolaire. *Mouvements*, S. 99-107.

Dubar, C. (03 2007). Les sociologues face au langage et à l'individu. *Langage et société*, S. 29-43.

Dubet, F. & Duru-Bellat, M.. (2000). *L'Hypocrisie scolaire. Pour un collège enfin démocratique.* Paris: Seuil.

Dubet, F. (01 2011). Equality of Place, Equality of Opportunity. *Études*, S. 31-41.

Dubet, F. (1988). *La galère : jeunes en survie.* Paris : Fayard.

Dubet, F. (2002). *Le déclin de l'institution.* Paris : Seuil.

Dubet, F. (2008). *Faits d'école.* Paris: EHESS Cas de Figure.

Dubet, F. (2014). *Cultures juvéniles et régulation sociale.* doi: doi:10.1684/ipe.2013.1142

Dubet, F. (2014). *La préférence pour l'inégalité. Comprendre la crise des solidarités.* Paris : Seuil.

Dubet, F.; Duru-Bellat, M.; Vérétout, A. (2010). *Les Sociétés et leur école. Emprise du diplôme et cohésion sociale.* Paris: La Découverte.

Dubet, François; Duru-Bellat, Marie; Vérétout, Antoire. (2010). *Les Sociétés et leur école. Emprise du diplôme et cohésion sociale.* Paris: La Découverte.

Dubois, V. (2009). *La vie au guichet. Administrer la misère.* Paris: Points.

Dupuy, C. (10. 07 2010). Politiques publiques, territoires et inégalités. Les politiques régionales d'éducation en France et en Allemagne (1969-2004). *Thesis*. Paris.

Durkheim, E. (1922). *Education et sociologie.* Paris: Félix Alcan.

Duru-Ballat & Van Zanten. (2010, 2007). *Sociologie de l'école.* Paris: Armand Colin.

Duru-Bellat, M. & Tenret, E. (02 2009). L'Emprise de la méritocratie scolaire: quelle légitimité? *Revue française de sociologie*, S. 229-258.

Duru-Bellat, M. (02 2001). Effets maîtres, effets établissements: quelle responsabilité pour l'école? *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Bildungswissenschaften*, S. 321-337.

Duru-Bellat, M. (02 2003). Les apprentissages des élèves dans leur contexte : les effets de la composition de l'environnement scolaire. *Carrefours de l'éducation*, S. 182-206.

Duru-Bellat, M. (02 2015). Les compétences non académiques en question. *Formation emploi*, S. 13-29.

Duru-Bellat, M. (2002). *Les Inégalités sociales à l'école. Genèse et mythes.* Paris: PUF.

Duru-Bellat, M. (2006). *L'inflation scolaire : les désillusions de la méritocratie.* Paris: La République des idées.

Duru-Bellat, M. (2009). *Le mérite contre la justice.* Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.

Duru-Bellat, M. (2014). Conférence - La méritocratie, un paradoxe écologique ? Clermont-Ferrand, France: vimeo [https://vimeo.com/91920452].

Duru-Bellat, Marie & Van Zanten, Agnes. (2007, 2010). *Sociologie de l'école.* Paris: Armand Colin.

Dutercq, Y. & Lang, V. (02 2001). L'émergence d'un espace de régulation intermédiaire dans le système scolaire français. *Education et sociétés*, S. 49-64.

Dutrévis, Marion & Crahay Marcel. (03 2013). *Redoublement et stigmatisation : conséquences pour l'image de soi des élèves [Online]*. Von journals.openeditions.org: https://journals.openedition.org/osp/4150#quotation abgerufen

Ebner, Christian; Uhly, Alexandra. (27. 05 2016). *Der Ausbildungsmarkt.* Von Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung: http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/228395/der-ausbildungsmarkt abgerufen

EC. (2013). *Reducing Early-School-Leaving: Key Messages and Policy Support.* Policy.

EC. (3. 12 2013). *PISA 2012: EU performance and first inferences regarding education and training policies in Europe.* Abgerufen am 2017 von ec.europa.eu: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/policy/strategic-framework/doc/pisa2012_en.pdf

Edelstein, B. & Grellmann, S. (03. 05 2013). *Welche Abschlüsse erreichten Schüler früher und heute?* Von BpB: http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/159282/welche-abschluesse-erreichten-schueler-frueher-und-heute abgerufen

Edelstein, Benjamin & Grellmann, Simone. (03. 05 2013). *Herkunft gleich Zukunft?* Von Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung: http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/159279/herkunft-gleich-zukunft-2009 abgerufen

Edelstein, Benjamin & Veith, Hermann. (01. 01 2017). *Schulgeschichte bis 1945: Von Preußen bis zum Dritten Reich.* Von BpB: http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/229629/schulgeschichte-bis-1945?p=all abgerufen

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

Esterle-Hedibel, M. (01 2006). Absentéisme, déscolarisation, décrochage scolaire, les apports des recherches récentes . *Déviance et Sociétés*, S. 41-65.

Esterle-Hédibel, M. (2007). *Les èlèves transparents.* Villeneuve D'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion.

Eurostat. (19. 03 2019). *Early leavers from education and training by sex and NUTS 2 regions.* Von Eurostat: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=edat_lfse_16&lang=en abgerufen

Fache, A. (2016). Serge Paugam :« Ces enfants font très jeunes l'expérience de la stigmatisation » [online]. *L'Humanité*, https://www.humanite.fr/serge-paugam-ces-enfants-font-tres-jeunes-lexperience-de-la-stigmatisation-627522.

Farges, G. (2011, mis en ligne le 01 janvier 2015). Le statut social des enseignants français . *Revue européenne des sciences sociales [En ligne]*. Von http://journals.openedition.org/ress/884 abgerufen

Felouzis, G. (07-09 2003). La ségrégation ethnique au collège et ses conséquences . *Revue française de sociologie* , S. 413-447.

Fernandez-Cano, A. (21. 01 2016). A Methodological Critique of the PISA Evaluations. *Relieve, e-Journal of Educational Research,Assessment and Evaluation*. Abgerufen am 15. 03 2019 von https://www.uv.es/RELIEVE/v22n1/RELIEVEv22n1_M15eng.pdf

Fischer, Natalie & Brümmer, Felix. (2012). School attachment and performance. The impact of participation in ex-tracurricular activities at school. In M. Richter, & S. (. Andresen, *he politicization of parenthood* (S. 265-279). New York: Springer.

Forquin, J.-C. (1979). Note de synthèse [La sociologie des inégalités d'éducation : Principales orientations, principaux résultats depuis 1965]. *Revue française de pédagogie*, S. 87-99.

Foucault, M. (10. 03 1975). Radioscopie. (J. Chancel, Interviewer)

Foucault, M. (1974). *Surveiller et punir.* Paris: Gallimard.

Foucault, M. (2004). *Naissance de la Biopolitique. Cours au Collège de France. 1978-1979.* Paris: EHESS, Gallimard, Seuil.

Galand, B. and Hospel, V.. (2015). Facteurs associés au risque de décrochage scolaire : vers une approche intégrative [online]. *L'orientation scolaire et professionnelle*. doi:10.4000/osp.4604

Galland, O. (2011). *Sociologie de la jeunesse.* Paris: Armand Collin.

Gaulejac, V. d. (2009). *La société malade de la gestion* . Paris: Seuil.

Geay B., Oria N. & Fromard L. (03 2009). La remise en ordre symbolique de l'institution. Les conseils de discipline dans l'enseignement secondaire. *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, S. 62-79.

Geißler, R. (16. 12 2014). *Armut und Präkarität.* Abgerufen am 13. 09 2018 von Bundeszentrale fûr politische Bildung: http://www.bpb.de/izpb/198010/armut-und-prekaritaet?p=2

Geißler, R. (16. 12 2014). *Bildungsexpansion and Bildungschancen*. Abgerufen am 20. 08 2018 von Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (BpB): http://www.bpb.de/izpb/198031/bildungsexpansion-und-bildungschancen?p=all

Gentner, C. & Mertens, M. (Hrsg.) . (2006). *Null Bock auf Schule? Schulmüdigkeit und Schulverweigerung aus Sicht der Wissenschaft und Praxis* . Waxmann.

Gesundheit, D. (01. 09 2017). *Fast jeder zweite Schüler leidet unter Stress.* Von DAK Gesundheit: https://www.dak.de/dak/bundes-themen/fast-jeder-zweite-schueler-leidet-unter-stress-1936264.html abgerufen

Giampino, S. & Vidal, C. (2009). *Nos enfants sous haute surveillance. Évaluations, dépistages, médicaments...* . Paris: Albin Michel .

Gilbert C. & Henry E.. (01 2012). La définition des problèmes publics : entre publicité et discrétion. *Revue française de sociologie*, S. 35-59.

Glasman, D. (05 2007). “Il n'y a pas que la réussite scolaire !” Le sens du programme de “réussite éducative”. *Informations sociales* , S. 74-85.

Glasman, D. (09 2000). Le décrochage scolaire: une définition sociale et institutionnelle. *VEI Enjeux*, S. 10-25.

Glasman, D.; Œuvrard, F. (dir.). (2004). *La déscolarisation.* Paris: La Dispute.

Goffman, E. (1973). *La Mise en scène de la vie quotidienne.* Paris: Les Editions de Minuit.

Governance of Educational Trajectories in Europe. (2016). Von GOETE.EU: http://www.goete.eu/ abgerufen

Groh-Samberg O., Jossin A., Keller C., Tucci I.,in DGS (dir.),. (2013). « Die Heterogenität der Integrationspfade : Zur Strukturierung der Lebensverläufe von Migrantennachkommen in Deutschland und Frankreich ». *Vielfalt und Zusammenhalt, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie*.

Gruel, L. (1985). Conjurer l'exclusion. Rhétorique et identité revendiquée dans des habitats socialement disqualifiés. *Revue française de Sociologie*, S. 431-453.

Gschwind, A. K. (08 2015). Wie kommt Bildung in die Landschaft? *Masterarbeit in Sozialpädagogik*. Esslingen, Baden-Württemberg, Germany: H o c h s c h u l e E s s l i n g e n.

Gutierrez Laurent (eds.). (2011). *Histoire du mouvement de l'éducation nouvelle.* Paris: Carrefours de l'éducation, Armand Colin.

Halpern, C.; Le Galès, P. (01 2011). Pas d'action publique autonome sans instruments propres. Analyse comparée et longitudinale des politiques environnementales et urbaines de l'Union Européenne. *Revue française de science politique*, S. 51-78.

Hamnet, Chris; Butler, Tim & Ramsden, Mark. (01 2013). I wanted my child to go to a more mixed school' : schooling and ethnic mix in East London. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, S. 553-574.

Hegeler, H.-P. & Rademaker, H. (2005). Schulversäumnisse und die Wahrnehmungsprobleme der Schulverwaltung oder: wie man lernte, Schulversäumnisse zu fürchten. In B. P. Herz, *Problem Schulabsentismus. Wege zurück in die Schule* (S. 77-98). Julius Klinkhardt.

Helbig, M. & Nikolai R. (09. 11 2015). *Bildungsungleichheiten zwischen den Bundesländern – ein Überblick.* Von BpB: http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/213318/bildungsungleichheiten-ein-ueberblick abgerufen

Helsper, W. (2004). Pädagogisches Handeln in den Antinomien der Moderne. In H. H. Krüger, *Einführung in Grundbegriffe und Grundfragen der Erziehungswissenschaft* (S. 15-34). Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Henry, S. (02 2012). Histoire et témoignages d'infirmières visiteuses (1905-1938). *Recherche en soins infirmiers*, S. 44-56.

Hermann, U. (23. 10 2013). *Die Geschichte des Lernens mit Lehre.* Abgerufen am 2018. 09 17 von Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung : http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/170980/geschichte-des-lernens-mit-lehre?p=all

Hery, É. (01 2005). Les pratiques pédagogiques, objets d'histoire. *Carrefours de l'éducation*, S. 93-1005.

Herz, B.; Puhr, K.; Ricking, H (Hrsg.) . (2006). *Problem Schulabsentismus. Wege zurück in die Schule.* Julius Kinkhardt.

Inspection générale de l'Education nationale & Inspection générale de l'administration de l'Education nationale et de la Recherche. (2013). *Conséquences des mesures de l'assouplissement de la carte scolaire après 2007.* 2013: Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche.

Jacobi, J. (09. 09 2013). *Deutsche Bildungsgeschichte – eine Zeitleiste.* Von BpB: http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/145249/geschichte-des-bildungssystems abgerufen

Jacquart, A. (2007). *Mon utopie*. Paris: Stock.

Jobert, B. (1985). L'État en action. L'apport des politiques publiques. *Revue française de science politique*, S. 654-682.

Jobert, B. (2 2004). Une approche dialectique des politiques publiques. L'héritage de l'État en action. *Pôle Sud*, S. 43-54.

Kastirke, Nicole & Jennessen, Sven. (2006). Frau Bösen-Sell kommt bis zu den Sommerferien nicht mehr -krank, lustlos, überfordert? In G. Corina, & M. (. Martens, *Null Bock auf Schule? Schulmüdigkeit und Schulverweigerung aus Sicht der Wissenschaft und Praxis* (S. 103-106). Waxmann.

Kerbel, B. (08. 10 2015). *Inklusion: eine Schule für alle Kinder?* Von BpB: http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/213296/inklusion-worum-es-geht abgerufen

Kherroubi, M., Millet, M., Thin, D. (2005). *Classes relais et familles, accompagnement ou normalisation ?* Paris: CNFE-PJJ, coll. « Etudes et Recherches ».King, Vera; Müller, Burkhard (Hrsg). (2013). *Lebensgeschichten junger Frauen und Männer mit Migrationshintergrund in Deutschland und Frankreich.* Münster: Waxmann.

King, Vera & Müller, Burkhard (Hrsg). (2013). *Lebensgeschichten junger Frauen und Männer mit Migrationshintergrund in Deutschland und Frankreich.* Münster: Waxmann.

Kirszbaum, Thomas. (2015). *En finir avec les banlieues? Le désenchantement de la politique de la ville.* Paris: Editions de l'aube.

Kittl-Satran, H. in Zusammenarbeit mit Mayr, A.; Schiffer, B. und Scheipl J. (2006). *Schulschwänzen-Verweigern-Abbrechen. Eine Studie zur Situation an Österreichs Schulen.* Studien Verlag: Innsbrück.

Knollmann, Martin; Al-Mouhtasseb, Kinan and Hebebrand, Johannes . (2009). Schulverweigerung und psychische Störungen: Merkmale von schulverweigernden Kindern und Jugendlichen und ihren Familien einer kinder- und jugendpsychiatrischen „Schulverweigererambulanz“. *Prax. Kinderpsychol. Kinderpsychiat.*, S. 434-449.

Kraul, M. (10. 09 2014). *Privatschulen in Deutschland.* Abgerufen am 09. 10 2018 von Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung: http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/191321/privatschulen?p=all

Krüger, H.-H. & Rabe-Kleberg, U. u.a. (Hrsg.). (2011). *Bildungsungleichheit revisited. Bildung und soziale Ungleichheit vom Kindergarten bis zur Hochschule.* Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschafte.

Krüger-Hemmer, C. (03. 05 2016). *Allgemeinbildende und berufliche Schulen*. Abgerufen am 20. 08 2018 von Bildungszentrale für politische Bildung: http://www.bpb.de/nachschlagen/datenreport-2016/225426/allgemeinbildende-und-berufliche-schulen

Krüger-Hemmer, C. (03. 05 2016). *Der sozioökonomische Status der Schülerinnen und Schüler* . Abgerufen am 10. 10 2018 von BpB: http://www.bpb.de/nachschlagen/datenreport-2016/225435/der-soziooekonomische-status-der-schuelerinnen-und-schueler

Kühn, S. M. (25. 08 2015). *Der Streit um "G8": Kürzere Schulzeit, mehr Stress, weniger Bildung?* Von BpB: https://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/kultur/zukunft-bildung/211182/g8-versus-g9?p=all abgerufen

Kühne, S. (09. 09 2013). *Wie sich das deutsche Bildungssystem verändert. Entwicklungstrends in der deutschen Bildungslandschaft.* Abgerufen am 10. 10 2018 von BpB: http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/146188/ins-system-kommt-bewegung?p=all

Kupfer, A. (02 2010). The socio-political significance of changes to the vocational education system in Germany . *British Journal of Sociology in Education*, S. 85-97.

Lahire, B. (11-12 1992). L'inéglité devant la culture scolaire: le cas de l'expression écrite à l'école primaire. *Sociétés contemporaines*, S. 167-187.

Lahire, B. (1998). La réussite en milieux populaires ou conditions sociales d'une shizophrénie heureuse. *VEI-Enjeux*, S. 104-109.

Lascoumes, P. (09 2004). La Gouvernementalité : de la critique de l'État aux technologies du pouvoir . *Le Portique [En ligne]*, S. 1-15.

Laval, C. (2018). *Foucault, Bourdieu et la question néolibérale.* Paris: La Découverte.

Laval, C. (2018). *Foucault, Bourdieu et la question néolibérale.* Paris: La Découverte.

Lavoie, Gérard; Thomazet, Serge; Feuilladieu, Sylviane; Pelgrims, Greta; Ebersold, Serge. (2013). Construction sociale de la désignation des élèves à 'besoins éducatifs particuliers': incidences sur leur scolarisation et sur la formation des enseignants. *ALTER, European Journal of disability research*, S. 93-101.

Le Conseil National d'évaluation du système scolaire. (2016). *Comment l'école amplifie-t-elle les inégalités sociales et migratoires?* Paris: CNESCO.

Leibfried, S., Rusconi, A., Leuze, K., Martens, K. (Eds.). (2007). *New Arenas of Education Governance. The Impact of International Organizations and Markets on Educational Policy Making.* Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Leloup, S. (2000). La motivation : critère d'évaluation de la performance scolaire ? *Formation Emploi*, S. 35-47.

Leroy, D. (2013). Lernen und Sprache. In V. &. King, *Lebensgeschichten junger Frauen und Männer mit Migrationshintergrund in Deutschland und Frankreich* (S. 69-78). Münster: Waxmann.

Leroy, Delphine & Xavier Joel. (2013). Von Bücher und Radiowellen: das Lernen außerhalb der Schule. In B. M. Vera Kind, *Lebensgeschichten junger Frauen und Männer mit Migrationshintergrund in Deutschland und Frankreich* (S. 79-85). Münster: Waxmann.

Lipsky, M. (1980). *Street-level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services.* Russell Sage Foundation.

Loncle, P. (2012). "Politiques de jeunesse : de quoi parle-t-on ?". In Van De Velde, & Loncle (dir.), *Politique de jeunesse : le grand malentendu* (S. 15-31). Paris: Champ social.

Lorcerie, F. (05 2009). L'école, son territoire et l'ethnicité. *C.E.R.A.S | « Revue Projet »*, S. 64-71.

Lorcerie, F. (2003). *L'école et le défi ethnique. Éducation et intégration.* Paris: INRP-ESF.

Louis, E. (02 2014). 10 ans d'existence des assistants d'éducation, Quel bilan ? *Pour*, S. 7-15.

Lütgens, J. ; Mengilli, Y.; Pohl, A.; von Schwanenflügel, L. and Walther, A. (2015). *Partispace-German Report.* Frankfurt am M.: JWG Universität.

Lütgens, Jessica; Mengilli, Yağmur; Pohl, Axel; von Schwanenflügel, Larissa and Walther, Andreas Walther. (2015). *Partispace-German Report.* Frankfurt am M.: JWG Universität.

MacDonald, R. (2008). *Disconnected Youth? Social Exclusion, the 'Underclass' & Economic Marginality.* Von Social Work & Society, International Online Journal: https://www.socwork.net/sws/article/view/45/358 abgerufen

Maillard, Dominique; Merlin, Fanette ; Rouaud, Pascale ; Olaria, Manon (collab.). (04 2016). "Tous" mobilisés contre le décrochage scolaire - Variations autour d'un mot d'ordre national. *Céreq Bref*, 4p.p.

Maire, S. (16. 11 2018). Science et politique des « soft skills » de l'éducation à l'emploi. Sociologie d'un nouveau motif cognitif international. *PhD Thesis*. Starsbourg, France.

Martine Kherroubi, Mathias Millet, Daniel Thin. (2005). *Classes relais et familles, accompagnement ou normalisation ?* Paris: CNFE-PJJ, coll. « Etudes et Recherches ».

McDowell, Joanne; Živoder, Andreja & Tolomelli Alessandro. (2016). Comparing the views of students, parents and teachers on the emerging notions of relevance of education. In A. W. al., *Governance of Educational Trajectories in Europe* (S. 183-201). London: Bloosmbury.

MEN. (2014). *Tous mobilisés pour vaincre le décrochage scolaire.* Von education.gouv: http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/11_Novembre/10/9/2014_decrochage_scolaire_DP_369109.pdf abgerufen

Merle, P. (01 2011). La carte scolaire et son assouplissement: Politique de mixité sociale ou de ghettoïsation des établissements ? *Sociologie*, S. 37-50.

Merle, P. (04 2009). Les deux mondes de la violence scolaire. Statistique ministérielle versus expérience des élèves. *Enfances & Psy*, S. 91-101.

Merle, P. (07-09 1998). L'efficacité de l'enseignement. *Revue française de sociologie*, S. 565-589.

Merle, P. (2005). *L'élève humilié: l'école, un espace de non-droit.* Paris: PUF.

Merle, P. (2012). *La ségrégation scolaire.* Paris: La Découverte.

Merle, Pierre & Piquée, Céline . (07-12 2006). La mobilisation des élèves. Déterminants sociaux ou expérience subjective de l'école. *Carrefours de l'éducation*, S. 95-110.

Millet, M. & Thin, D. (2005). *Ruptures scolaires. L'école à l'épreuve de la question sociale.* Paris: PUF.

Ministerium für Kultus, J. u. (2019). *Gemeinschaftsschule*. Von km-bw.de: https://km-bw.de/Gemeinschaftsschule abgerufen

Ministerium für Kultus, J. u. (2019). *Gemeinschaftsschule*. Von km-bw.de: https://km-bw.de/Gemeinschaftsschule abgerufen

Ministerium für Kultus, J. u.-W. (2019). *Informationen zu Gemeinschaftsschule*. Von Ganztag: https://km-bw.de/,Lde/4185901 abgerufen

MKJS Baden-Württemberg in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Innenministerium Baden-Württemberg und dem Ministerium für Arbeit und Soziales Baden-Württemberg. (2006). *Aktiv gegen Schulschwänzen.* Handbuch.

Morel, S. (2014). *La médicalisation de l'échec scolaire.* Paris: La Dispute.

Muller, P. (04 2000). L'analyse cognitive des politiques publiques: vers une sociologie politique de l'action publique. *Revue française de science politique,* S. 189-207.

Munck, J. D. (06. 11 2011). Les trois dimensions de la sociologie critique. *SociologieS [En ligne]*. Von http://sociologies.revues.org/3576 abgerufen

Nationale, E. (06. 09 2012). *Assistants chargés de prévention et de sécurité.* Von education.gouv.fr: http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid285/bulletin_officiel.html?cid_bo=61301 abgerufen

Nida-Rümelin, J. (03. 02 2015). *Akademisierungswahn. Plädoyer für eine Umkehr der Bildungspolitik.* Von BpB: https://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/200385/akademisierungswahn abgerufen

Nil Idil Çakmak, T. (27. 09 2017). *Abgeordnete im neuen Bundestag. Viele Stef(ph)ans, wenige Frauen* . Von Tageschau.de: https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/btw17/hintergrund-neue-abgeordnete-101~_kapitel-2.html?fbclid=IwAR3Q84XFJwxto2ouPxt2qXIuzEdHS-My7IEgkSKdzXQBRsemHiupGV7bfWw abgerufen

Noiriel, G. (2007). *A quoi sert "l'identité nationale" ?* . Marseille: Agone.

Noiriel, G. (2017). *Une histoire populaire de la France: de la guerre de cent ans à nos jours.* Paris: Agone.

Oberti, M. (2007). *L'École dans la ville. Ségrégation, mixité, carte scolaire.* Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.

Observatoire des inégalités et Compas. (2018). *Rapport sur la pauvreté en France.* Observatoire des inégalités.

Observatoire des inégalités, (29. 11 2018). *L'Assemblée nationale ne compte quasiment plus de représentants des milieux populaires.* Von Observatoire des inégalités: https://www.inegalites.fr/L-Assemblee-nationale-ne-compte-quasiment-plus-de-representants-des-milieux?id_theme=18 abgerufen

Observatoire des Inégalités, Observatoire des sociétés. (2019, 01 24). *Tel père, tel fils ? L'inégalité des chances reste élevée.* Récupéré sur Observatoire des Inégalités: https://www.inegalites.fr/Tel-pere-tel-fils-L-inegalite-des-chances-reste-elevee

OECD. (2016). *Education at a Glance 2016.*

Oehme, A. (2007). Schulverweigerung. Subjektive Theorien von Jugendlichen zu den Bedingungen ihres Schulabsentismus. *Dissertation*. Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač.

Oschmiansky, F. (01. 10 2010). *Der Arbeitsbegriff im Wandel der Zeiten.* Von BpB: http://www.bpb.de/politik/innenpolitik/arbeitsmarktpolitik/55031/arbeitsbegriff?p=all abgerufen

Palier, B. (09 2000). Does Europe matter? Europeanisation et réforme des politiques sociales des pays de l'Union Européenne. *POlitique européenne*, S. 7-28.

Parreira do Amaral, M. & Rinne, R. (2013). Reading discourses in the governance of educational trajectories. In M. Parreira do Amaral, R. Dale, & P. Loncle, *Shaping the Futures of Young Europeans: education governance in eight European countries* (S. 67-86). Bloomsbury.

Parreira do Amaral, M.; Dale, R. & Loncle, P. (eds). (2015). *Shaping the Futures of Young Europeans - Education governance in eight European countries.* Oxford: Symposium Books

Paugam, S. (2013). *Les formes élémentaires de la pauvreté.* Paris: PUF.

Perrenoud, P. (1994, rééd. 2010). *Métier d'élève et sens du travail.* Paris : ESF.

Philip Christine, Philbert Marie-Christine. (01 2009). Auxiliaire de vie scolaire, un nouveau métier ? Présentation du dossier . *La nouvelle revue de l'adaptation et de la scolarisation*, S. 5-8.

Philip, C. (01 2009). Auxiliaire de vie scolaire, une fonction paradoxale ? *La nouvelle revue de l'adaptation et de la scolarisation*, S. 33-44.

Picketty, T. (2014). *Capital in the twenty-first century.* Cambridge, Massachussets, London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Pierre Merle & Céline Piquée. (07-12 2006). La mobilisation des élèves. Déterminants sociaux ou expérience subjective de l'école. *Carrefours de l'éducation*, S. 95-110.

Pincet, Y. (04 2002). Hector Malot, romancier de la jeunesse active et volontaire. *Revue de littérature comparée*, S. 479-471.

Pinçon, M. & Pinçon-Charlot, M. (2019). *Le Président des ultra-riches. Chronique du mépris de classe dans la politique d'Emmanuel Macron.* Paris: La Découverte.

Pinçon, Michel & Pinçon-Charlot Monique. (1999). Ehrenberg Alain, La fatigue d'être soi. Dépression et société. [compte-rendu]. *Revue française de sociologie*(40-4), S. 778-780.

Pingoud, K. (02 2004). Elaboration d'un référentiel de compétences pour exercer la profession d'infirmière en milieu scolaire. *Santé Publique*, S. 225-238.

Pohl, A. (2015). *Konstruktion von "Ethnizität" und "Benachteiligung". Eine international vergleichende Untersuchung von Unterstützungssystemen im Übergang Schule – Beruf.* Weinheim und Basel: Beltz Juventa.

Popp, K. (2006). Schulverweigerung aus Sicht unterschiedlicher Professionen. In C. &. Gentner, *Null Bock auf Schule?* (S. 163-188). Münster: Waxmann.

Prairat, E. (02 2014). Le scandale des exclusions ponctuelles de cours . *Administration & Éducation*, S. 45-47.

Prairat, E. (2011). « La réparation et l'exclusion ». In E. Prairat, *La sanction en éducation* (S. 96-106). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Premier Ministre; Ministère De L'éducation Nationale, De L'enseignement Supérieur Et De La Recherche; Ministère Du Travail, De L'emploi, De La Formation Professionnelle Et Du Dialogue Social. (2014). *Tous mobilisés pour vaincre le décrochage scolaire.* Paris: educ.gouv.

Prengel, A. (09. 09 2013). *Herausforderung: Heterogenität.* Abgerufen am 10. 10 2018 von BpB: http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/145242/heterogenitaet?p=0

Prodhomme, A. (02 2007). Le Gamin de Paris, figure de la réhabilitation. *VST - Vie sociale et traitements* , S. 30-39.

Promberger, M. (22. 11 2010). *Hartz IV im sechsten Jahr.* Von BpB: http://www.bpb.de/apuz/32345/hartz-iv-im-sechsten-jahr?p=all#fr-footnode3 abgerufen

Prost, A. (2013). *Du changement dans l'école. Les réformes de l'éducation de 1936 à nos jours.* Paris: Seuil.

Pudal, B. (2019). Une philosophie du mépris. *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 3.

Pudelko, T. (2015). *Dokumentation der Fachtagung. „Ganztagsschule als Chance Schulverweigerung zu reduzieren?".* Berlin: Der Paritätische Gesamtverband.

Radaelli, C. M. (04 2000). Logiques de pouvoirs et récits dans les politiques publiques de l'Union Européenne. *RFSP*, S. 255-275.

Raguideau, M. (01 2012). Enfants en souffrance, enseignants en difficulté. *Enfances & Psy*, S. 82-91.

Rauschenbach, T. (07. 05 2015). *Was macht das besondere Profil und die Identität einer Ganztagsschule aus?* Von BpB: http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/206232/ganztagsschule abgerufen

Raveaud, M. (2007). L'éducation comparée: nouveaux débats pour des paradygmes bicentenaires. *Revue Internationale de Politique Comparée*, S. 377-384.

Rayou P., van Zanten A. (2004). *Enquête sur les Nouveaux enseignants: changeront-ils l'école?* Paris: Bayard.

Reinecke-Terner, A. (2017). Schulsozialarbeit als Herstellen einer Zwischenbühne. In R.-T. A., *Schulsozialarbeit als Zwischenbühne. Beiträge zur Sozialen Arbeit an Schulen* (S. 251-293). Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

Rey, O. (01 2016). Le Changement, c'est comment? *Dossier de veille de l'IfE*, S. 1-28.

Rice, D. (2012). Street-Level Bureaucrats and the Welfare State: Toward a micro-institutionalist theory of policy implementation. *SAGE*, S. 1038-1062.

Ricking , Heinrich; Hagen, Tobias; Scheithauer, Herbert (Hrsg.) . (2016). *Schulabsentismus und Schulabbruch: Grundlagen - Diagnostik - Prävention (Brennpunkt Schule).* Kohlhammer.

Ricking, H. (2006). *Wenn Schüler dem Unterricht fernbleiben. Schulabsentismus als pädagogische Herausforderung* . Julius Klinkhardt.

Riedlinger, I.; Pohl, A. (2017). *FSJ auszeit - ein Projekt des Diakonischen Werk Württembergs. Abschlussbericht der Evaluation 2015-2017.* Tübingen: IRIS e.V.

Rolff, H.-G. (2016). *Schulentwicklung kompakt. Modelle, Instrumente, Perspektiven (3.).* Beltz.

Roux; S.; Sapiro, G. Sapiro; Charle, C. et Poupeau, F. (1-2 2014). Penser l'Etat. *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, S. 4-10.

Safont-Mottay, Claire; Oubrayrie-RousselNathalie & Prêteur Yves. (2010). Valeurs et attentes des collégiens et des collégiennes envers l'école : une mixité à construire. *Revue française de pédagogie*, S. 31-45.

Sälzer, C. (2010). *Schule und Absentismus. Individuelle und schulische Faktoren für jugentliches Schwänzverhalten.* Baden-Baden: VS.

Sälzer, C.; Trautwein, U.; Lüdtke, O.; Stamm, M.. (2012). Predicting adolescent truancy: the importance of distinguishing between different aspects of instructional quality. *Learning and Instruction*(22), S. 311-319.

Sander, U. (26. 05 2002). *100 Jahre Jugend in Deutschland.* Von BpB: http://www.bpb.de/apuz/25608/100-jahre-jugend-in-deutschland?p=all abgerufen

Sarfati, J.-J. (2013). Réflexions générales sur la politique de partenariat à l'école. *Éducation et socialisation [En ligne]*. doi:10.4000/edso.412

Schäfer, A. (2015). *Die Akademikerrepublik. Kein Platz für Arbeiter und Geringgebildete im Bundestag?* Von MPIfG: https://www.mpifg.de/forschung/forschung/themen/schaefer_akademikerrepublik.asp abgerufen

Schatz, Edward (ed.). (2009). *Political ethnography. What immersion contributes to the study of power.* Chicago: Chicago Press.

Schmidt, V. & Crespy, A. (2014). Néo-institutionnalisme discursif. In L. B. éd., *Dictionnaire des politiques publiques. 4e édition précédée d'un nouvel avant-propos* (S. 350-359). Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.

Schulz, Philip Frieg & Rebekka. (2014). *Hartz-IV empfänger nicht "faul". Eine Studie zur berufsbezogenen Persönlichkeit von Arbeit Suchenden und Berufstätigen.* Bochum: Bochum University.

Sellier, M. (1994). L'analyse sociétale des relations entre système éducatif et système productif. *Revue internationale d'éducation de Sèvres*, S. 35-45.

Sénat. (2015). *Le système d'apprentissage en Allemagne et en Autriche : un modèle à suivre ?* Paris: Sénat.

Sicot, F. (2005). Intégration scolaire : le handicap socioculturel a-t-il disparu ? [en ligne]. *Revue française des affaires sociales*, S. p. 273-293.

Sirota, R. (1993). Le métier d'élève (ou le retour à l'acteur). *Revue Française de pédagogie*, S. 85-108.

Solga, H. (02 2002). "Stigmatization by negative selection": Explaining less-educated people's decreasing employment opportunities. *European Sociological Review*, S. 159-178.

Sozialforschung, F. Q. (05 2014). Adele Clarke in Conversation With Reiner Keller. Engaging Complexities: Working Against Simplification as an Agenda for Qualitative Research Today. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung, 15*(2).

Speck, K. (2006). *Qualität und Evaluation in der Schulsozialarbeit. Konzepte, Rahmenbedingungen und Wirkungen.* . Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.

Speck, K. (2008). Schulsozialarbeit. In D. &. Kreft, *Wörterbuch Soziale Arbeit* (S. 473-479). Wiesbaden: Vs Verlag.

Spies, Anke & Pötter, Nicole . (2011). *Soziale Arbeit in Schulen. Eine Einführung.* Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Stamm, M.; Holzinger-Neulinger, M. & Suter, P.. (2012). *Schulabbrecher in unserem Bildungssystem.* Baden-Baden: Springer

Stauber and al. (2016). Understanding the interactive emergence fo educational inequalities through access and accessibility of education. In W. a. al., *Governance of educational trajectories in Europe* (S. 97-115). London: Blomsbury.

Stauber, B.; Parreira do Amaral, M.; Danic, I. (2016). Understanding the interactive emergence fo educational inequalities trhough access and accessibility of education. In W. a. al., *Governance of educational trajectories in Europe* (S. 97-115). London: Blomsbury.

Stavo-Debauge, J.; Roca i Escoda, M. & Hummel, C. (05 2017). Enquêter. Rater. Enquêter encore. Rater encore. Rater mieux. Presentation du dossier "penser les ratés de terrain". *SociologieS [en ligne]*. Von http://journals.openedition.org/sociologies/6084 abgerufen

Strauss, A. & Glaser, B. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* . New Brunswick (U.S.A) and London (U.K.): Aldine Transaction.

Strübing, J. (2014). *Grounded Theory. Zur sozialtheoretischen und epistemologischen Fundierung eines pragmatischen Forschungsstils.* Wiesbaden: Springer.

Taraud, Dominique ; Bellier, Jean-Pierre ; Ferreira, Renaud ; Gasnier, Anne & Thollon, Frédéric . (2015). *Bilan et perspectives relatifs à la classe de troisième préparatoire*

aux formations professionnelles. Paris: Ministère de l'Education Nationale, de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche.

Thimm, K. (2000). *Schulverweigerung. Zur Begründung eines neuen Verhältnisses von Sozialpädagogik und Schule.* Münster: Votum.

Tikkanen, Jenni; Biggart, Andy; Pohl, Axel. (2016). The diversity of education and welfare systems in Europe. In W. a. al., *Governance of educational trajectories in Europe* (S. 35-52). London: Bloomsbury.

Tillmann, K.-J. (16. 11 2015). *Das Sekundarschulsystem auf dem Weg in die Zweigliedrigkeit.* Abgerufen am 09. 10 2018 von Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung: http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/215556/zweigliedrigkeit

Topalov, C. (1994). *Naissance du chômeur.* Paris: Albin Michel.

Toupin, L. (2016). Le salaire au travail ménager, 1972-1977 : retour sur un courant féministe évanoui. *Recherches féministes,* S. 179-198.

Trautwein, Baumert, Maaz. (29. 06 2007). *Hauptschulen: Problemschulen?* Abgerufen am 20. 08 2018 von Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (BpB): http://www.bpb.de/apuz/30368/hauptschulen-problemschulen?p=all

Tricoire, M.; Pommier, J.; Deschamps J.-P. (1996). La santé scolaire en France: évolution et perspectives/ School health in France : evolution and perpectives. *Santé publique,* S. 257-267.

Troger, V. & Ruano-Borbalan, J.-C. (2009). *Histoire du système éducatif.* Paris: PUF.

Truong, F. (02 2010). Enseigner Pierre Bourdieu dans le 9.3 : ce que parler veut dire. *Idées économiques et sociales,* S. 72-77.

Tschirhart, A. (01 2013). Des surveillants généraux aux conseillers principaux d'éducation : histoire d'un héritage . *Carrefours de l'éducation,* S. 85-103.

Tucci, I. (02 2015). Analyse comparée des parcours scolaires de descendants d'immigrés en France et en Allemagne. *Revue française de pédagogie* , S. 47-60.

Tucci, I. (2014). Trajectoires scolaires et professionnelles de descendants d'immigrés en France et en Allemagne : des difficultés comparables ? In S. P. éd., *L'intégration inégale. Force, fragilité et rupture des liens sociaux.* (S. 329-346). Paris: PUF, « Le Lien social ».

Ule, Mirjana; Živoder, Andreja; Lunabba, Harry & du Bois-Reymond, Manuela. (2016). Teachers and Parents as Actors in the Students' Educational Transitions. In A. (. Walther, M. (. Parreira do Amaral, M. (. Cuconato, & R. (. Dale, *Governance of Educational Trajectories in Europe* (S. 247-264). London: Bloomsbury.

UNESCO. (kein Datum). *L'inclusion dans l'éducation.* Von UNESCO: https://fr.unesco.org/themes/inclusion-education abgerufen

UNICEF. (2016). *'Grandir en France' : un défi pour les 6-18 ans des quartiers prioritaires.* Paris: UNICEF.

Veil, M. (15. 10 2002). *Ganztagsschule mit Tradition: Frankreich.* Von Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung: http://www.bpb.de/apuz/26687/ganztagsschule-mit-tradition-frankreich?p=all#fr-footnodeid6 abgerufen

Verdier, E. (2000). “Analyse sociétale et changement institutionnel : le cas de l’éducation et de la formation professionnelle initiale”. In T. B. Tallard M., *Innovations institutionnelles et territoires* (S. 101-128). Paris: L'Harmattan.

Verhoeven, M., Orianne, J.-F. et Dupriez, V.. (2007). Vers des politiques d’éducation « capacitantes » ? *Formation emploi,* S. 93-107.

Verneuil Yves, Savoie Philippe. (2013). Encadrement éducatif et vie scolaire dans les établissements d'enseignement secondaire depuis le XVIIe siècle. *Carrefours de l'éducation,* S. 9-15.

Vigner, G. (02 2011). La maitrise de la langue : une construction institutionnelle ? . *Le français aujourd'hui,* S. 21-32.

Vigour, C. (2005). *La comparaison dans les sciences sociales.* Paris: Repères.

Wacquant, L. (2004). *Punir les pauvres. Le nouveau gouvernement de l’insécurité sociale.* Paris: Agone.

Wacquant, L. (2007). *Parias urbains. Ghetto, banlieues, Etat. Une sociologie comparée de la marginalité sociale.* Paris: La Découverte.

Wacquant, L. (2009). *The neoliberal government of social insecurity.* Georges Steinmetz.

Wacquant, L. (2012). Three steps to a historical anthropology of existing neoliberalism. *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale,* S. 66-79. doi:doi:10.1111/j.1469-8676.2011.00189.x

Wagner, Michael (Hrsg.). (2007). *Schulabsentismus. Soziologische Analysen zum Einfluss von Familie, Schule und Freundenkreis.* Weinheim und München: Juventa.

Walther, A.; Parreira do Amaral, M., Cuconato, M. and Dale, R. (2016). *Governance of educational trajectories in Europe.* London: Bloomsbury.

Weber, F. & Beaud, S.. (2010). *Guide de l'enquête de terrain* . Paris: La Découverte.

Weber, M. ((French Transl.), 2017). *L'éthique protestante et l'esprit du capitalisme.* Paris: Champs Classiques.

Wieckmann, J. (Mai/Juni 2009). Gemeinschaftsschule -ein neuer Begriff in der Bildungslandschaft. *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik,* S. 409-430.

Wissinger, J., Sephan, G., H. (Hrsg.). (2002). *Schulleitung. Forschung und Qualifizierung.* Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

Zamora, P. (02 2012). Le développement de l’apprentissage : une réponse à l’échec scolaire ? *Regards croisés sur l'économie,* S. 85-97.

Zanten, A. V. (2001). *L'école de la périphérie. Scolarité et ségrégation en banlieue.* Paris: PUF.

Zanten, A. V. (2005). *Les politiques d'éducation.* Paris: PUF.

Ziegler, P. D. (2015). *Stress-Studie 2015. Burn-out im Kinderzimmer: wie gestresst sind Kinder und Jugendliche in Deutschland ?* . Von Universität Bilefeld: http://kinderförderung.bepanthen.de/static/documents/03_Abstract_Ziegler.pdf abgerufen

Zinnecker, J. (1978). Die Schule als Hinterbühne oder Nachrichten aus dem Unterleben der Schüler. In G.-B. J. Reinert, *Schüler im Schulbetrieb. Berichte und Bilder vom Lernalltag, von* (S. 29-121). Hamburg: Reinbeck.

Zittoun, P. (2008). Référentiels et énoncés et politiques publiques : les idées en action . In W. P. GIRAUD O., *Les politiques publiques et démocratie* (S. 73-92). Paris: La Découverte.

Appendix

Useful indications to the subject and places.
This information aims to give an idea of the comparability of both French and German contexts.
Germany and Baden-Württemberg
Germany as a country has an overall population of 82.8 million inhabitants (Eurostat 2017) and is therefore the most populated country in the EU (16, 2 % of total EU population). According to Eurostat, in 2019, the unemployment rate in Germany is 3, 2 % (6, 5 % in the EU-average, 8, 8 % in France)[719]. But this does not reflect high geographical disparities of unemployment in Germany, neither does it highlight the growing issue of the "working poor" (I will develop this aspect in the dissertation). Germany contributes 21, 2 % of total EU GDP. As a federal republic it consists of 16 federal states (hereafter *Länder* or singular *Land*), where each is fully responsible for its own education system. In 2014 the total budget for education, research and science amounted to Euro 267.0 billion. This corresponds to 9.2 per cent of gross domestic product (Eurydice). *Länder* and local authorities count for 90% of educational expenditure. Private funding (firms, organizations…) is particularly important in professional education, tertiary education and lifelong learning.
Baden-Württemberg is the third most populated *Land* in Germany with 11 million inhabitants It is located in the south-west of Germany. Since 1952 Baden-Württemberg has been a region of immigration, to which it owes a substantial amount of its population growth (about 75% whilst the other 25% were gained through a higher birth rate than mortality rate). Immigrants are on average 10 years younger than the native population, which does not, however, compensate for an overall ageing of the population. This is generally the case in Germany, which is reflected in the age distribution of teachers: compared to many other European countries except Italy, Germany has a disproportionally high number of older teachers. Baden-Württemberg has the highest proportion of people with a foreign passport in Germany (12 % of the total population). 40 % of foreign residents come from the 27 EU-countries (Italy, Greece), with the second biggest group of immigrants coming from Turkey. In Stuttgart, Mannheim and Hallstadt every fourth or fifth person is a foreign national. Baden-Württemberg is an economically dynamic Land, based on a dense landscape of large and middle-size industries with international reputation (car industry, electronics). The Land contains many dynamic university cities, such as Stuttgart, Balenstadt, Tubingen, and Mannheim.

Sources: Eurostat [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20171003-1?inheritRedirect=true], 27/03/19. Eurostat, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs/visualisations#Ecotrends], 29/03/19. Eurydice [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/funding-education-31_en],

[719] The *unemployment rate* is the number of unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force based on International Labour Office (ILO) definition.

27/03/19. BpB: Wer finanziert das Bildungswesen? [http://www.bpb.de/208333/wer-finanziert-die-verschiedenen-bildungsbereiche-in-deutschland-2011], 27/03/19 Official Website of Baden-Württemberg [https://www.baden-wuerttemberg.de/de/unser-land/land-und-leute/bevoelkerung/], 27/03/19. Cramer, Bohl, du Bois-Reymond, "Comparative report teacher training", WP 3, GOETE, 2013 [http://www.goete.eu/project/work-programme/153-for-teachers]. BpB, Armut trotz Arbeit, 26.6.2018 [http://www.bpb.de/nachschlagen/zahlen-und-fakten/globalisierung/52684/armut-trotz-arbeit].

The Geschwister Scholl Gemeinschaftsschule (*GMS*)

The *GMS* is a lower secondary and integrated school form. The Geschwister Scholl *GMS* located in Baden-Württemberg, in a medium-sized town in the countryside between Stuttgart and Bretonville (university city), the capital city of Baden-Württemberg. In 2013, it started its transition from a *Realschule* into a comprehensive lower secondary school. According to the internal statistics (as of 1st of June 2017), 423 students are enrolled in the school of whom 70 have migrant backgrounds (first or second nationality). Among the 21 nationalities present on the school's register, we find most students' origins are either Turkish, from Bosnia-Herzegovina or Italy thus outnumbering the other nationalities. The school's statistics on the "inclusion" category mention three students with "emotional and developmental" disorders. On average, there are 26.4 students per class. Whilst both nationality and religion are part of the school's formal statistics, I was not provided with parents' socio-economic and/or educational status, despite my having requested them. In my dissertation, I will provide with some elements regarding the unequal distribution of social milieus and migration backgrounds across the different school forms (*Förderschule*, *Hauptschule*, *Reaschule*, *Gemeinschaftsschule*, *Gymnasium*).

France and Brittany

France has 67.19 million inhabitants (Insee 2018). According to Eurostat, the unemployment rate in France runs at around 9% (Eurostat 2018). In 2016, domestic expenditure in education amounted to 149.9 billion, or 6.7 % of the GDP. Contrary to Germany the state is the principal contributor (57, 3% in 2016), then decentralized authorities (23, 4%) then businesses (8, 4%) and lastly, private households (7,7 %). In 2018, 79. 9% of a generation graduated in general (and technological) upper secondary education.

Brittany is a region located in the north-west of France. In 2015, it counted 3,293,850 inhabitants, of which 47, 1 % are aged 45 or older. According to Insee, 34.5 % of the total population are between 0 and 29 years old. A national official report focused on the regional education system and performance shows that, similarly to Baden-Württemberg, gain of population come from a positive net migration while the original population is getting older as well.

73.1 % of the workforce (age 15-64) has an occupation and 8, 8% is unemployed. The female 15-24 age group are the most affected by unemployment. The capital city is Rennes, which is also a university city. More generally, Brittany is diverse, made of dynamic cities and extended countryside, more or less suffering from changing structural economic processes. In

this, access to public services and supply in terms of education and training is unequally distributed in the different local units. In 2000, the submentioned report on education in Brittany stresses a favourable social structure to educational performances according to the increase of intermediary and higher professions. Brittany is considered as a performant region in education according to specific indicators (e.g. rate of attainment in the baccalaureate, regular assessments in mathematics and French…). Like in Baden-Württemberg in Germany, Brittany has the lowest rate of "early school leavers" compared to other French regions.

Sources : educ.gouv. [Https://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/ENC_2018/90/6/enc18_web_1073906.pdf], 27/03/19 Eurostat : [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/guip/countryAction.do], 27/03/2019. Insee [https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/2011101?geo=REG-53#chiffre-cle-1]. Der Statistik Portal [https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/255393/umfrage/anteil-der-schulabsolventen-innen-mit-abitur-in-deutschland-nach-bundeslaendern/], 26/04/2019. Edelstein, B. & Grellmann, S., 2013, « Welche Abschlüsse erreichten Schüler früher und heute? », BpB [en ligne] [http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/bildung/zukunft-bildung/159282/welche-abschluesse-erreichten-schueler-frueher-und-heute], 26/04/2019. Rapport de Inspection générale de l'Éducation nationale et de l'administration de l'Education nationale et de la recherche (Septembre 2000) [en ligne] [http://media.education.gouv.fr/file/08/6/6086.pdf], 26/04/2019.

The "*collège REP* La Balikan"

It is located in one of the city's Priority Neighbourhoods, in which low-income population[720] groups are more concentrated. According to a local organization, which regularly draws up a socio-demographic portrait of these neighbourhoods[721] for the municipality, this is the suburban area which in 2015 contained the highest number of low-income families, as well as migrant backgrounds. The population with migrant backgrounds has been increasing over a couple of years, as well as the proportion of adolescents. A relative mix of ages live together, although with limited, even very limited income. There were 400 students enrolled in the lower secondary school in 2014. Of these 66 students are in special inclusion classes, 10 partially deaf are integrated in ordinary classes, and 56 are educated in a special unit (SEGPA).

According to internal statistics, students who need a scholarship are increasing in proportion to the total population (65.10 % in 2012; 68.09% in 2015).

Furthermore, the population of the school is very diverse from students' migrant backgrounds. I asked a special needs assistant whether she could give me a breakdown of the students in an ordinary class (5th grade). Here are the results:

Out of 19 students, 10 have different countries of origin: Guyana (1), Guadeloupe (2), Portugal (1), Italy (1), Turkey (3), Cape Verde (1), Guinea (1), Mayotte (1), Chechen

[720] See Insee definition in English: "The Priority Neighbourhoods are a new priority geographical area of urban policy, established by the 21 February 2014 planning law for urban affairs and urban cohesion of …" [https://www.insee.fr/en/metadonnees/definition/c2114], 26/03/2019.

[721] Which I cannot name without compromising the anonymity of the neighbourhood and as a consequence, of the school.

Republic (1), French (5). One can notice that, over 12 students with migration backgrounds, half of it comes from countries that are former French colonies.

PART 1 (Discourse analysis)

The following grid summarizes the texts that have been analysed to account for the narratives and measures that aim to trigger and frame policy-making at the local school level in France and Germany, Brittany and Baden-Württemberg with regard to young people, who are not likely to succeed in their secondary education (meaning graduating). These policy programmes[722], through their reference to the EU context, attest to the dissemination of a global narrative promoting the establishment of a "knowledge-based economy", including its normative vision of education and policy making.

Level of governance[723]	Author(s)	Title	Date	Target audience
European	Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving for the European Commission – experts, practitioners, policy-makers from 27 countries as well as key European stakeholder organisation and representatives of non-EU countries	Reducing Early School Leaving: key messages and policy support, Final report	November 2013	Policy-makers and national and subnational stakeholders in different fields of intervention

[722] This dissertation started in 2014. The texts, on which this chapter is based, have been identified with the help of a keyword search. The aim was to find textual productions, according to which discursive positions of different authorities at different levels of governance could be analysed.

[723] The reader must be aware of the different distribution of competence in educational policy in France and Germany. Traditionally the *Länder* are legally competent to decide about the organization of their educational system. The role of the federal government is to pay attention to the coherence of the ensemble. As for France, education policy has been traditionally centralised and implemented through devolved regional authorities. However, as I already mentioned, many studies have shown that traditional regulations of educational governance have changed in the context of the internationalisation of education. An approach through public policies might be more relevant to explain policy-making and outcomes than an approach centred on the form taken by institutions. For ex. Claire Dupuy explains that territorial inequality in education in France and Germany rather result from complex interactions between centralised and decentralised actors in their institutional contexts than from the federal or central organisation of educational governance.

Federal	Ministry for Family, Seniors, Women and Youths	Jugend und Chancen –Integration fördern Programm Schulverweigerung – Die 2. Chance Handbuch für Koordinierungsstellen	September 2008	Schools, institutions and organisations, which might be interested and involved in developing practices for dealing with dropouts on a cross-sectoral basis.
National	National Government	Tous mobilisés pour vaincre le décrochage scolaire	November 2014	Schools, local stakeholders, parents and students
Land	Minister for Education, Youth and Sport of Baden-Württemberg	Aktiv gegen Schulschwänzen. Handbuch	2006	Schools
Regional	Askoria[724]	Etude évaluative, accompagnement méthodologique et scientifique. Rapport final sur les Plateformes de Suivi et d'Appui aux Décrocheurs	2015	Regional policy-makers

[724] Askoria is a French training centre for social workers. In Rennes, it also has a research and development division. The research programme was ordered and financed by the regional government of Brittany.

Professionals in La Balikan during the research in 2016

Function, name, number of years working in the school	Main tasks/ themes	Professional status
Executive unit: General track: **Principal** (Christine Madec), 2 years, and **deputy** (Emile George), one year **Principal of the inclusion track** (Eric Robert, several years, was about to retire)	Elaboration and implementation of the school policy Extern/intern relations	Civil servants
Teachers (subjects) Interviews reported: Monique Louvard (French), 8 years Paul Jardin (French + FLS), 8 years Catherine Lejeune (sport), 10 years Sylvie Vaudrel (sport), 4 years Marc Ferdinand (maths), 10 years Simone Dubuy (German), 2 years Mohammed Touba (Spanish), 1 year	In and out-of-class activities	Civil servants: -Full time: 18 hours in front of the students) -contract teachers (often part-time, temporary occupation)
Student life department	principal educational	(temporary) CPE: civil

head of educational counselling (CPE) : Maud Rousselet (1 year) **Educational assistants** -Annie & Thomas (3 years) -Mohammed (1 year) -Julien (1 year)	advisor: coordinating roles between the head of the school, the administration, teachers, educational assistants, special needs assistants) Students' individual follow-up Discipline Management of lateness and absences Reception desk Supervision of the study room	servant, supervises the Educational assistants: temporary contract, official minimum wage
"Student Life assistants" (Special needs assistants) Odile Boulin (1 year) Dominique Amadé (2 years)	Individual supervision of students having learning problems / support to the student life department in improving the school climate	temporary contract, official minimum wage
officer in charge of prevention and security Fatima Zaoui (3 years)	School climate Problematic students « exclusion-inclusion » (a student is excluded from the class but not from the school) PSC1 training (preparing students for First Aid and CPR Certification)	temporary contract, official minimum wage
School social worker Valérie Pointeau, 3 years	Social work Project animation in cooperation with teachers	Civil servant

School Nurse, Aude Caillé, 6 years, was about to retire.	Socio-medical intervention Health prevention	Civil servant
Careers advisors), unknown (not mentioned)	Advise students and families individually Take part in related activities	Civil servant
Coordinator with outside schools and other local actors (not mentioned)	Facilitate links, communication and cooperation with other actors in the local area	Civil servant
(Administration, technical and cleaning staff)	Admin, technique, service, cleaning.	Unknown, non-relevant to the study

Professional landscape in the Geschwister Scholl Gemeinschaftsschule (GMS) in 2016-2017

Function, name, how many years in the school	Main Tasks/ thematic	Status
Principal (Friedrich Markel) 10 years	Elaboration and implementation of the school policy	Civil servants
Teachers (and intern students) Mathias Müller (History, English, Ethics), 4 years Birgit Rist (English, French, Religion), 5 years Leo Schatzl (Geography, German, English), 2 years	In- and out-of class activities, especially for class teachers. The tasks that *Vie scolaire staff* look after in France.	Civil servants (I did not get to know contract workers)
Two School social workers (*Schulsozialarbeiterin*), Dorothee Klein, 3 years (her colleague was not met or interviewed within this	50% in the *GMS*, 50% in another Gymnasium	Employed by a local welfare organisation, itself funded by the municipality

study)		
Special needs assistants (Lehrunterstützungskräfte)	Individual supervision of students with learning difficulties	Unknown
Afternoon educational assistants (Mittags- und Nachmittagsbetreurinnen) Kristine Maute, 1 year	After school animation and games, homework	Temporary contract, part-time job, low wages
External partners (all-day school model) such as sport and cultural organisations, youth work….		Unknown
Administration		Unknown, non-relevant to the study

The „ideal“ educational system in France

Preschool (3+ year-olds, compulsory)			
Primary education (6-10 years-olds) • CP • CE1 • CE2 • CM1 • CM2			
Lower secondary education (*collège*, 11-14 year-olds) • 6e • 5e • 4e • 3e In combination with „Adapted section of general and professional education“ (SEGPA) → *Brevet des collèges* (lower secondary school exam)			
General upper secondary education (lasts 3 years) • 2e • 1ère • Terminale (17 year-olds) → *BAC général*	Technological upper secondary education (lasts 3 years) • 2e • 1ère • Terminale (17 year-olds) → *BAC technologique*	Professional upper secondary education (lasts 2 years) • 2e pro/DEP/CAP1 • 1ère pro → *CAP / BEP* Terminale pro (17 year-olds) → *BAC professionnel*	Vocational education (lasts 3 years) Workplace + professional school → *CAP* (diploma)
University, elite school, technological university, work			Work

(adapted from Decréau, 2019, p. 109)

The „ideal“ educational system in Germany

Elementary education (non-compulsory) • *Kita* (0-2 year-olds) • *Kindergarten* (3-5 year-olds)					Special nursery („*Förderkindergarten*“)
Primary education (6-9 years-olds, Klasse 1-4)					
Primary school (*Grundschule*)					Special school („*Förderschule*“)
Lower secondary education (Klasse 5-10)					
Gymnasium → *Hauptschulabschluss (HSA)* → *Mittlerer Schulabschluss (MSA)*	Realschule → *HSA, MSA*	Hauptschule → Qualificatory → *HSA* (9th grade) → *MSA* (10th grade)	Gesamtschule (comprehensive schools), e.g. *Gemeinschaftsschule* → *HSA*, *MSA*	School forms with 2/3 educational tracks → *HSA*, *MSA*	Special school → *HSA*, *MSA* (if applicable)
	Vocational & training compensatory measures of the transitional system (*BVG*, *BVJ*, *BGJ* or 2-year *Berufsfachschule*)				
Upper secondary education (Klasse 11-13*)					
Gymnasium → *Abitur (Hochschulreife)* → *Specialized Abitur (Fachhochschulreife)*	Vocational & training education *Fachoberschule (FOS)*, *Berufsoberschule (BOS)*, Specialized Gynasium, Professional School → *Abitur* → *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife* → *Fachabitur* → *Vollzeitschulischer Berufsabschluss*	Dual education (professional school & firm) → Dual qualification	Professional school (full-time) → Professional qualification		Special school, Workshops (*WfbM*)
Tertiary education (19-24+ year-olds)					
University, Health care college, art school, teachers college, ...		Work	Gap year, voluntary year (*FJS*, *BFD*, ...)		Special school, social enterprise/sheltered workshop (*WfbM*)
Work					

(freely adapted from BPB: http://www.bpb.de/fsd/bildungsgrafik2/, 2013)

→ Typical transitions ↔ „Down-/upward“ transition *) G8 or G9

UNIVERSITE BRETAGNE LOIRE / DROIT ET SCIENCE POLITIQUE

EBERHARD KARLS UNIVERSITÄT TÜBINGEN

UNIVERSITÉ DE RENNES 1

Titre : **Que font les acteurs scolaires du « early school leaving »? Comparaison franco-allemande des interprétations et usages de ce mot d'ordre politique**

Mots clés : comparaison franco-allemande / gouvernance éducative / « décrochage scolaire » / usages et représentations

Résumé : Cette thèse porte sur l'étude de l'appréhension d'un mot d'ordre politique, à savoir la lutte contre les « sorties scolaires précoces » (« early school leaving »). Ce travail de recherche s'intéresse à la formulation et diffusion du problème à travers l'analyse de documents politiques français et allemands matérialisant sa mise à l'agenda à différents niveaux de l'action éducative. En cela, il cherche particulièrement à discuter le point selon lequel les acteurs de l'école auraient un rôle déterminant à jouer. Dans cette perspective, la recherche consiste également en une enquête concernant les perceptions qu'ont ces acteurs de ce problème construit dans les termes du projet européen d'une « Europe de la connaissance » compétitive, performante économiquement et socialement « plus » cohésive. Dans quelle mesure les acteurs de l'école perçoivent-ils leur responsabilité quant à la lutte contre les « sorties précoces » ? Ou encore leur capacité concrète pour peser face aux problèmes et difficultés diverses et variées qui peuvent influer négativement une trajectoire éducative ? Dans quelle mesure enfin les acteurs de l'école, pris dans leur diversité, tendent-ils à voir majoritairement dans l'école, chez l'individu et son environnement ou encore dans les choix politiques, la cause des « participations négatives » qui les conduit parfois exclure de leurs murs les éléments les plus perturbateurs ?

Quelle légitimité accordent-ils à ce nouveau combat, à la lumière de la nature historiquement sélective des systèmes éducatifs allemands (Bade Wurtemberg) et français, et des récents discours qui s'alarment aujourd'hui de la « massification » de l'enseignement supérieur. Lutter contre les « sorties précoces » et s'inquiéter de « l'envahissement » de l'Université, voilà qui est étrange ! Cette thèse tente de saisir les tenants et les aboutissants de ce combat au nom d'une meilleure « égalité des chances » à et par l'école, et de la perception qu'en ont ceux en charge de la réaliser. A l'aune de cette année 2020 (l'horizon repris par la « Stratégie Europe 2020 » dans la continuation de la Stratégie de Lisbonne), cette thèse permet également de discuter l'influence de l'Union européenne sur les agendas nationaux, régionaux et locaux traitant d'éducation –jusqu'à ceux, parfois, des principaux. Plus spécifiquement, elle propose une lecture interactive de la traduction de ce mot d'ordre mettant en lumière les filtres de nature structurelle, institutionnelle et individuelle mobilisés dans les discours et les usages.

Title : **How do school actors deal with "early school leaving"? A French-German comparison about the interpretations and usages of a political watchword**

Keywords : French-German comparison / educational governance / « early school leaving » / usages and representations

Abstract : This thesis questions the interpretation of a political watchword aiming at reducing « early school leaving ». This research addresses the formulation and dessimination of this problem through the analysis of French and German political programmatic at different levels of the educational governance and which give school actors a crucial responsibility in fighting it. So the second aspect of this research is to highlight the perceptions that these actors have of this responsibility through questioning their understanding of the problem, embedded in the narrative of the "knowledge society", economically "more competitive" and socially "more cohesive". At the edge of the year 2020 (the horizon of the Europe 2020 Strategy that continues on the former « Lisbon strategy ») this thesis discusses the influence of the European Union on shaping domestic educational agendas, from the national level to even the principals'. But more specifically, it allows to highlight the structural, institutional and individual filters through which this issue is interpreted, which lead to different interpretations of the reality and usages. How far do the school actors perceive their responsibility in fighting against "early school leaving"?

How do they identify their capacity to make the difference while facing some of their students' problems and difficulties that might influence their school trajectory negatively? Finally, how, on the whole, the school actors taken in all their diversity, tend to blame the school, the individual student and their environment or political choices for their early dropout or "negative participation", which sometimes leads schools to exclude the troublemakers? What legitimacy does this fight have in their eyes, in the light of the historical and selective nature of the French and German educational systems, and considering recent discourses that are alarmed regarding the expansion of tertiary education? Fighting against "early school leaving" and worrying about the "invasion" of the university, this sounds at first sight strange and contradictory! This thesis tries to grasp the whys and wherefores of this political fight in the name of better "equal opportunities" in and by school by analysing the perceptions of the actors in charge of realising them.