

“Central State Policy Implementation in France” in *Handbook of Public Policy Implementation*, edited by Fritz Sager, Céline Mavrot and Lael Keiser

Julie Pollard* and Claire Dupuy**

*University of Lausanne - IEP

** University of Louvain – ISPOLE

Abstract:

France has long been considered a paragon of centralization and still is, despite reforms toward increased regionalization and transfers of policy responsibilities to subnational governments since the 1980s, as well as European integration. In this chapter, we study the implementation of central state policy over the course of territorial restructuring. We review policy instruments and supervisory mechanisms in place allowing prefects and other central states officials to monitor the implementation of central state policies across the national territory before and after decentralization. We discuss the role of subnational governments and private actors as implementation players since the early days of centralization. Based on a systematic literature review and a broader range of research, this chapter offers a multilevel, diachronic and cross-policy sectors analysis. It discusses two partially conflicting analyses of the contemporary French state's role in implementation. The first emphasizes its ‘steering at a distance’ capacity, while the second suggests that the French state’s power to implement its decisions over the national territory hinges on how state actors actually make use of their resources in the course of implementation, which is not systematically the case.

1. Introduction

France has long been considered a paragon of centralization due to the comparatively high concentration of political and administrative power at the centre of the political system (for a comparative approach see Page and Goldsmith 1987). European integration and territorial restructuring, as initiated by the decentralization laws of 1982-1983, changed little to the understanding that the French central state could rely on a large array of resources to govern and, specifically, to implement centrally-devised public policies. After all, the central state kept the normative power (Pasquier 2015), a territorially dense network of public administrations and the largest share of public funding capacities. In that respect, whether before or after territorial restructuring, the state in France has been deemed able to monitor central state policy implementation due to the large array of resources it could rely on.

In this chapter, we empirically study this claim by looking at the implementation of central state policy over time and across policy sectors. Existing research converge in challenging an approach to central state policy implementation that grounds the French state’ decisive role in the amount of its manifold resources. As it is repeatedly reported, central state actors have depended on subnational governments¹, market actors and other non-public actors, such as associations, to implement central state policies. After decentralization particularly, there is evidence that central state actors have been diversely able to steer and monitor non-

¹ There are three levels of subnational governments in France: municipalities and intermunicipal structures, *départements* (subregional governments) and regions.

state actors' participation to the process of implementation despite a high level of administrative, legal, normative and financial resources. However, a debate is ongoing about the interpretation to be given to the central state's role in the implementation of its policies. Some argue that the French central state is still able to "steer at a distance" (Epstein 2020), while others suggest that the French state's power to implement its decisions over the national territory hinges on how state actors actually make use of their resources in the course of implementation (Dupuy and Pollard 2014).

This chapter's analysis started with a systematic literature review that followed the PRISMA protocol (Moher et al. 2009). We intended to systematically identify journal articles dealing with the issue of central state policy implementation in France from the 2010s beyond our respective sectors of specialization². It did not bring the expected results as many contributions that we knew dealt with policy implementation were not extracted from Scopus despite searches with relevant keywords; and many articles that were extracted based on a combination of keywords including 'policy implementation' and 'France' did not study *per se* the process of policy implementation. We can nonetheless derive two observations from this unsatisfactory attempt at a systematic literature review³: first, the issue of the implementation of central state policy in France is not conceptualized as such – in contrast to the implementation of European policies or the evolution of the French state in general. Articles providing theoretical contributions on implementation in France focus virtually exclusively on street-level bureaucracy (e.g. Dubois 1999, Spire 2008) while other dimensions, such as the specific role of local politicians or deconcentrated state administrations, are overlooked⁴. Second, relatedly, policy implementation in the French case is mostly studied from an empirical standpoint. Most articles consider implementation as a framework or a period for addressing other issues. Therefore, we draw both from the results of this 'systematic review of the literature', while discarding their systematicity, and other references to ensure that a large range of relevant contributions is considered.

In the remainder of the chapter, section two zeroes in on central state policy implementation before decentralization, while the next sections focus on the period following decentralization laws. Section three examines the main features of central state policy implementation in the context of territorial restructuring. Section four presents two conflicting analyses, grounded in empirical data, that accounts for the power of central state actors to steer and monitor implementation processes.

2. Central state policy implementation before territorial restructuring

In this section, we focus on central state policy implementation in France before the enactment of decentralization laws in the early 1980s. We present the long-prevalent ideal-typical model of implementation whereby the French state was depicted as a prototype of centralization able to control implementation. We then discuss this model based on empirical research which

² We are grateful to Ann Mireille Sautter for her research assistance on this matter. Our initial choice of a systematic literature review was driven by the objective to systematically identify the empirical findings and theoretical developments on policy implementation in France in the last decade. We aimed to build an exhaustive picture of the existing body of research on this issue, covering all sectors and irrespective of the methods or the theoretical approach featured in existing studies. It was also a way to identify seminal texts - recurrently quoted - from earlier scholarship.

³ We do not wish to engage in a broader debate about the relevance of the PRISMA method here.

⁴ In addition, articles dealing with central state power across the national territory that do not explicitly articulate it in terms of implementation were not included in the pool of articles extracted from Scopus based on our keyword searches.

highlights that the implementation of central state policy was dependent on central state actors' relationships with local elite and elected politicians.

2.1. An ideal-typical model of implementation

The ideal-typical model of policy implementation in France is described by Pierre Muller (1992). It was at its peak during the post-war years and during the "Trente Glorieuses" and began to be questioned in the 1970s. In this model, the state administration is directly responsible for the local implementation of public policies throughout the national territory. It organizes a fine coverage of the whole territory, through a large deconcentrated administration. The "deconcentration" process, which was presented as contributing to the modernization of the country, consisted in the relocation of services of the central administration in Paris throughout the national territory. The central state administration is "in charge of the deployment of the main economic activities on the territory and orchestrates local development" (Muller 1992, 281); while the deconcentrated public administration is responsible for integrating the sectoral policies defined at the central level and making them coherent in subnational territories. The central figure of the deconcentrated administration is the prefect, who serves as a direct representative of the central state in each *département* (subregional level). Prefects are deemed to both define and protect territorial interests, and ensure that national interests are respected and that central state policies are implemented. Like prefects, the deconcentrated administration is appointed and supervised by the central state. The central state thus deploys a significant part of its staff outside the capital city - especially compared to its European counterparts. Pierre Muller emphasizes the key role of "mediation of the administration, which has the essential task of adapting the rule of law to 'local contingencies'" (1992, 281). Muller illustrates this model with the case of the agricultural sector. From the 1950s onwards, deconcentrated administration representatives take over from local officials to impose management through corporatist vertical channels up to the *département*. So, in this ideal-typical account of the implementation of central state policy in pre-decentralization France, the central and deconcentrated state's administrative and normative resources are deemed decisive in allowing the state to control the implementation process. This is consistent with the prevailing view of a society entirely under state influence. In contrast, subnational governments' own resources are seen as residual (Mabileau 1991). Subnational governments would be unable to structure their own territory. Local elected officials were deemed incapable of implementing public policy, as they are accused of incompetence and suspected of potential corruption.

2.2. Tamed Jacobinism and the role of local governments and elites

How does this model of central state policy implementation in France fare in view of empirical research? Comparative research on centralized states in Europe in the late 1970's confirms that local governments in France were granted limited policy responsibilities (Page and Goldsmith 1987). Yet, it also indicates that local officials had access to central policy making through their holding of multiple mandates, both at the local and national levels of government. Seminal works on the French state before territorial restructuring further document this observation and its implications for central state policy implementation. Grémion coined the term "tamed Jacobinism" to describe the arrangements between deconcentrated state representatives in subnational territories and local officials based on the exchange of information and the capture of resources from the political centre (1978). Going a step further, Crozier and Thoenig suggested that the implementation of central state policies relied on a "joint regulation" of deconcentrated state administrations and local officials (1975, Duran and Thoenig 1996). The

implementation of central state policies by state authorities at the subnational level depended on local officials' participation, they argued: their information on local situations was traded against resources from the central level. As a consequence, central ministries adapted their policies to local circumstances to the extent that local officials could persuade them to do so, despite the uniformizing constraints of national policy objectives (Duran and Thoenig 1996, 586).

Interestingly, this scholarship highlights that the French territorial state in the pre-decentralization period could rely on extensive resources, specifically administrative ones, to implement central policies; while also being dependent on information provided by local governments, through their elected politicians (especially the mayors and the elected officials of the *départements*), in the process of implementation. Doing so, this body of work accounts for the territorial variation of the outputs of central policy implementation despite centralized policy-making, territorial uniformity goals of policymaking and the existence of a strictly hierarchical and descending administrative chain (in the case of education policy see Dupuy 2020).

3. Central state policy implementation after decentralization: Changing defining features

In this section, we turn to the period initiated by decentralization laws. Research on this period, beginning in the early 1980s, highlights how territorial restructuring has changed the defining features of central state policy implementation in comparison to the pre-decentralization period (for a broader overview on territorial restructuring in France, see Douillet et al. 2012, Barone 2011, Gourgues and Mazeaud 2018, Pinson and Le Galès 2005, Pasquier 2015, Faure et al. 2007, Le Lidec 2011, Le Galès 2008).

First, and most evidently, research conducted in several policy sectors suggests that the adoption of decentralization laws was not only conducive to expanding the range of policy responsibilities of French subnational governments (Hooghe et al. 2016), but also to increase their role in the implementation of central state policies. For instance, this is the case in secondary education policy where regional governments have been tasked with supplying teaching material to high-schoolers. In that case, while delegating the implementation, central state actors are still in charge of devising the policy and making decisions and they can draw from significant prescriptive, administrative, and financial resources for steering and controlling education through policy-making at the subnational level (Dupuy 2020). In other policy sectors, the larger participation of subnational governments in the implementation of central state policy is to the detriment of central state actors working in deconcentrated administrations (Aust and Cret 2012).

Second, the role of deconcentrated state administrations in policy implementation has been affected by decentralization, although differently over time. In the 1980s and 1990s, state actors at the subnational level were strengthened as deconcentration, that is, the transfer of policy responsibilities within the French state from the central to the subnational level, was thought of as a compensation for decentralization. In contrast, from the early 2000s, and particularly following the organic law on finance laws (LOLF) of August 2001, state reforms inspired by new public management considerably weakened the deconcentrated state institutions and actors (Bezès and Le Lidec 2016). These reforms were carried on during the 2010s, with important effects on central state policy implementation. Not only have subsequent steps of decentralization resulted in a decline of the *département* (subregional) level, which historically was where the deconcentrated state administration was the strongest; but the *Réforme de l'administration territoriale de l'État* (RéATE), enacted in 2010, also further

marginalized deconcentrated administrations in the implementation of central state policies (Poupeau 2013, Epstein 2020). Moreover, the involvement of deconcentrated administrations in implementation has also been increasingly challenged by the work of a growing number of agencies, as in urban or healthcare policy.

Third, after decentralization, the implementation of central state policies has also increasingly relied on the participation of private actors. Various forms of delegation to private actors have emerged and developed in recent decades. For instance, in a study of the implementation of a legal right to housing in France, Weill suggests that involved non-profit organizations serve as a street-level bureaucracy and reinforce the implementation of a targeted conception of the right to housing (2014). He shows how they have acquired a decisive position in implementation, as the beneficiaries they select and accompany are much more likely to have their rights recognized. Also in the field of housing, Pollard shows that the sharp rise of tax expenditures set up by the central government also relies on implementation by private actors - in this case, companies: real estate developers, builders, banking and marketing networks, and engineering consultancies (2018). Delegation of implementation to private actors, which is on the agenda in France as in other West European countries, takes different forms, even in the same sector, as illustrated by migration policy. On the one hand, research reports the broadening of actors involved in implementation (Cottin-Marx et al. 2017), with NGOs, international organizations, private companies, employers, and even citizens, becoming full-fledged implementers of central state migration policy (Hamidi and Paquet 2019). This evolution has resulted in changes in the very profile of non-state actors involved, associations in a first place, where their professionalized management functions have gained prominence, if not taken over their militant functions. The management of newly arrived migrant populations illustrates this change. On the other hand, the role of private actors as implementers of central state policy has altered their relationships with the French state (e.g. Cottin-Marx et al. 2017, Robelet 2017).

4. A steering and monitoring French state? Two conflicting analyses

In the face of these defining features of the implementation of central state policies since decentralization, first and foremost the increased role of subnational governments and private actors and the decline of deconcentrated state administrations, how are we to analyse the French state's role? Does the central state in France steer and monitor the implementation process of its policies under these renewed political conditions? There is an ongoing debate as interpretations differ as to the (renewed) role of the central state. Two partially conflicting analyses illuminate this question. We start with a body of works that shows how central state actors have relied on a renewed set of policy instruments to monitor and steer subnational governments when the latter are in charge of implementing state policies. We then present another strand of research that challenges these results by reporting that central state actors do not always commit their resources in the process of policy implementation and, thereby, that the process of central policy implementation is ultimately shaped by other actors, that is, subnational governments and private actors.

4.1. "Steering at a distance": The renewed role of the central state in implementation

A recent scholarship emphasizes the persistence of central state capacity to steer the implementation process in a context where the centre-periphery model has been upset (Epstein 2013, 2005, Cole 2008, Aust and Crespy 2009, Pinson 2010, Cole 2011, Aust and Cret 2012, Le Galès 2008). This strand of research studies the state's resources, (new) policy instruments and administrative arrangements, and how they impact upon the implementation of the policies

of the central state. Works report that in this new context, central state actors resort to policy instruments that already existed to implement their policies, which may result in transformative policy changes as in the case of French higher education (Aust and Crespy 2009). There is also cross-sector evidence that central state policies have relied on a range of new policy instruments, allowing the central state to steer and monitor the implementation process. These instruments share a neo-managerial component, whether they take the form of calls for projects, support to experiments or conditionality in financial subsidies, and are applied in policy sectors as diverse as urban policy and coastal protection (Béal and Pinson 2015, Rocle and Salles 2018, Epstein 2013). These policy instruments allow the central state to “to reinforce its capacity for steering public policy at the local level, or at least give credit to this capacity in a few particularly visible areas” (Béal and Pinson 2015, 415).

The “steering at a distance” argument is a clear instance of this type of analysis (Epstein 2005, Cole 2008). In this approach, particular attention is paid to changes in the central state’s policy instruments to document a renewed role of the State in the implementation of policies - despite limited (financial) resources. Two types of instruments are pointed out. Soft instruments, such as calls for projects and the creation of labels, which set up competition between territories, are gaining ground. The rise of agencies is the second component of the state’s power over implementation. In France as in other Western countries, agencification corresponds to a restructuring of the administrative organization where government activities are transferred to administrative bodies formally outside ministerial departments (Verhoest et al. 2016). It has been interpreted as a defining dimension of the restructuring of central states, specifically as a form of renewal of state power which allows central states to play a leading role in implementation. In the French case, their role has been investigated mainly in the health and urban renewal sectors. In the case of urban renewal for instance, Epstein shows how the National Agency for Urban Renewal (*Agence nationale pour la rénovation urbaine*) bypassed deconcentrated administrations and pushed for demolition-reconstruction operations, as decided at the national level. As argued by Epstein, “the institutional reforms of the first decade of the new millennium thus gave rise to new mechanisms of centralization, no longer based on hierarchy or negotiation but on competition and emulation” (2020, 103). These specific policy instruments geared toward competition, so Epstein’s somewhat paradoxical argument goes, are instrumental to central state actors regaining the upper hand in the implementation process in the context of territorial restructuring, where subnational governments were allocated with additional policy responsibilities (2020). In essence, they allow central state actors to control from the centre the implementation of national and subnational policies in subnational territories. This analysis derives from fine-grained studies of urban renewal in France (Epstein 2013) and labels (Béal, Epstein, and Pinson 2015).

Overall therefore, following this line of research, territorial restructuring in France has expanded the role of subnational governments in the implementation of central state policies, while at the same time the central state has been able, through new managerial policy instruments, though not exclusively, to carve out control and steering capacities from the centre.

4.2. “A Dethroned King”: The limits to the weight of the French state in implementation

Another strand of research challenges the generalisability of the results of the ‘steering at a distance’ scholarship by taking a larger view on whether and how central state actors make actually use of their resources, including policy instruments, in the process of implementation. A key approach in this body of research is to study central state actors in a multi-level perspective and, specifically, to differentiate between an aggregate level of resources available to the central state from a specific set thereof that deconcentrated state actors can act upon during the process of implementation. Relatedly, this approach also features a focus on the

resources of each type of actors involved in implementation, and not exclusively those endowed with the most resources or the formal leading position. Strikingly, this line of works empirically shows, across policy sectors, that central state actors, specifically deconcentrated state actors, do not always commit their resources in the process of implementation, lack relevant resources or face non-state actors that use resources of their own to shape the implementation of central state policies. As a result, this scholarship suggests that the French state does neither systematically monitor implementation nor is able to steer the implementation process.

A first dimension pertains to how central state actors are able to actually influence political and social actors in the subnational territories, including but not exclusively subnational governments. In their study of the transfer of the minimum income scheme (*revenu minimum d'insertion*), Reiter and Kuhlmann show that the central state “did not secure its own position on the ground” and “retreated completely from its social inclusion activities at the level of the *départements*” (2016, 268). While nominally this policy has remained a national policy, whereby state actors at the central level have kept control of policymaking, deconcentrated state actors lack political authority to steer how subnational governments implement this policy. Other studies confirm that central state actors may have a restricted ability to coordinate the intervention of non-state actors in their own policy areas despite benefiting from considerable amounts of resources. Studying tax incentives to boost investment in private rental property, Pollard reveals the discrepancy between the set up and the effective implementation of these instruments by the central state (Pollard 2018). On the one hand, these tools reveal a renewed state capacity to encourage new housing production; but on the other hand, empirical evidence indicates the state's difficulty in controlling their implementation – especially by real-estate developers⁵ – across the national territory. For instance, despite the main objective of encouraging construction in areas where the demand is high, such tools have long been used for construction in zones where housing needs were not as strong. In some areas, the overproduction of new housing or the artificial increase in rental prices were also pointed out as evidence of the State's inability to steer implementation.

Second, in some cases, state actors' ability to coordinate and impact on subnational governments faces a major constraint: subnational governments and private actors have their own resources available to them for negotiating and implementing the state policy. Going back to the transfer of the minimum income scheme to subnational governments (*départements*), Hemker shows how subnational elected politicians used “ ‘subterranean’ administrative measures that affect how easily benefits are accessible for recipients” (2017, 188). Specifically, he points to subnational executives' partisanship and the budgetary constraints their government face. He concludes that “local political environments shape social policy implementation within a nominally national policy” (Hemker 2017, 189). In the field of education in France, deconcentrated state actors face limits when it comes to acting on non-state actors on the ground as regional governments benefit from a range of financial, knowledge-related and positional resources that allow them to negotiate the implementation of central state policy with deconcentrated state actors (Dupuy 2020). Specifically, regional governments have direct relationships with school principals which allow them to assess deconcentrated state actors' policy requirements in a contradictory fashion. These direct relationships have often been facilitated by the professional background of regional governments' education division heads, for the latter are often former staff of the ministry for national education. They thereby possess knowledge of internal operations within the education deconcentrated administration and the central ministry (see also Dupuy and Pollard 2014). In

⁵ They publicize the existence of such incentives, organize marketing campaigns to promote these schemes, and also create housing whose features allow to maximize the tax breaks granted by the state.

cases, it results in regional governments enjoying a significant autonomy in implementing central state education policy.

Last, focusing on state knowledge on non-state actor's activities, when they are in charge of implementing state policies, is also an indicator of the actual weight of the state in implementation. This perspective expands on James Scott's analysis that states seek data to make legible the aspects of their environment with which they are involved (1998). Focusing on education and housing, Dupuy and Pollard (2014) show that the central state has given up on developing proper tools to monitor the activities of subnational governments and private actors related to the implementation of state policies. For instance, in education, the central state has developed no knowledge instrument at all to inform itself of regional governments' pedagogical support programs. This is thus a serious limit on the state's capacity to exert control and to implement decisions in the subnational territories.

In sum, the empirical research presented here concludes that non-state actors contribute to shaping central state policy implementation. But rather than offering a definitive answer to the question of how the French central state control and monitor the implementation process of centrally-devised policies, this scholarship provides with an approach attuned not only to sectoral variation, but also to the specific configurations of actors involved in implementation and the extent to which they make actual use of their resources in the process. Instead of focusing on the weight of the state as such, this research suggests to study instead the capability of the French state to implement its policies (for a theoretical elaboration on this point see Soifer and vom Hau 2008, Soifer 2008, Dupuy and Pollard 2014).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we qualified the long-held representation of a centralized French state that directly implements its own policies throughout the national territory by relying on a strong deconcentrated administration. In the period prior to decentralization, as well as in the period following it, the central state plays along with other actors who have a significant role in implementation, primarily subnational governments. After the decentralization laws of the early 1980s, the features of central state policy implementation in France have dramatically changed: subnational governments have gained prominence, the deconcentrated administrations have been weakened and private actors have been delegated responsibilities in the process of implementation. However, the period is not uniform: in addition to sectoral variation, that pertains to actors tasked with implementation and the type of policy instruments implemented, successive reforms of the organization of the central state and further decentralizations steps from 2000 onwards have altered central state policy implementation.

We discussed two main analyses that assess the role of the French state in the implementation of its own policies. The first, termed "steering at a distance" (Epstein 2013), emphasizes the new instruments of the state to maintain (or regain) control over implementation. These instruments bypass deconcentrated administrations and put subnational governments in competition with each other. The second analysis describes the central state as a "dethroned king" (Dupuy and Pollard 2014) and emphasizes the gap between the state's resources and their actual use in the course of implementation. It focuses on the state's ability (or inability) to effectively coordinate and supervise actors in charge of implementing state policies, as well as on the state's capability to know and evaluate implementation activities led by other actors like subnational governments and private actors.

Beyond the French case, this second approach thus highlights the relational nature of implementation and the insights gained from focusing on specific configurations of actors in order to describe and analyse the implementation of central state policies. This approach also

suggests how rewarding research that closely articulate state power and policy implementation can be. Michael Mann's (1984) analysis of state infrastructural power, as the capacity to implement policies throughout the national territory, revisited by Soifer and Vom Hau (2008), provides a heuristic framework in that respect. Exploring further the distinction between the *capability* of the state to exercise control on implementation (focusing on the existence of resources at disposal) and the *weight* of the state in the subnational territories (focusing on the actual use of resources) opens exciting avenues for research.

Bio

Julie Pollard is senior lecturer in policy analysis at the Institute for political science of the University of Lausanne (Switzerland). Her background is in political science, sociology and urban studies. She specializes in urban policy analysis in Western Europe. Her main topics of research are: economic private actors in public policies, housing policies and regulation, comparative and qualitative approaches to urban policies and multi-level governance.

Claire Dupuy is a professor of comparative politics at University of Louvain – ISPOLE (Belgium). She specializes in comparative public policy with a focus on state transformations and regionalization processes in Western Europe. Her research interests also include collaborative governance and administrative burdens, as well as policy feedbacks and how policy changes impact on citizens' (dis)affection toward politics.

References

- Aust, Jérôme, and Cécile Crespy. 2009. "Napoléon renversé ? Institutionnalisation des Pôles de recherche et d'enseignement supérieur et réforme du système académique français." *Revue française de science politique* 59 (5):915-938.
- Aust, Jérôme, and Benoit Cret. 2012. "L'Etat entre retrait et réinvestissement des territoires. Les Délégués régionaux à la recherche et à la technologie face aux recompositions de l'action publique." *Revue française de sociologie* 53 (1):3-33.
- Barone, Sylvain. 2011. *Les politiques régionales en France*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Béal, Vincent, Renaud Epstein, and Gilles Pinson. 2015. "La circulation croisée. Modèles, labels et bonnes pratiques dans les rapports centre-périphérie." *Gouvernement et action publique* 4 (3):103-127.
- Béal, Vincent, and Gilles Pinson. 2015. "From the Governance of Sustainability to the Management of Climate Change: Reshaping Urban Policies and Central-Local Relations in France." *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning* 17 (3):402-419.
- Bezes, Philippe, and Patrick Le Lidec. 2016. "Politiques de la fusion. Les nouvelles frontières de l'État territorial." *Revue française de science politique* 66 (3-4):507-541.
- Cole, Alistair. 2008. *Governing and Governance in France*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Cole, Alistair. 2011. "The French State and its Territorial Challenges." *Working Paper du Projet transversal rEr de Sciences Po Paris* avril.
- Cottin-Marx, Simon, Matthieu Hély, Gilles Jeannot, and Maud Simonet. 2017. "La recomposition des relations entre l'État et les associations : désengagements et réengagements." *Revue française d'administration publique* 163 (3):463-476.
- Crozier, Michel, and Jean-Claude Thoenig. 1975. "La régulation des systèmes organisés complexes. Le cas du système de décision politico-administratif local en France." *Revue française de sociologie* 16 (1):3-32.

- Douillet, Anne-Cécile, Alain Faure, Charlotte Halpern, and Jean-Philippe Leresche. 2012. *L'action publique locale dans tous ses états. Différenciation et standardisation*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Dubois, Vincent. 1999. *La vie au guichet. Relation administrative et traitement de la misère*. Paris: Economica.
- Dupuy, Claire. 2020. *Converging Regional Education Policy in France and Germany*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dupuy, Claire, and Julie Pollard. 2014. "A Dethroned King? The Limits of State Infrastructural Power in France." *Public Administration* 92 (4):359-374.
- Duran, Patrice, and Jean-Claude Thoenig. 1996. "L'Etat et la gestion publique territoriale." *Revue française de science politique* 46 (4):580-622.
- Epstein, Renaud. 2005. "Gouverner à distance. Quans l'Etat se retire des territoires." *Esprit* (319):96-111.
- Epstein, Renaud. 2013. *La rénovation urbaine. Démolition-reconstruction de l'Etat*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.
- Epstein, Renaud. 2020. "Un demi-siècle après Pierre Grémion: Ressaisir la centralisation à partir de la périphérie." *Revue française de science politique* 70 (1):101-117.
- Faure, Alain, Jean-Pierre Leresche, Pierre Muller, and Stéphane Nahrath. 2007. *Action publique et changements d'échelles : les nouvelles focales du politique*. Grenoble: L'Harmattan.
- Gourgues, Guillaume, and Alice Mazeaud. 2018. "Une décennie de démocratie participative régionale, pour rien ?" In *30 ans de démocratie régionale*, edited by Romain Pasquier and Tudi Kernalegen. Berger-Levrault.
- Grémion, Pierre. 1978. *Le pouvoir périphérique. Bureaucrates et notables dans le système politique français*. Paris: Seuil.
- Hamidi, Camille, and Mireille Paquet. 2019. "Redessiner les contours de l'État : la mise en oeuvre des politiques migratoires." *Lien social et Politiques* 83:5-35.
- Hemker, Johannes. 2017. "The Political Economy of Social Policy Implementation: Evidence from the Decentralization of the RMI in France." *French Politics* 15:187-222.
- Hooghe, Liesbet, Gary Marks, Arjan Schakel, Sandi Chapman Osterkatz, Sara Niedzwiecki, and Sarah Shair-Rosenfield. 2016. *A Postfunctionalist Theory of Governance. Volume I: Measuring Regional Authority*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Le Galès, Patrick. 2008. "The Ongoing March of Decentralization within the Post-Jacobin State." In *Changing France. The Politics that Markets make*, edited by Pepper D. Culpepper, Peter A. Hall and Bruno Palier, 198-219. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Le Lidec, Patrick. 2011. "La décentralisation, la structure du financement et les jeux de transfert d'impopularité." In *Gouverner (par) les finances publiques*, 149-192. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.
- Mabileau, Albert. 1991. *Le système local En France*. Paris: Montchrestien.
- Mann, Michael. 1984. "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results." *Archives européennes de sociologie* 25:185-213.
- Moher, David, Alessandro Liberati, Jennifer Tetzlaff, and Douglas G. Altman. 2009. "Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses: the PRISMA Statement." *Annals of Internal Medicine* 151 (4):264-269.
- Muller, Pierre. 1992. "Entre le local et l'Europe. La crise du modèle français de politiques publiques." *Revue française de science politique* 42 (2):275-297.
- Page, Edward C., and Michael J. Goldsmith. 1987. *Central and Local Government Relations. Comparative Analysis of West European Unitary States*. London: Sage Publ.
- Pasquier, Romain. 2015. *Regional Governance and Power in France. The Dynamics of Political Space*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Pinson, Gilles. 2010. "France." In *Changing Government Relations in Europe. From Localism to Intergovernmentalism*, edited by Michael J. Goldsmith and Edward C. Page, 68–87. London: Routledge.
- Pinson, Gilles, and Patrick Le Galès. 2005. "State Restructuring and Decentralisation Dynamics in France: Politics is the Driving Force." *Cahier européen du pôle Ville/ Métropolis/ Cosmopolis* (07/05).
- Pollard, Julie. 2018. *L'État, le promoteur et le maire: la fabrication des politiques du logement*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.
- Poupeau, François-Mathieu. 2013. "L'émergence d'un État régional pilote. La recomposition des jeux administratifs autour du ministère de l'Écologie et du Développement durable dans une région française." *Gouvernement et action publique* 2 (2):249-277.
- Reiter, Renate, and Sabine Kuhlmann. 2016. "Decentralization of the French Welfare State: From 'Big Bang' to 'Muddling Through'." *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 82 (2):255-272.
- Robelet, Magali. 2017. "Les transformations des modes de contrôle croisés entre associations et autorités publiques dans le secteur du handicap." *Revue française d'administration publique* 163 (3):599.
- Rocle, Nicolas, and Denis Salles. 2018. "'Pioneers but not Guinea Pigs': Experimenting with Climate Change Adaptation in French Coastal Areas." *Policy Sciences* 51:231-247.
- Scott, James. 1998. *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Soifer, Hillel. 2008. "State Infrastructural Power: Approaches to Conceptualization and Measurement." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 43 (3-4):231-251.
- Soifer, Hillel, and Matthias vom Hau. 2008. "Unpacking the Strength of the State: The Utility of State Infrastructural Power." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 43 (3-4):219-230.
- Spire, Alexis. 2008. *Accueillir ou reconduire. Enquête sur les guichets de l'immigration*. Paris: Raisons d'agir.
- Verhoest, Koen, Sandra Van Thiel, Geert Bouckaert, and Per Laegreid, eds. 2016. *Government Agencies: Practices and Lessons from 30 Countries*. Springer.
- Weill, Pierre-Édouard. 2014. "Quand les associations font office de street-level bureaucracy. Le travail quotidien en faveur de l'accès au droit au logement opposable." *Sociologie du travail* 56 (3):298–319.