

School enrollment policies

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«Normative tensions and transactions around enrollment policies in Francophone Belgium »

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To contextualize the belgian enrollment policies

- Belgian francophone is embedded within an history and a political context wich matters, when it comes to understand the reactions to the recent enrollment policies : the so-called « décret inscriptions » and « décret mixité »
- the recent policy trends in FCB are to be considered, concerning their impact on the « coordination forms » within the system, and the power they give to different agents within the system.
- The reactions of various agents within the system (parents, schools principals) are part of the process of construction of the policy itself

Objectives of the presentation

- to present some key features of the schooling system in FCB, and the impact of recent policies on the « coordination forms » within the system
- To show how the recent enrollment policies in Francophone Belgium try also to affect these coordination forms
- To present the hypothesis, that the opposition to enrollment policies are understandable in relation with the minorization of two forms of coordination : school hierarchies and local social communities

Various forms of coordination in FCB

- Source : a typology of Boyer & Hollingsworth (1997), applied to the FCB school system (Maroy & Dupriez, 2000)
- Hollingsworth and Boyer try to integrate the literature that deals with various institutional arrangements allowing to construct co-ordination among social agents within any social sector
- This typology allows to think the relations among various coordination forms

Figure 1 : main forms of coordination in the FCB schooling system
before 1997 and the « Decret missions »

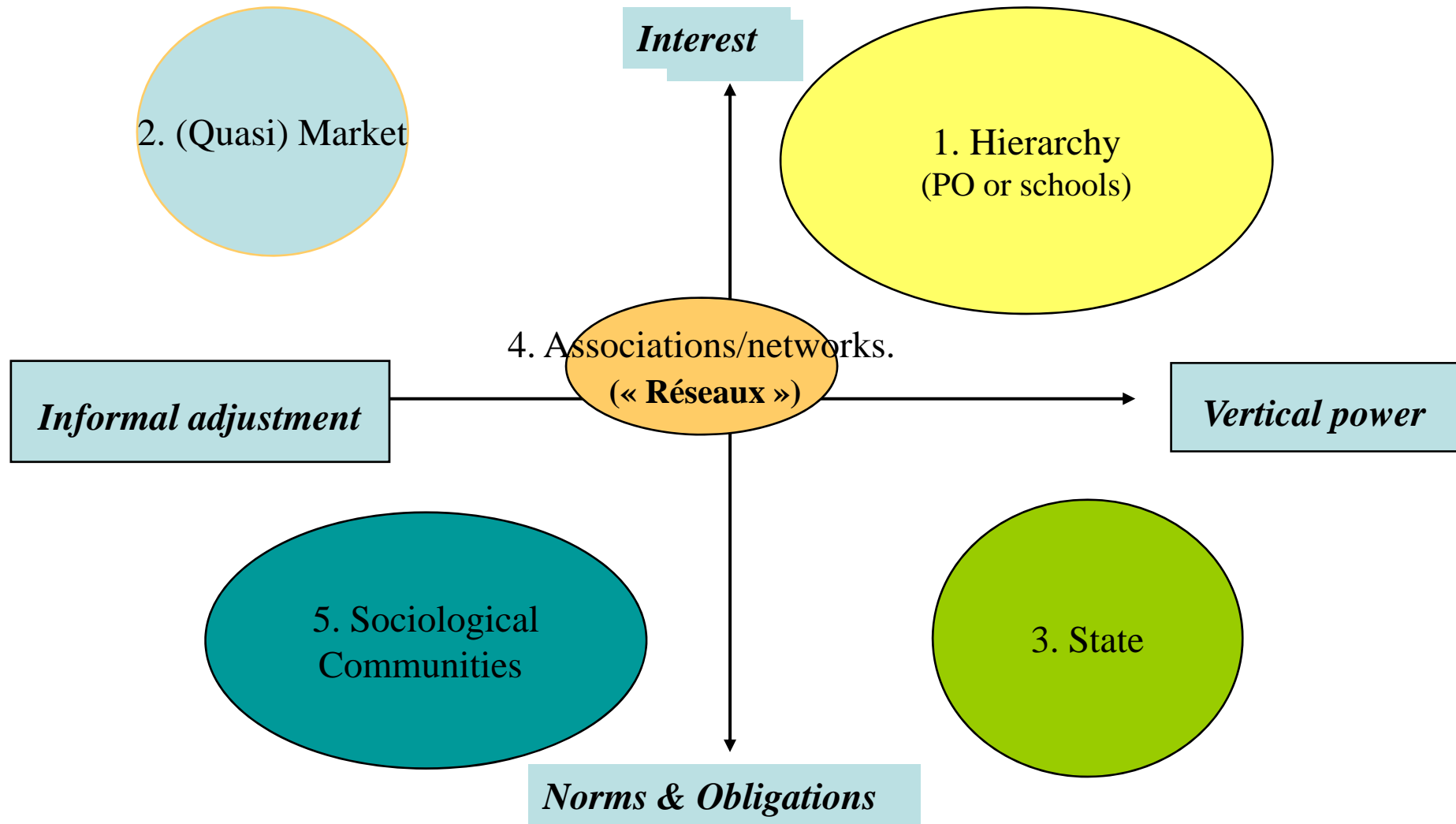


Figure 2 : impact of recent school policies on forms of coordination

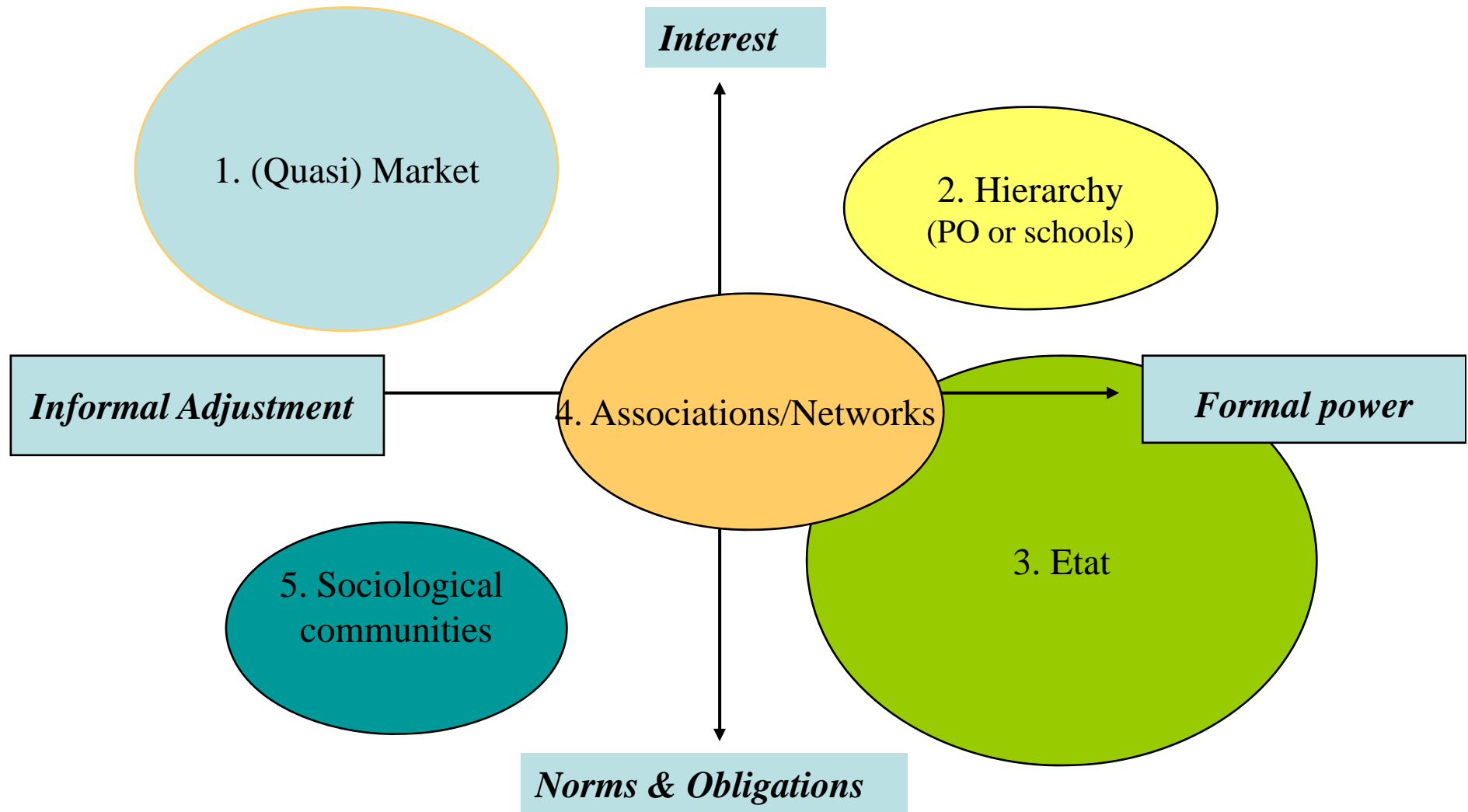
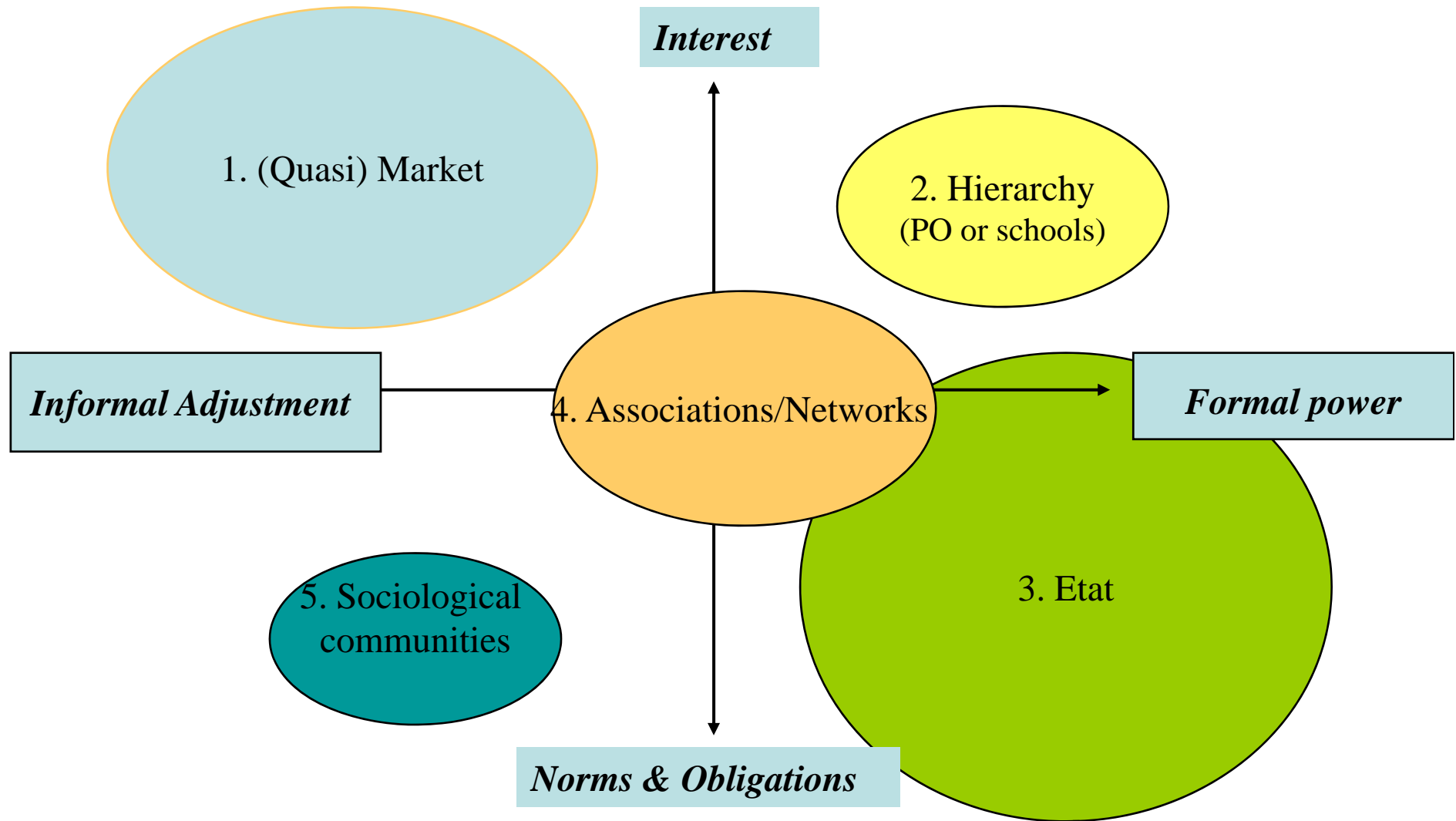


Figure 3 : the possible impact of the school enrollment policies : « decret mixité »



In short, the « décret mixité »

- **Promotes standardized rules stemming from the State**
- **Limits the school autonomy**
- **Reinforce parent's formal right to choose , and therefore, potential competition among schools**
- **Could reduce some local « school communities »**

Conclusions :

- Belgian schooling system is based upon a « consociative democracy » which goes hand in hand with several forms of coordination
- School policies for 15 years, have change partially these forms in order to reinforce efficacy and equity : more State, less autonomy of schools, dvlp of « inter-networks » institutions
- relative coherence and legitimacy of these policies among policy makers (but less for school professionals) based on the search of efficacy and equity

The debate about enrollment policies : underlying values .

- government rationale for defending the policy is : more equality (of rights) for more « parent's choice », hoping that this will favor more « social and academic diversity » among schools.
 - regime of « competition for equality » compatible with some form of « fair market »
- Some opponents to this policy are defending : freedom of choice for parents, and latitude of selection for schools, as a condition of building of schooling communities,
 - regime of « community within social hierarchy » ; free choice is not in favor of competition and market but of various forms of local communities
- Actually, the government is pro-choice and equity (promoting universal and individualistic values), while opponents to the decree are partly « communitarian » and particularistic