European Journal of Education, Vol. 45, No. 1, 2010, Part I

Global Knowledge-based Policy in Fragmented Societies: the case of curriculum reform in French-speaking Belgium[1]

ERIC MANGEZ

Introduction

Belgium has often been described as a consociational democracy stemming from a sharply segmented society (Lijphart, 1979). It is both a federation and a consociation. Its linguistic divisions account for the fact that it is a federation. Its denominational divisions (which have existed for much longer) account for the fact that it is a consociation. Our focus here is on the consociational arrangements within French-speaking Belgium. Consociational democracies usually arise in societies where several integrated sociological communities live side by side on the same territory (Lijphart, 1977). These communities can be based on race, language or religion. In Belgium, they are based on religion: they constitute denominational segments of society.

The fact that they are denominational means they are based on belief and values. Historically, two separate communities (Catholic and non-Catholic) upheld different values and viewed the world and their place in it differently. They agreed to live together solely on the basis of a 'pact', according to which each community would be given equal rights to organise its own collective life (Mabille, 2000). This allowed each community to create a wide range of organisations dealing with almost every aspect of daily life, i.e. a pillar. Today, each 'pillar' has educational services (pre-schools, primary and secondary schools), training services, higher education institutions (universities and hautes écoles), health care services, health insurance, hospitals, trade unions, youth organisations and political parties. It is said of pillars that they care for their people 'from the cradle to the grave'. One should note that, while Catholics developed their own 'network' of schools, non-Catholics did not: rather, non-Catholics massively attended schools governed by various public bodies (whether local, regional or national). The latter can therefore be said to belong to the secular pillar. It should also be emphasised that, in consociational systems, the 'real' policy-makers are not the politicians, at least not primarily. In the education sector, those who make education policy are the elites who run the different networks. Until recently, for a wide number of issues, the only agreement they could ever reach was to allow each network to choose its own form of organisation. This applied to curriculum, teaching methods, examinations, standards, enrolment and expulsion, inspection, recruitment, etc. This, in itself, is typical of a consociational policy arrangement: communities agreeing that there would be no common policy (each would mind

© 2010 The Author. Journal compilation © 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 9600 Garsington Road, Oxford OX4 2DQ, UK and 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148, USA.

its own business and take care of its own interests). It is also the ground for peace between communities.

The question we will deal with here is that of the possible implications of such an arrangement for knowledge use and circulation in the education sector. We differentiate between: (1) a core historical trend in which consociational democracies are not likely to generate knowledge-driven policy communities, since discretion and secrecy are needed to keep the peace; and (2) a more recent and partially exogenous trend that encourages the education-policy community in Belgium to be less discreet and increase joint regulation. For this trend, we will take curriculum reform as a case study.

Discretion and Compromise versus Knowledge and Expertise

Our main point is that the consociational democracy that prevails in Belgium (Seiler, 1997) does not encourage knowledge use and circulation across the policy community. The main argument is that discretion and secrecy constitute fundamental requirements of a pillarised society. As Lijphart (1977, pp. 41–44) indicates, one of the main principles (Boogards, 1998) that enables such democracies to function peacefully is segmental autonomy ('autonomie segmentaire'). In The Netherlands (which used to be a consociational democracy), one encounters the principle of 'gedogen', which is a virtually untranslatable Dutch term that means 'looking the other way when you must' (Van Der Hoek, 2000). According to this principle, once an agreement is reached regarding the distribution of resources among segments (pillars), each pillar 'minds its own business' so that all parties involved benefit from a relative autonomy. Segments then do not need or want to know what others are doing, nor why or how they are doing it. Neither do they want others to look into their affairs. The *mot d'ordre* is non-involvement in neighbours' affairs. Discretion is the price of peace in a consociational democracy.

In this context, policy assessment does not expand and, more generally, knowledge about the system and its components is not wanted. This explains why, as many experts have observed (Varone & de Visscher, 2001; Varone & Jacob, 2004), evaluation policy is rather underdeveloped in Belgium. The pillars are vertical and autonomous, while knowledge and expertise tend to see the system horizontally and give rise to instability. Let us also underline that in pillarised societies, no central State is powerful enough to impose itself as a legitimate evaluator of the system and its components: when pillars are strong — as has been the case in Belgium — , the State is usually weak (De Munck, 2002).

Essentially, decision-making in a pillarised society is based on compromises (Dumont & Delgrange, 2008). This has implications for the use of knowledge in the decision-making process which cannot be guided by expertise and evidence, as its primary orientation is the need to reach a compromise. Expertise and knowledge come second, if at all. Compromise-based policy-making prevails over knowledge-based policy-making. This stems from the very nature of the Belgian consociational arrangement. It also explains why there has never really been any clear and strong political discourse (let alone will) to promote evidence-based policy, evidence-based practices or policy evaluation. By contrast, this type of discourse has been much stronger in Anglo-Saxon countries, as well as in France

© 2010 The Author. Journal compilation © 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

where the political will to promote State knowledge and expertise (van Zanten, 2006) has existed for a long time.

The tension between knowledge and policy in a consociation is most evident when it involves knowledge (or instruments) that would inform actors about their performance. Until recently, Belgium had never held any national examinations (comparable to the French baccalaureate for example) in the education sector. For a long time, providing users or collective actors with knowledge that would enable them to compare students, schools or networks was seen as disrupting the peace, as it would undermine the basis of the consociational pact, according to which differences between schools or school providers are based strictly on denomination.

In the same vein, Belgium has not usually embraced practices such as benchmarking. Benchmarking means looking at what others do, possibly measuring how well they do it, identifying those who do it best, and subsequently following their example. Peace in the Belgian education sector requires that each institutional actor mind its own business.

Education Research in Belgium

This structure is mirrored in the way research is organised and conducted in the field of education in Belgium. Thus, as universities are also pillarised, all researchers and academics can be said to belong to a given pillar, although they may not think that this does or should interfere with their work. However, one cannot help but notice that most of the educational research is mono- and intra-pillar. It is mono-pillar in that it looks at only one network, and intra-pillar in that the researchers usually belong to the pillar they are investigating.

Most researchers in the field have experienced or witnessed the many obstacles one faces when trying to design research that seeks to look across different school networks belonging to different pillars. Research questions exploring differences between networks (in terms of performance, teaching methods or other issues) are politically difficult to investigate: access to the field will probably be denied or prove difficult, whilst funding is likely to be subject to several conditions. One condition that is sometimes imposed is that the research must be inter-university (comprised of universities belonging to different pillars). Another could be the setting up of an accompaniment committee made up of representatives from different pillars and to which the researchers would have to report regularly. These conditions constitute forms of soft surveillance. They also tell us something about the relationship between research and policy in Belgium, namely, that knowledge is very 'sensitive' to 'policy-makers' (the elites of the different pillars).

However, this does not mean that there is a knowledge vacuum in Belgium. While there are obviously things that institutional actors do not want to know and issues for which knowledge is not wanted, other types of knowledge are promoted, some of which receive funding. In the education sector, pedagogical research probably receives more funding than any other research field. Its approach is often normative and uncritical, yet highly consensual. In addition, pedagogical research does not proceed primarily through investigation: it often focuses less on how things actually work, and more on how they should work. Hence, it does not threaten consociational arrangements. Research in the field receives funding, and certain recent decrees have formulated a number of pedagogical assertions — which prompt the question as to who wrote them.

© 2010 The Author. Journal compilation © 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Recent Changes in Governance and in the Use and Circulation of Knowledge

These conditions were slow to change in the 1990s, but evolved more rapidly as from 2000. The changes included an expansion in the data-gathering capacities and initiatives of several actors (the government, the administration, the 'networks', and unions) and the creation of numerous inter-pillar and inter-network committees and groups (the *Conseil de l'éducation et de la formation*, the *Commission de Pilotage* and various other *ad hoc* committees). For Belgium, these constituted major changes: there is now greater interest in learning more about the system, and inter-network governance is growing (Maroy, 2006). To understand how these changes occurred, one must examine changes in Belgian society and in the international community.

Within Belgium

Today, notwithstanding the pillars' influence, their internal integration — at one time very tight — has weakened. The decrease in integration has occurred at two levels: (i) membership and (ii) vertical integration. Membership in pillarised organisations is now less integrated than ever before. By this, we mean that more individuals are crossing pillar boundaries during their lives. For example, they may be affiliated with the union of one pillar, yet vote for a party associated with a different pillar; or they might transfer from a Catholic school to a public school, etc. In the education sector, while most children stay in a given pillar throughout their education, today more than ever they are crossing pillars. When it comes to individual choices, there has been a shift — though limited — from pillarisation to privatisation.

At the same time, inter-organisational relations within pillars have become less integrated. By this we mean that the sense of cohesion or commonality once shared by leaders from different organisations (unions, schools, political parties, etc.) within a given pillar has declined. Professionalisation has contributed to this process. Consequently, interaction among organisations occurs less frequently and open disagreement sometimes arises. This may be viewed as a slow process of dissociation. Each leader gains a degree of autonomy and is no longer closely bound to the pillar. This has probably made it easier for them to improve the sectoral dialogue with their counterparts in other pillars or countries.

Comparative Knowledge and Transnational Discourses

We argue that these changes have also occurred because of forces that are external to the sector. They came about through the sheer number of influences and economic discourses rather than through explicit policy ideas. Instruments of international comparison (such as PISA and previous OECD and IEA studies) played an important role in these changes. Comparisons generate and publicise knowledge about various education systems and their respective performances. In Belgium, such comparisons played a brokering role, in that they prompted elites from the various networks to get together for one simple reason: they now had something in common; and that was a problem. Actually, they had several problems in common. According to OECD (1994), Belgium was spending too much on

© 2010 The Author. Journal compilation © 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

education, in view of the results it obtained for its financial outlay. PISA repeatedly emphasised that the education sector in Belgium was both inefficient (low mean) and highly inequitable (high variance). This put pressure on policy makers and network representatives, forcing them to improve joint regulation. Elites now had to think about managing the system more effectively and collectively across networks and pillars.

At the same time, a new discourse on education and its role slowly penetrated the policy community. The new dominant discourse on education and training emphasised their strategic dimension for national economic prosperity. It changed the outlook of the community. In consociations, education is viewed, primarily, as a vehicle for values and culture. However, the new discourse now claimed it was a vehicle for achievement and prosperity:

> . . . without exception, national governments of all political persuasions have declared that it is the quality of their education and training systems which will decisively shape the international division of labour and national prosperity. Therefore, the diminished power of nation states to control economic competition has forced them to compete in what we call the global knowledge wars (Brown & Lauder, 1997, p. 174).

Obviously, the trend towards greater accountability also challenges the consociational requirement for discretion. As accountability is presented in European forums, information on comparisons between nations, regions, organisations or individuals seems increasingly to make its way into the dominant discourse at the international level (the same holds true of international comparisons provided by intergovernmental or other international agencies). Such knowledge reflects concern with performance in a global world: 'How well do we do compare to others?' From a consociational standpoint, this questions the stability of the foundations of a pillarised society (i.e. its values and identities, discretion and autonomy). Can globalisation be domesticated without fundamentally altering such foundations?

The comparative knowledge and transnational discourses accompanying globalisation forced elites from different pillars to jointly consider reforming the system. This started a trend: elites from separate pillars would increasingly act jointly in their thinking, information gathering, policy making and system management (i.e. they were turning it into a single system instead of an entity composed of different systems). As consociations are composed of societies-in-a-society and systems-in-a-system, creating an integrated system is a major challenge that requires the re-invention of policy-making in Belgium.

Re-inventing Education Policy-making in Belgium: creating a system

The elites entered into dialogue in the 1990s, attempting to reach agreement on common rules in a variety of educational areas: examinations, curricula, enrolment, student expulsions, hiring of staff, inspection, and so on. These educational policies, which had for a long time been left to the networks, were now increasingly negotiated among pillars/networks. In fact, several changes occurred in the 1990s. The number of inter-network committees and other working groups expanded. Members of these groups and committees were often torn between the need to

© 2010 The Author. Journal compilation © 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

work together and the long-standing practice of preserving the autonomy of one's own pillar. Thus, the roles played by meetings of these groups and their positions vis-à-vis the acquisition of knowledge were not always clear. The primary reason why institutionalised actors participated in the meetings was to ensure that none of the decisions would weaken or potentially threaten their autonomy. However, the meetings also served as forums where elites and agents from different pillars would meet and talk. In this sense, they slowly developed a degree of cohesion, formulating common problems and sharing cognitive references. While consociational democracies are often described as 'societies-in-a-society' (Vanderstraeten, 2002) or systems-in-a-system, it is possible that recent changes will lead to the creation of a more integrated system.

Special structures, mainly in the administration, were created to promote knowledge-based management of the education system. Management services were set up in 1993 and a steering committee was added in 2002. Although the latter formed part of the administration, its members included representatives from the networks/pillars. It was designed to collect and process knowledge on the performance of the system and possible 'best practices'. One of its mandates was to manage databases on pupils, teachers and schools. While bureaucratic government generally focused on handling routine administrative tasks and enforcing laws and standards, the emerging post-bureaucratic administrative services were more oriented towards making changes and improvements and, consequently, processing knowledge and developing new indicators. Thus, some (post)-bureaucrats saw themselves as analysts or experts rather than as conventional bureaucrats. This led to greater legislative activity because the agreements were subsequently transformed into legal texts grouped into several decrees, the most important of which was the 'mission' decree of 1997. This process, in which agreements are first negotiated by the elites ruling the networks before being transposed into laws, is typical of consociational policy-making, going bottom up, i.e. from the sociological communities and their elites to the State and its administration.

Curriculum Reform

To investigate this process in detail, the following will use curriculum reform as a case study. As noted earlier, the negotiations that took place in the 1990s included discussion on curricula. While all aspects of this issue had previously been left to individual networks, in the 1990s the networks agreed on common guidelines promoting a new type of curriculum focusing on the concept of 'competence'. They agreed that each network would henceforth be obliged to follow these guidelines, yet remain responsible for adapting them to their individual curriculum texts. In other words, the compromise did not go as far as to define a common curriculum. Although it did delineate certain 'guidelines' (already a major step forward, considering the Belgian context), it gave each network significant autonomy in interpreting them and applying them to their individual curriculum texts. This constitutes a particularly interesting institutional situation, providing the opportunity to observe, within the same segment of time and space, the interpretive work carried out by different networks on the same collection of documents providing the so-called guidelines (the 'missions' decree and the various directives associated with it).

© 2010 The Author. Journal compilation © 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Common Guidelines

We will examine the content of these common guidelines before investigating how the networks interpreted them. The concept of competence, which is of special interest to us since it is central to the pedagogical guidelines we are examining, originated in the social sciences (Bernstein, 2007). Although the concept is vague and polysemous, or perhaps due to these qualities, it has become a core category in thinking revolving around the skills expected of workers and their definition and evaluation. The concept of competence started to be used in educational systems when enterprises — and their managers — incorporated it as a principle guiding task definition, individual assessment and career regulation (Ropé & Tanguy, 2000).

Whilst in the world of business, the concept of competence is linked primarily with post-Fordist type questions of managerial efficiency (Brown, 1995), this does not imply that, once it is incorporated into the world of education, it will be understood through the same prism. Competence, in conjunction with the educational reform movement associated with it, has been linked to a series of principles raised by educational, political and administrative elites (Mangez, 2001).

At a pedagogical level, from the 'missions' decree and various documents with which it is associated, we can select key elements for analysis according to Bernstein's theoretical concepts. In particular, the texts make fluid pedagogical time and space, notably by employing the concepts of 'cycle', 'differentiated pedagogy', 'pedagogical continuum' and the 'elimination of repeating a year'. They also emphasise the need to acquire cross-curricular competence, since segmented learning cannot be justified and there is a need to give increased status to horizontal teacher-student relationships. Thus, they weaken classification and promote teaching-learning relationships that aim at greater horizontality. On the other hand, these texts also make provision for the creation of standardised external evaluation. While the networks have not yet incorporated this measure, there could, of course, be significant developments here in the future.

The Work Carried out by the Networks

So far, we have described a range of pedagogical orientations and content resulting from the publication of the 'missions decree' and its related documents. These were intended to influence the preparation of the programmes by the networks. We have since witnessed the creation of a cohort of course programmes. The aim of this section is to reveal the structure of the pedagogic discourse expressed by these texts. To identify historical variations in pedagogy within and between the networks, we have created a corpus (of about 1000 pages) using the following texts: the programmes of the network of the French Community (CF) in 1985, the programmes of the CF in 2000, the programmes of the Catholic network (L) in 1985 and the L programmes in 2000.

We decided to examine these texts in terms of the relative occurrence of various key pedagogic terms they contain[2]. The database includes 18 statistical units (referring to course programmes) and 75 variables (referring to keywords). In total, about 13,000 observations were made.

The analysis of this data revealed wide diachronic variations (1985 versus 2000) and synchronic variations (between networks). Factor analysis allowed two

© 2010 The Author. Journal compilation © 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

main factors to surface, i.e. the two most important components of pedagogical discourse included in the database. These factors can be differentiated using Bernstein's distinction between visible pedagogical discourse (factor 1) and invisible pedagogical discourse (factor 2) (Bernstein, 1997). They also seem to refer to a distinction between knowledge-based curricula (factor 1) and competence-based curricula (factor 2).

The variables listed in Table I provide the essence of the pedagogical language's principal component (20% of the total variance) and its second component (16%). They are presented in their order of importance as factors (see also Figure 1). The only variables listed here are those whose saturation coefficient is greater than 0.5 (in absolute value).

The first component is negatively correlated to the 'construct' variable (–0.673) (which refers to a constructivist perspective on education) and to the 'situation' variable (–0.524) (which refers to the simulation of real life situations for students). However, this component is largely circumscribed by variables such as 'effort' (0.874), 'exercise' (0.743), 'lesson' (0.860), 'subject' (0.778), 'schoolmaster' (0.709) and 'teacher' (0.843). In addition, a series of terms forming the core of a traditional pedagogy is highly correlated with the first factor: 'aptitude' (0.753), 'attitude' (0.581), 'observation' (0.555) and 'objectives' (0.598). This model, developed by child psychologists influenced by behaviourism, emphasises the need for teachers to clearly define their 'objectives'. In addition, it advocates that teachers meticulously and methodically 'observe' student 'aptitude' and 'behaviour'. Following convention, we will call the first factor the 'behaviour' factor.

The second factor does not create interpretation problems since it is greatly influenced by terms that are central to the reform movement under examination. Included, of course, are 'competence' (0.606), but also 'situation[s]' (real life simulations) (0.594) for the 'student' (0.698), who must be 'active' (0.659), the advantages of pedagogy centred on a 'project' (0.789) and 'formative' evaluation (0.844), which enhances the status of 'autonomy' (0.633). The second factor is negatively correlated with the 'assimilate' variable (–0.545) and the 'discover' variable (–0.564), which symbolically refer to the idea of moving the student towards knowledge that is 'already there'. Following convention, we will call it the 'competence' factor. Based on Bernstein's language, we see that the positive side of the first factor (to the right of the x-axis in the figure below) corresponds to a pedagogical orientation that is more visible than the second. The positive side of the second factor (the upper y-axis) moves toward an invisible pole. The first factor is positively correlated at once with terms symbolising strong classification and framing and a clear division between and sequencing of the educational activities and objectives pursued (exercise, objective, observation, lesson) and an explicit and hierarchical teaching-learning relationship (schoolmaster, teacher, child and effort). The second factor is positively correlated with terms symbolising a loose classification of learning (situation, project, competence) and a weaker framing in the form of a less explicit teaching-learning hierarchy (the 'student' is 'active' and displays 'autonomy', the evaluation must be 'formative').

When we examine various course programme scores for the two factors in Figure 2, we see, first, that the old programmes tend to be scattered horizontally, i.e. along the 'behaviour' axis, while the new programmes are scattered vertically

© 2010 The Author. Journal compilation © 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

TABLE I. Two principal components

Variables	Saturation coefficients for factor 1
Effort (effort)	0,874
Leçon (lesson)	0,860
Professeur (teacher)	0,843
Cahier (notebook)	0,813
Matière (subject)	0,778
Persévérer (perseverance)	0,769
Aptitude (aptitude or ability)	0,753
Exercice (exercise)	0,743
Adolescent (adolescent)	0,733
Esprit critique (critical spirit)	0,710
Maître (schoolmaster)	0,709
Construit (construct)	–0,673
Erreur (error)	0,654
Enfant (child)	0,649
De base (basic)	0,628
Objectif (objective)	0,598
Désir (desire)	0,598
Transversal (transverse)	0,582
Attitude (attitude)	0,581
Réussite (success)	0,575
Observation (observation)	0,555
Correction (correction)	0,536
Progrès (progress)	0,524
Situation (situation)	–0,524
Variables	**Saturation coefficients for factor 2**
Information (information)	0,849
Formatif (formative)	0,844
Projet (project)	0,789
Apprentissage (learning)	0,724
Consigne (instructions)	0,716
Certificatif (attestation)	0,705
Elève (student)	0,698
Actif (active)	0,659
Structuration (structuring)	0,652
Autonomie (autonomy)	0,633
Plaisir (pleasure)	0,622
Tâche (task)	0,606
Compétence (competence)	0,606
Situation (situation)	0,594
Performance (performance)	0,591
Savoir (knowledge)	0,591
S'approprier(appropriation)	0,575
Découvrir (discovery)	–0,564
Assimiler (assimilate)	–0,545

along the 'competence' axis. This indicates that there has been a shift in the debates and in differences of opinion. In 1985, these were based on the model represented by the 'behaviour' factor. In 2000, they dealt with the language of reform as represented by the 'competence' axis, although some programmes were more closely linked to this language (especially literature programmes and programmes

© 2010 The Author. Journal compilation © 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

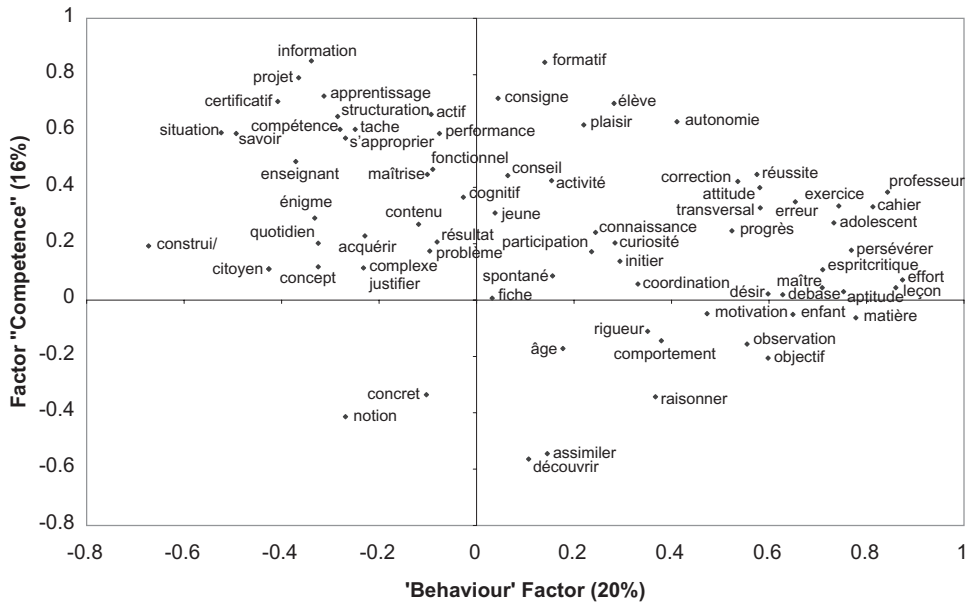


FIGURE 1. Saturation coefficients for 75 variables (2 factors selected)
Note: The coordinates of each variable are defined by the strength of its correlations (saturation coefficients) with each of the two factors forming the axes of the graph.

in the independent network) than others (especially the more 'scientific' programmes and those in the Community network). This type of change is associated with globalisation: texts no longer refer to 'knowledge' (Figure 3). Rather, they now employ the terms 'information' and 'competence'. Certain words have waned (knowledge, discipline, aptitude, exercises, effort, etc.), while new words have emerged (competence, information, project, construction, performance, active, autonomy, etc.).

When we examine the situations of the two networks, it seems that they both changed their discourse, although Catholic texts seem to have employed this new language much more. In Figure 2, arrows were drawn to indicate, discipline-by-discipline, historical shifts in pedagogical discourse. Notably, most of the shifts occurred concurrently, moving from right to left, i.e. they moved away from the language of the 'behaviour' axis (indicated by a lower score on this axis). They also moved from the bottom to the top, i.e. towards the language of 'competence' (indicated by a higher score on this axis). This result indicates that all course programmes have been involved in a common general shift, emphasising information, knowledge, competence, learning, etc. The shift towards a universal curriculum is visible in all school networks in Belgium.

However, they also show differences: while they now follow common guidelines, networks still differ in terms of what they do with these guidelines. Indeed, the analysis reveals that, in 1985, it was primarily the authors of course programmes for the French Community (secular pillar) who mobilised the legitimate pedagogical narrative. In 2000, the legitimate narrative was transformed to give

© 2010 The Author. Journal compilation © 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

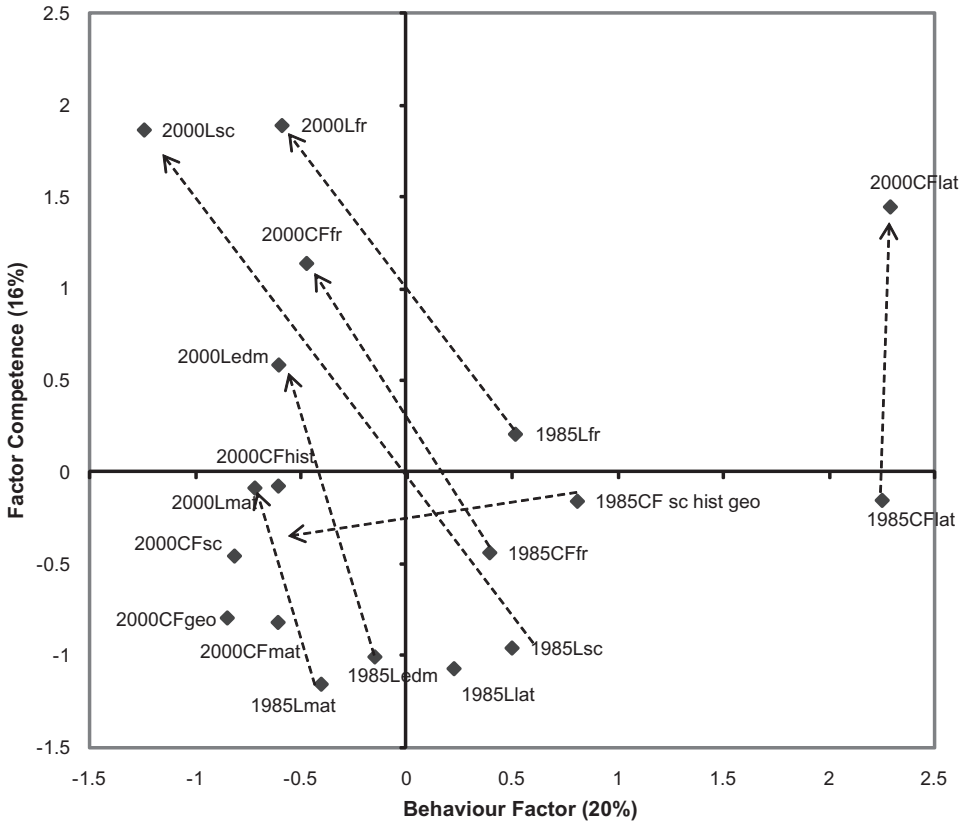


FIGURE 2. Factor scores for course programmes
Note: The x-axis represents the 'behaviour' factor; the y-axis is the 'competence' axis; the programmes are identified by a code referring, first, to the period (1985 or 2000), then to the network (Catholic or French Community) and, lastly, to the discipline.

greater legitimacy to the principles of 'construction of knowledge', 'projects', 'learning', simulation of real life 'situations' and the concept of 'competence'. This time, the Catholic network programmes seemed to have the most occurrences of this new legitimate language. A more detailed analysis of the programmes in certain disciplines confirmed this different positioning of networks along the visible-invisible continuum (Mangez, 2004). Interpreting the same documents, the pedagogical coordinators of the two networks took slightly different directions: in the Catholic network, the pedagogies became less visible, whilst in the Community network the pedagogical model became more explicit.

Conclusion

Globalisation enlarges the picture in which education systems understand themselves. While consociative democracies are organised on the basis of their internal

© 2010 The Author. Journal compilation © 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

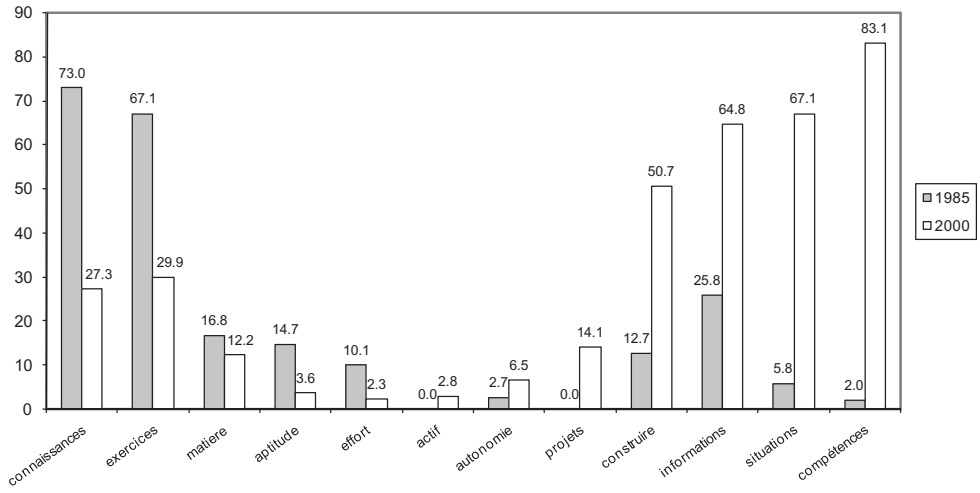


FIGURE 3. Relative occurrence for some selected terms
Note: Figure 3 shows the relative occurrence (per 3000 words) of various terms in course programmes from 1985 versus 2000.

sociological specificities, the globalisation process challenges their old habit of discretion and autonomy. During the last decades, the major change one can observe in the Belgian education system relates to an increase in joint regulation 'above' the networks and the traditional collective actors. The latter are forced to abandon some of their autonomy. When examining curriculum reform, it clearly appears that the various networks are now submitting to common regulation. However, the past has not disappeared: rather, it is redefined in new terms. While diachronic variations in curriculum texts may be understood in the light of globalisation, synchronic variations in the year 2000 must be understood in terms of the traditional segmental autonomy of each pillar: when using common guidelines for specific curriculum texts, each network (pillar) re-introduces its own values and cultural references (including its own understanding of the role of knowledge) into its texts.

The two networks examined in the article traditionally convey different values. The Community network — as a State network — and its agents set great store by the concept of 'public service' (Charlier, 2000) and by values such as equality, neutrality and compliance with legal standards. Historically, this network was formed to combat religious obscurantism: it viewed access to knowledge as a way to liberate the masses from the ascendancy of religion. The visible pedagogical model, given that it accepts the standard yardstick by which we measure student performance, and because its approach is based on a fragmentation of knowledge (rather than on an integration of knowledge that relates to a student's experiences) is probably more in keeping with values such as neutrality and equality. Today, the Catholic network sets great store in values such as opening up, personal development and the uniqueness of each individual. By accentuating students' activities and giving greater value to meaningful practices, the invisible pedagogical model promotes these values.

© 2010 The Author. Journal compilation © 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

NOTES

1. This contribution is part of the EU-funded research project n° 028848-2 (FP6): Knowandpol (The role of knowledge in the construction and regulation of health and education policy in Europe: convergences and specificities among nations and sectors) http://www.knowandpol.eu.
2. Our analysis thus places great store in naming processes. According to Bourdieu, sociology must 'examine what can be expressed in words when it constructs "social facts", as well as what is contributed by the battle over classification — a dimension in every class struggle — in the formation of classes, be they social classes, age classes, sexual classes, as well as clans, tribes, ethnic groups or nations' (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 155). Thus, sociological interest in ways of naming reality is based on the claim that social relationships penetrate and permeate language, which then serves to reveal social phenomena. Our effort to select words that were likely to indicate pedagogical trends was based on Bernstein's theoretical framework.

REFERENCES

Bernstein, B. (1997) Class and pedagogies: visible and invisible, in: A. H. Halsey, H. Lauder, P. Brown & A. Stuart Wells (Eds) *Education. Culture, Economy and Society* (Oxford, Oxford University Press).

Bernstein, B. (2007) *Pédagogie, contrôle symbolique et identité. Théorie, recherche, critique* (Québec, Presse Universitaire de Laval).

Boogards, M. (1998) The favourable factors for consociational democracy: a review, *European Journal Of Political Research*, 33, pp. 475–496.

Bourdieu, P. (2001) *Langage et pouvoir symbolique* (Paris, Seuil).

Brown, P. (1995) Cultural capital and social exclusion: some observations on recent trends in education, employment, and the labour market, *Work, Employment and Society*, 9, pp. 29–51.

Brown, P. & Lauder, H. (1997) Education, globalization and economic development, in: A. H. Halsey, H. Lauder, P. H. Brown & A. Stuart Wells (Eds), *Education: Culture, Economy and Society* (Oxford, Oxford University Press).

Charlier, J.-E. (2000) La régulation de l'enseignement de la Communauté française: de la concurrence à la compétition, *Recherches Sociologiques*, XXXI, pp. 29–40.

De Munck, J. (2002) La Belgique sans ses piliers? Du conflit des modèles au choix d'une politique, *Les semaines sociales du MOC.*, pp. 95–115.

Dumont, H. & Delgrange, X. (2008) Le principe de pluralisme face à la question du voile islamique en Belgique, *Droit et société*, 68, pp. 75–108.

Lijphart, A. (1979) Consociation and Federation: Conceptual and Empirical Links, *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique*, 12, pp. 499–515.

Lijphart, A. (1977) *Democracy in Plural Societies; a comparative exploration* (New Haven / London, Yale University Press).

Mabille, X. (2000) *Histoire politique de la Belgique. Facteurs et acteurs de changement. 4ème édition* (Bruxelles, CRISP).

Mangez, E. (2001) Régulation de l'action éducative dans les années quatre-vingt dix, *Education et Sociétés, revue internationale de sociologie de l'éducation*, 8, pp. 81–96.

© 2010 The Author. Journal compilation © 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Mangez, E. (2004) La production des programmes de cours par les agents intermédiaires: transfert de savoirs et relations de pouvoir, *Revue Française de Pédagogie*, 146, pp. 65–77.

Mangez, E. (2009) De la nécessité de discrétion à l'Etat évaluateur, *La Revue Nouvelle*, juillet-août, pp. 32–37.

Maroy, C. (2006) *École, régulation et marché: une comparaison de six espaces scolaires locaux en Europe* (Paris, Presses universitaires de France).

Rope, F. & Tanguy, L. (2000) Le modèle des compétences: système éducatif et entreprise, *L'Année sociologique*, 50, pp. 493–520.

Seiler, D.-L. (1997) Un système consociatif exemplaire: la Belgique, *Revue Internationale de Politique Comparée*, 4, pp. 601–624.

Van Der Hoek, M. P. (2000) Does the Dutch model really exist? *International Advances in Economic Research*, 3, pp. 387–403.

Van Zanten, A. (2006) Competition and interaction between research knowledge and state knowledge in policy steering in France, in: J. Ozga, T. Seddon & T. S. Popkewitz (Eds) *Education, Research and Policy. Steering the Knowledge-Based Economy. World Yearbook of Education* (London, Routledge).

Vanderstraeten, R. (2002) Cultural values and social differentiation: the Catholic pillar and its education system in Belgium and the Netherlands, *Compare*, 32, pp. 133–148.

Varone, F. & De Visscher, C. (2001) Introduction, in: C. De Visscher & F. Varone (Eds) *Evaluer les politiques publiques. Regards croisés sur la Belgique* (Louvain-La-Neuve, Academia-Bruylant).

Varone, F. & Jacob, S. (2004) Institutionnalisation de l'évaluation et nouvelle gestion publique: un état des lieux comparatif, *Revue Internationale de Politique Comparée*, 11, pp. 271–292.

© 2010 The Author. Journal compilation © 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.