Social Advancement and the Primary School Teacher: the Making of Normal School Directors in France, 1815-1880

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French historians have commonly held that educational institutions reflected and reinforced the social structure of nineteenth century France.[1] Accordingly, the instruction of the common man was limited to the primary schools, while education beyond this level was regarded as the exclusive preserve of the bourgeois and upper classes. The occupation of primary school teaching itself was held to conform to this pattern. Schoolmasters, recruited largely from the rural working class, were given an education in the normal schools designed to limit them to the horizon of their rural clientele, and were then sent back to the rural areas. Once they had returned to the village, they were consigned by poor pay and intellectual isolation to a lifetime of oblivion in the same cranny of French society from which they had originated.

Such a view of the French educational structure, while containing a good deal of truth, overlooks the complexity of the French system of primary education which resulted from the rapid expansion of the system after the Law on Public Education of 1833 (the Guizot Law). The law required every commune in France to open a school for boys, the larger towns to open higher primary schools, and the departments to establish normal schools to train teachers for the new schools. The law also created a corps of primary schools inspectors. Within a few years a network of urban primary, higher primary and normal schools had been created, and there had come into being a new class of educators and education officials within the primary system which came to be recruited over the years mainly from among the abler primary school teachers. Thus the framers of the Law of 1833 had provided, to some extent unintentionally, the means whereby the teacher could advance himself within his profession.

One of the more important features of the law from the point of view of the professional advancement of the teacher was the introduction of the

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[1] Among others, Octave GRÉARD, *Education et instruction, enseignement primaire* (Paris, 1887), 35-97, for his views of French education before the Third Republic; and Georges DUVEAU, *Les Instituteurs* (Paris, 1957). For two good general accounts of French education, see Maurice GONTARD, *Les Écoles primaires de la France bourgeoise* (Toulouse, n.d.), 29-32, 233-4; and Antoine PROST, *L'Enseignement en France 1800-1967* (Paris, 1968), 132-152.

brevet primaire supérieur, the higher teachers' certificate. The ordinary teachers' certificate, the *brevet primaire* (or *brevet simple* as it was sometimes called) had been introduced in 1816 to establish minimal standards for teachers, but by 1833 it was not adequate to provide certification for the upper levels of the teachers' corps. Though the *brevet supérieur* was orginally intended only for the higher primary teachers, it was possible in practice for most teachers possessing the regular teachers' certificate to present themselves for government examinations for the higher certificate.[2] Able young teachers very quickly discovered that possession of this credential opened the way to over 5,000 of the better primary, higher primary and various municipal vocational and professional schools located in the cities and richer towns; to 70 to 80 directorships and 150 to 300 professorships in the normal schools; and to 150 to 260 inspectorships.[3] By the 1840's one in ten certified teachers had the *brevet supérieur* and by the 1860's this percentage had risen to one in seven.[4] During the late 1840's the government further confirmed this meritocratic feature of the primary system by introducing the *certificat d'aptitude pour l'inspectorat.*

In order to examine more fully the process by which young men of rural or small-town origin and primary school background were able to advance themselves within the primary system during the years 1830 to 1880, this paper will examine the social origin, educational background and careers of 212 normal school directors, the highest officials in that

[2] The original two-year programme preparing for the *brevet primaire* was composed of the 3 R's, French, history and geography, elements of applied geometry and physics, religion and morality, music and physical education, and, as electives, municipal law, book-keeping, and agriculture. The programme also called for six months of practice-teaching in primary schools attached to the normal schools. Preparation for the *brevet supérieur* involved more knowledge of the above subjects including the electives. See E. JACOULET, "Écoles Normales," *Dictionnaire de pédagogie*, vol. II (of III) (Paris, 1887), 2058-2072. On the views of the framers of the Law of 1833, see note 37.

[3] The figures cited represent the growth in the number of positions from the 1830s to the 1870s; the estimate on higher primary, vocational and professional schools includes *L'enseignement secondaire spécial* which will be discussed later in this paper. On the higher primary schools, see F17 9820-9827 (see note five), *Écoles primaires supérieures, 1834-1848.* On such municipal and governmental professional schools as the *École Turgot* in Paris, the *École de La Martinière* of Lyon, etc., and the *Écoles des arts et métiers* of Angers and Châlons, see J. P. GUINOT, *Formation professionnelle et travailleurs qualifiés depuis 1789* (Paris, 1946), p. 148.

[4] F17* 3160, *Statistique de l'Instruction primaire sous le ministère Duruy, 1863-1869*, No. 6. In 1863 the normal schools graduated 973, of whom 128 had the *brevet complet (supérieur)*; 427 the ordinary certificate; 300 the ordinary certificate plus some electives toward the higher certificate; while 118 failed to pass the examination. On the number of normal schools and normal school students, there were by 1830 14 such schools, located mainly in or near Alsace-Lorraine, and by 1875, 77. By 1848, 8,000 of the 38,000 lay male teachers in France were graduates of normal schools; by 1870, about 26,000 of 40,000 laymen teachers were graduates. MINISTÈRE DE L'INSTRUCTION PUBLIQUE, *Statistique comparée de l'enseignement primaire 1829-1877* (Paris, 1880), Table XLVI, 174-7.

system.[5] Since the directors were closely linked with other groups in the primary system, most having worked previously as school inspectors, secondary or normal school professors, or as teachers in primary or higher primary schools, a study of the directors provides information on these groups as well as considerable insight into the workings of French education and social institutions during the nineteenth century.[6] During the period in question, 80% of the directors were of modest origin. An average of 60% had been educated in the primary and normal schools, while almost 40% had been trained in all or in part in secondary schools, mainly in the *collèges communaux* or municipal colleges (see Tables I-III in the Appemdix). In the case of 46 of the 212 directors studied, the professions of their sons are also traced, and this provides a three generational picture of considerable social advancement over the years 1800 to 1880.

During the early1830's, the framers of the Guizot Law organized first-rate curricula, attached a number of the normal schools to important urban secondary schools (sometimes with shared facilities and staffs) and recruited directors from a variety of backgrounds: from among secondary school professors and principals, civil servants, boarding school headmasters and outstanding primary school teachers. Clerico-conservative groups, however, proved to be far less enthusiastic about the normal schools than the framers of the Law of 1833. They argued that the upper levels of the primary system should be run by clergy and the bourgeois graduates of the secondary and higher schools, as in Germany and England. They also felt that to give such an extensive education to peasants would make them unwilling to return to their native villages as humble schoolmasters and would turn them into socially ambitious, potentially revolutionary *demi-savants* who would compete with the bourgeoisie for the *baccalauréat* and for the limited number of places in the government service and in the liberal professions to which the

[5] The sources and statistics in this study come mainly from the *Archives Nationales* (henceforth *AN*), F17 series (*L'Instruction publique*). See especially F17 9560-9617: *Écoles normales primaires: affaires diverses An XIII à 1892*. Inspectors' reports provided valuable information on place and date of birth, salary, diplomas, educational and career background: F17 9628, *Tableau du personnel des directeurs et maîtres-adjoints de l'École normale primaire*, 1834; F17 9690, same for 1844-46; F17 9732, same for 1875, and F17 9688, *État nominatif des maîtres de l'École normale primaire*, 1865. The *dossiers personnels* of individual directors provided valuable information of a similar sort (*AN*, listed alphabetically, prior permission necessary). I also sent 110 questionnaires to local *mairies* requesting information (profession of parents, etc.) contained in birth certificates in their files; and I wish to acknowledge their great cooperation.

[6] On the background of the directors, 49 had been primary schools inspectors who had come up through the primary system; 36 had been secondary school professors; 33 primary school teachers (including 6 in higher primary schools); 29 normal school professors *(maîtres-adjoints);* 20 schools inspectors who had come through secondary education; 12 from private boarding schools; 15 former clerks and officials in government and private offices; 11 priests; and 7 unclear. Total of 212.

baccalauréat led.[7] Indeed just enough normal school students managed during the 1830's to obtain the *baccalauréat* to give some credence to their fears.[8] As the decade progressed, governments became increasingly cautious on the question of the normal schools. By the late 1830's they had begun to simplify normal school curricula, to increase religious instruction, to separate the normal from the secondary schools and to convert them into tightly disciplined boarding schools in the suburbs and in towns outside the "temptations" of the big city, a process of gradual downgrading which continued into the 1850's.

Ironically, the decline in prestige of the normal school served to increase opportunities for primary school teachers possessing the *brevet supérieur.* Education officials chose a growing number of directors and inspectors, and especially of normal school professors, from among teachers who had performed well in government examinations for the *brevet supérieur*, and later the inspectors' credential. Originally more than half of the 74 directors came from the secondary schools, of whom 25 could be called bourgeois, but by the end of the July Monarchy in 1848 slightly more than half had been trained in the primary system. By the 1870's, 70% of the directors had come from the primary system and were graduates of the normal schools.[9]

This meant that over the years directors increasingly came to resemble their students and the average teacher in terms of social, educational and geographical background. Under the July Monarchy, most of the directors came from urban areas, while twenty years later, during the sixties and seventies, the opposite was the case.[10] By 1880, 77% of the directors and 79% of their students were the sons of artisans, rural workers, schoolmasters and farmers. However, the number of artisans'

[7] E. JACOULET, *Dictionnaire*, II, p. 2061; and Ambroise RENDU, *Considérations sur les Écoles normales en France* (Paris, 1838).

[8] The normal school at Lyons was moved from the *collège royal (lycée)* of that city to Villefranche when it was discovered that a number of normal school students had used the facilities of the college to obtain the baccalauréat. F17 9600, *Extrait du Registre des délibérations de la commission de surveillance, près l'école normale primaire de Villefranche*, October 8, 1838.

[9] See note five *supra* and Tables I-III in the Appendix.

[10] Place of origin of directors from the 30s through the 70s:

	1830s and 1840s		1860s and 1870s	
	No.	%	No.	%
2,000 or less	32	31	54	57
2-5,000	12	11	18	19
5-10,000	25	24	7	7
10-50,000	14	13.5	9	10
50-100,000	8	7.5	1	1
over 100,000	13	12.5	5	5
Total	104		94	

Of those in the over-100,000 category, 12 of 13 in the first column were nominated in the 1830s, of whom ten were from Paris-Versailles, 2 from Marseille and one from Nantes. In the 60s and 70s all 5 came from Paris-Versailles.

sons among the directors, who were more likely to be urban in origin, was somewhat higher than among their students (32 to 25%), while the number of sons of farmers (19 to 27%) and of rural schoolmasters (19 to 26%) was correspondingly less.[11] The directors appear also to have come from more literate families than their students. Only four of 212 had fathers who could not read and write in a country where 35% of army conscripts and 47% of brides could not do so in 1850.[12]

The absorption of the higher primary schools by the municipal colleges during the 1840's also affected the recruitment of directors coming from the secondary system and the possibility of social advancement through the schools. The framers of the law of 1833 had created the higher primary schools (and to some extent the normal schools as well) to divert the lower middle and upper working classes from the colleges and the *déclassement* of a secondary education, and to provide them with a practical training more suitable to the producing classes. But the framers of the law failed to realize that many in these classes had come to share the bourgeois disdain for the primary system, and that for social rather than utilitarian reasons they would continue to prefer the secondary to the higher primary schools.[13] Having absorbed most of the higher primary schools during 1840's, the municipal colleges sought to provide for the utilitarian needs of their lower middle class clientele by opening, more or less spontaneously, professional sections teaching applied science, French and modern foreign languages and other semi-practical subjects alongside but separate from the traditional classical programmes. In the 1860's these professional courses were organized on a national scale by Victor Duruy into *L'Enseignement secondaire spécial.* In 1866 Duruy also established for the new programme a teachers' training school at Cluny, which recruited most of its students from among the better normal school graduates.

[11] The figures on the students are based on a study of 620 normal school students across France during the 40s to 60s, which are included in a forthcoming study on teachers. Of the remainder, 8.6% were the sons of petty employees and clerks, 5% of shopkeepers and small merchants, 2.3% of soldiers and 5% miscellaneous. The schools studied were Dijon (F17 9586); Rouen (9601); Nancy (9597); Melun (9602); Chaumont (9596); Bar-le-Duc (9597); Colmar (9600); Besançon (9587); Versailles (9602, 9697); Bourges (9584); Orléans (9593); Rennes (9591); Tulle (9584); Carcassonne (9582); Montauban (9603); Sauve (9590); Périgueux (9587); Auch (9590); Dax (9592); Lescar, Perpignan and Tarbes (9592); Montpellier (9591); and Nîmes (9588).

[12] The questionnaire sent to the *mairies* (note four) included a question on whether the parents had been able to sign the birth certificate. Concript illiteracy in France fell from 58% in 1827 to 15% in the late 1870s. Brides unable to sign their marriage papers fell from 46% at mid-century to 25% in 1880. See the MINISTÈRE DE L'INSTRUCTION PUBLIQUE, *Statistique comparée de l'enseignement primaire,* Tables LXXXI-LXXXVIII, 340-364; and Carlo CIPOLLA, *Literacy and Development in the West* (Baltimore, 1969), Appendix II-III.

[13] C. R. DAY, "Technical and Professional Education in France: The Rise and Fall of L'Enseignement Secondaire Spécial, 1865-1902," *Journal of Social History,* V (Winter, 1972-1973), 177-201. Also, Robert E. ANDERSON, "Secondary Education in Mid-Nineteenth Century France: Some Social Aspects," *Past and Present,* 53 (November, 1971), 121-146.

Before this a number of professorships in *l'enseignement spécial* had fallen by default to teachers possessing the *brevet supérieur*, because many specialists in classical studies were unwilling or unable to teach courses in the new programme. The former primary teachers proved quite competent, particularly in applied science and mathematics, as professors in special secondary studies and as students at Cluny competing with *bacheliers* from secondary schools. By 1880 one-fifth of the directors had taught at one time or another in *l'enseignement spécial* programmes, and four directors and fourteen inspectors were graduates of Cluny.[14]

In the statistics in Table I through III in the Appendix, one notes that about 80% of the directors were of modest or humble origin and that almost 40% had attended secondary and/or higher schools. Among the directors there were essentially two categories who had attended secondary schools and who had the *baccalauréat*: 1) the bourgeois group of the 1830's and early 1840's composed mainly of ex-secondary school professors and middle-level civil servants and 2) those who had attended the municipal colleges, usually as day-students, which by the 1840s comprised most of the directors coming from the secondary schools.[15] Since there were a great many secondary institutions in France at the time, all competing for students (66 great state *lycées*; 243 municipal colleges; and about 1,000 mainly Catholic private schools), the colleges had to rely largely on day boys rather than on boarding students in order to survive. The colleges charged modest day-fees averaging from 60 to 120 francs per year (plus books and supplies). These fees were too high for many industrial workers earning 900 to 1,200 francs a year, but were within the reach of a lower middle and skilled working class of artisans, urban teachers, shopkeepers, clerks, prosperous farmers from nearby villages and a variety of small producers earning from 1,200 to 2,500 francs.[16]

[14] C. R. Day, "Education, Technology and Social Change in France. The Short, Unhappy Life of the Cluny School, 1866-1891," *Journal of French Historical Studies*, IX (Spring, 1974).

[15] Among the 23 bourgeois directors of the 1830s and early 1840s, Boutet de Monvel, director at Orléans, had been secretary to Casimir Périer, Minister of the Interior and Prime Minister of France, 1830 to 1832. J. B. Dumont, the son of a well-to-do rural *propriétaire* and underprefect of the Department of the Dordogne, had been secretary to his father before becoming a primary school inspector and later a director. J. S. Clédat de Lavigerie, formerly the principal of a *collège*, and J. M. Dorlhac de Borne, formerly an academy secretary, were both the sons of provincial magistrates. A distinguished group from Versailles included Charles Lebrun, former assistant higher-education librarian in Paris; P. L. Lebas, former secretary to the Abby Saint-Cyr; A. G. Laurent, descended on his mother's side from a long line of court musicians (Gelinek); Philibert Chartier, the son of an engineer-architect, whose son succeeded him at Limoges; and J. B. Person, the son of a teacher. See F17 9628 and 9690. The city of Versailles also provided helpful information.

[16] Boarding and tuition fees in lycées ranged from 800 to 1,500 francs, in colleges from 500 to 1,000 francs. In 1842 there were 46 lycées (called royal colleges until 1848) with 18,697 students; 312 municipal colleges with 25,584 students; and over 1,000 private secondary schools with 25,250 students. By 1857, the heyday of the Catholic schools, the figures were 66 lycées (24,702 students); 243 municipal colleges (29, 340 students); and 979 private (65,492). See F17 6833, and R. Anderson, *op. cit.*

If a young man lived close enough to a municipal college, and if his parents had some resources, he could attend the college after having completed primary school. In the *lycées* and in many of the more prestigeous Catholic private schools, students usually attended exclusive primary sections attached to the school. During the course of their education, lasting from age seven to seventeen in most cases, their parents paid anywhere from 800 to 1,500 francs per year in boarding and tuitition fees, plus books and supplies and travel costs. This suggests that although the social dividing line in France between primary and secondary instruction was not altogether rigid, another line existed within the secondary system itself between the *lycées* and Catholic private schools on the one hand, and the municipal colleges and normal schools on the other. The clientele of the municipal colleges was more urban in composition than that of the normal schools and included a much larger number of small and medium urban producers and skilled industrial workers, both of which groups were seldom found in normal schools. Yet the two kinds of schools relied heavily on artisans, teachers, farmers, petty clerks and shopkeepers for their clientele. The normal schools drew mainly on the rural portions of these groups. Most of their students were young men who had enjoyed few educational options beyond elementary instruction apart from government boarding scholarships to the department normal schools. For them the barrier to secondary studies, to the municipal colleges, was geographical more than social or financial, since the annual cost of a normal school education, provided one had a boarding and tuition scholarship, came to about the same as being a day-student at a municipal college and living at home, about 200 francs.[17]

Exactly 37% of the directors had come from the secondary system. Yet of all the 212 directors, 45% had the *baccalauréat* and/or higher education diplomas. The obvious disparity between these figures (Tables II and III) is due to the fact that about 8% of the directors had trained in normal schools and later managed to obtain the *baccalauréat* while working as teachers in urban primary or normal schools. They attended local colleges on a part-time basis in order to acquire sufficient knowledge of Latin, and then presented themselves for government examinations for that diploma. Since residence requirements in secondary schools for such examinations were not very strict before the Third Republic (1870 to 1940), it was possible for a few talented and hard-working teachers to obtain the diploma. For example, François Vincent, the son of a village blacksmith and director at Bourg (Ain) from 1850 to 1871, started as a

[17] The 200 francs could be nevertheless a great burden on the parents of many normal school students. The director of the school at Besançon reported Jan. 20, 1866, "C'est une forte somme pour les familles parmi lesquelles se recrutent les futurs instituteurs." F17 9720. The rector of the Caen Academy said "La plupart appartiennent à des parents peu aisés." F17 9570, Sept. 30, 1873.

shepherd, later graduated from the normal school at Bourg with the *brevet supérieur*, and then, as professor in the same school, earned his *baccalauréat* after part-time study at a nearby college. Nicolas Lalin, the son of a village shoemaker, and director at Chaumont for many years, managed to attend a local college long enough to obtain his *baccalauréat*. One of the most venerable of the directors, Edouard Person, director at Chartres from 1838 to 1876, and the son of a schoolmaster, earned his *baccalauréat* while directing a boarding school in Versailles. His pupil at Chartres, Prosper Leduc, the son of a village worker, received the *brevet supérieur* in 1847, became a teacher at the normal school of Chartres, and then obtained the *baccalauréat* as a result of part-time study at the nearby college. He later earned the *licence-ès-sciences* (the university diploma) and was promoted by Victor Duruy to the highest paid directorship in France.[18]

However, most of the *bacheliers* of modest or humble origin were in no position to compete with their social superiors for coveted positions in the higher civil service and liberal professions. They tended to take middle-level positions in various government and business administrations, professorships in municipal colleges rather than *lycées*, and in some cases directorships and inspectorships at the upper levels of the primary system. As directors they usually obtained the better posts, won more awards and honours (as measured by the number receiving the Legion of Honour) and had greater security of tenure in office.[19] Yet the *brevetés* among the directors do not appear to have been intellectually or educationally inferior to the *bacheliers*. Several among them were men of ability and culture, notably Léon Chauvin, Adrien Guerrier de Haupt and Louis Mariotti.[20] In terms of useful knowledge, the *brevet supérieur* was sounder than the *baccalauréat*, especially in such subjects as applied mathematics and science and perhaps in French and in history and geography.[21]

[18] See the *dossiers personnels* in the *AN* (Listed alphabetically). Also, Léonce Person, *Jean-Baptiste Edouard Person, instituteur primaire et chef d'institution à Versailles, Directeur des Écoles normales d'Albi (Tarn) et de Chartres (Eure et Loir) 1805-1877* (Paris, 1884). J. Poullard, *Monographie de l'École normale d'instituteurs des Basses-Pyrenées* (Pau, 1901), 39, 56.

[19] The bourgeois group of the July Monarchy (Table I) had the highest percentage of *baccalauréats* and higher education diplomas (80%) and provided 10 of 30 directors awarded the Legion of Honour. The artisans, half of whom were urban in background, were 60% *bacheliers* and seven had the Legion of Honour. 45% of the schoolmasters, most of whom were rural, obtained secondary or higher diplomas and four the Legion of Honour. Among petty clerks, soldiers, shopkeepers, etc., the figures were 30% and four; among farmers, 30% and two; among rural workers, 18% and three.

[20] See the *dossiers personnels* of the three men; Guerrier's journal, *L'Union des Instituteurs*, published during the sixties and seventies; Louis Mariotti's report on his reforms at Versailles, F17 9688; and Léon CHAUVIN'S *Mémoires d'un instituteur* (Paris, n.d., 1896?), published under the pseudonym Noël Vauclin.

[21] C. R. DAY, "Cluny," *op. cit.*

Nevertheless, some school inspectors criticized certain directors of rural and primary background for their rusticity of manners and their bourgeois pretensions.[22] Such criticisms seem unfair in view of the fact that the inspectors came from more or less the same background as the directors. It is possible that such comments reflected the same self-consciousness and *arrivisme* that they sometimes saw in the directors. Indeed some teachers criticized their inspectors for exactly the same thing, complaining also that they did not visit their schools regularly enough and that they tended to associate themselves in local educational disputes with the notables and clergy rather than with the teacher.[23] It is clear from their reports to the academy rectors and to education officials in Paris that both the inspectors and directors had adopted, officially at least, the bourgeois views of their superiors in the profession; indeed they could not have been promoted to their posts had they not done so.[24]

A director's professional duties were very heavy and his position was not always secure. Within the school he was responsible for part of the teaching, all of the administration including even the buying of food and supplies, the maintenance of discipline and the success of his students in government examinations for the *brevet primaire.* He also had to supervise primary and sometimes higher primary schools attached to the normal school and to watch over anywhere from 25 to 100 pupil-teachers. These young men, 16 to 20 years of age, were generally well-behaved, but were virtually prisoners in the school (best described as "half barracks and half monastery") six and one-half days a week, eleven months a year. Hence through no necessary fault of his own — since the state established the basic rules governing discipline and programmes — the director had constantly to face the threat of disorder and to bear responsibility for the academic success and conduct of his students.[25]

[22] See the *dossiers personnels,* for example, of Pierre Demongeot, Léon Chauvin, and P. A. Cadoret. One inspector described a director as having "adequate manners, given his rural origin." Other inspectors described directors as being "un peu rustique," "un peu lent," or as having "un peu de rudesse à l'extérieur."

[23] On the views of the village teacher on local instruction and on the inspectors, almost 6,000 responded to the government decree of Dec. 12, 1860: "Quels sont les besoins de l'instruction primaire dans une commune rurale au triple point de vue de l'école, des élèves et du maître," F17 10757-10792. I have read 120 of them; the Academies of the Nord, Strasbourg, Poitiers and Montpellier. Also, L. CHAUVIN, *Mémoires,* 140-170.

[24] See the directors' reports in the normal schools series in the *AN,* F17 9560 to 9617, in which one also finds inspectors' comments written in the margins of various reports. See especially F17 9636, the director of the school at Douai (1839); also, F17 9582 and 9688.

[25] E. JACOULET, "Écoles normales," *Dictionnaire de pédagogie,* II, 2058-2072. F17 9603, Amiens, *Règlement intérieur,* drawn up by the *Conseil académique,* Aug. 11, 1852; and F17 9742, *Règlement intérieur,* Versailles, drawn up by the *Commission de surveillance,* 1851.

Only 34 of 74 directors on the job in 1835 were still there in 1845; and 31 of 77 directors in 1865 remained in 1875. Some retired and some were honourably transferred or even promoted, but as many were either transferred to less attractive posts (an inspectorship in an isolated upland area, for example), or were retired early or forced to resign.[26] The director was under pressure from many sources: from local notables and clergy who dominated the boards of Overseers attached to each school; from the schools inspectors and rectors, and from a succession of regimes, each of which tended to use the teacher for its own political ends. The July Monarchy, for example, sacrificed one of its best directors, Adrien Guerrier de Haupt at Amiens, because local clergy and notables opposed his reforms at the normal school. In the 1860's Victor Duruy not only saved the able Louis Mariotti from a similar fate at Angers, but promoted him to the post at Versailles, the most coveted directorship in France.[27] But the courageous and independent Duruy was a rarity among education ministers of his time. During the ten years after his resignation, 1869 to 1879, a succession of regimes of varying political hues took their toll of directors: the Second Empire, a radical republic and the Commune, the clerico-conservative Moral Order and finally the socially conservative Third Republic. It is no wonder that most directors followed the advice of Léon Chauvin in his memoirs: "whether out of duty or self-interest, the government employee must do what he is told, confident in the judgement of his superiors."[28]

Despite the relative insecurity of his post, the director enjoyed a reasonably comfortable existence. He earned 2,000 to 4,000 francs (see Table IV, Appendix), with room and board, heat and fuel, and frequently a garden attached to his quarters in the school. He averaged two to three children and was anxious to ensure that his sons were admitted to secondary schools, preferably *lycées* rather than municipal colleges. In this regard he had the advantage as a public employee of receiving priority for government boarding scholarships for his sons in the state lycées.[29]

In a three generational study of the families of 46 directors, 30 directors came from the primary system and 16 from the secondary schools,

[26] See the personal files of E. Fourcade, Adrien Guerrier de Haupt, J. F. Guillemeau, Prosper Hilaire, Louis Arsène Meunier, and J. B. E. Person, as examples of directors who encountered difficulties with education officials at one time or another. On the turnover of directors, see especially F179688.

[27] See note 20, *supra*, and René LEMOINE, *La Loi Guizot, son application dans le Département de la Somme* (Abbeville, 1933), 225-269. Also Jean-Philippe David, *L'Établissement de l'enseignement primaire au XIX^e siècle dans le département de Maine-et-Loire 1816-1879* (Angers, 1967), 181-223.

[28] L. CHAUVIN, *Mémoires*, p. 212.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 285, and F17 9688, Louis Mariotti. Generally on the director's life, see André CANIVEZ, *L'École normale d'instituteurs de Douai de 1834 à 1961* (Douai, ? 1962), 65-66.

and almost all were of humble origin.[30] The 70 sons (the third generation) in almost every case advanced themselves socially and professionally beyond their fathers and far beyond their grandfathers. These sons ranged from 15 to 45 years of age and thus were divided into two categories: 1) 44 adults over 20 years either engaged in a career or clearly preparing for one, and 2) 26 young men between the ages of 15 and 20 who were still in school. None in either category became an artisan, worker, farmer, petty clerk or shopkeeper, the professions of most of their grandparents. Among the adult group, two had become primary school teachers and five normal school professors or primary school inspectors. Eleven were secondary school professors, of whom eight in *lycées*. Eight more became military officers, ten entered the civil service, five went into business and industry and three into the liberal professions.

Among the 26 young men who were still students, seventeen attended lycées or institutions of higher learning. Four more attended municipal colleges and five were enrolled in private boarding schools. Not one of the 26 young men attended a normal school, while among the adults 7 (of 44) had done so. In both samples, the *lycées* prevailed over the municipal college as the choice of directors' sons, but in the second group a higher percentage of directors' sons were able to attend a *lycée*. The sons of directors were finding it increasingly easy to gain access to secondary schools, and to the better ones. The improved wages of the directors during the 1860s would offer a partial explanation of this (Table IV, Appendix).

Having completed their studies, most of the sons favoured the academic and military professions and the middle levels of the civil service. Some even managed to penetrate to the liberal professions and higher civil service, traditionally the preserves of the bourgeoisie. Few entered business and industry, which is somewhat surprising in view of the interest in applied science and agriculture of a number of directors. For example, Léon Chauvin and Edouard Person, both directors of humble origin, had marked abilities in these areas. Yet their talented sons moved towards careers in the academic and liberal professions. Each had a son who became a *lycée* professor after study at the *École normale supérieure* in Paris, and another of Person's sons became a prominent lawyer in Chartres. Indeed, of 14 directors' sons who had obtained an advanced education by 1865, seven became lycée professors, two lawyers, two doctors, two military officers (graduates of the military academy of Saint-Cyr), and a

[30] The exact breakdown of the professions of those in the first generations was 12 artisans and workers; 5 farmers; 9 clerks and small shopkeepers; 5 teachers: 1 normal school director; 2 lesser military officers, 2 liberal professions, and 1 civil service, plus 9 who were of uncertain origin.

mining engineer (a graduate of the *École polytechnique* and its affiliate the *École des mines*).[31]

In 1865 roughly 1,600 higher education diplomas were delivered (including doctorates) in a country of 35 million, yet almost one-third (14 of 44) of the directors' sons by 1865 had attended or graduated from an institution of higher learning, six of whom from the *grandes écoles*. But only one had a technical or scientific education.[32] In terms of employment patterns there was a similar tendency among directors' sons to avoid applied science and technology in favour of the civil service and of teaching in secondary or normal schools. When young men did enter business and industry they usually sought posts as clerks and bookkeepers, frequently in the rapidly expanding railroad companies, rather than technical or engineering positions. This tendency also existed in *enseignement spécial*, despite the partly utilitarian goals of that programme. Although skilled and technical positions in industry brought higher pay, such positions continued to be associated in the public mind with vulgar manual work. Ambitious young men of modest origin often preferred less well-paying, but more secure and socially more acceptable, office jobs in government and business administrations.[33]

The three generational study points to the avenues by which able and intelligent young men of modest origin were able to advance themselves professionally and socially through the French education system. As the century progressed, the percentage of directors coming from the primary system via the normal schools increased from about 40 to 70%. Before 1880 the directors and inspectors' corps continued to include *bacheliers* from the secondary schools, mainly from the municipal colleges, though in dwindling numbers. Some directors of primary background had obtained teaching experience at the secondary level, particularly in *enseignement spécial* and Cluny, and some managed to obtain secondary and higher education diplomas along the way. This relatively open system allowed for individual advancement on the basis of ability, particularly as measured

[31] See the sources cited in note 5 and also Tables I and II in the Appendix. Among other examples of a two generational rise in family fortunes; Pierre Demongeot, the son of a poor village worker, was the father of the graduate of the *École polytechnique* and became a highly placed civil servant; Z. J. F. Augé, the son of a *vigneron*, had a son who obtained his *agrégation* after study at the *École normale supérieure* and became professor at the Lycée de Caen. Chauvin's son became professor at the Lycée de Tours and Person's son at the important Lycée Saint-Louis in Paris. The son of N. A. Cordier and grandson of a forest-warden graduated from Saint-Cyr, as did the son of Louis Mariotti.

[32] *Ibid.* On the number of students in higher education and of diplomas delivered each year in France, 1851-1939, see Antoine Prost, *L'Enseignement*, p. 243.

[33] The daughters of directors had fewer professional opportunities: of 31 daughters over 18 years of age, 9 had no profession, 6 were teachers, and 2 were in school. 14 were married: 6 to normal school professors, 2 to teachers, 2 to lycée professors (both of whom were former normal school professors who had obtained higher diplomas while on the job), while 4 married clerks, modest civil servants or lower-level military officers.

by success in examinations and the capacity for pleasing one's superiors, and this suited the social ambitions of the lower middle and upper working classes who sought to advance their family fortunes and to escape manual work through education. The prevalence of late marriage and the limitation of family size characteristic of the groups studied in this paper, especially during the second half of the century, further enabled young men to take advantage of the French meritocracy to advance themselves and their families over one or two generations.

Such opportunities appear to have been less common in England and Germany. In England Her Majesty's Inspectors came mainly from Oxford and Cambridge. Most teachers were trained as apprentices to designated master teachers, and relatively few young men attended a handful of teacher training colleges run by the churches. Teacher training in England was so inadequate that by the end of the nineteenth century half of English teachers were uncertified, a situation unimaginable in France or Germany.[34] Though Germany had an excellent system of normal schools, the staffs of these schools were recruited mainly from among the bourgeois products of secondary and higher education. Primary schools inspectors were clergymen for the most part, and the lay state inspectors had little to do with primary instruction.[35] In Germany and in England, therefore, the young teacher of modest background had very few chances to advance himself within the primary system or to obtain a secondary education. The best way to get ahead in either country was by making money, by economically productive effort of some sort. In England vocational and technical education was haphazard; Germany on the other hand had an excellent post-elementary system of continuing vocational training *(Berufsschulen)* which provided the humbler classes with sound training for their station in life.[36]

Further research needs to be done to establish more precisely the relationship of French to German and English education, particularly in terms of social advancement and the schools. If the French system allowed more professional and social mobility, why did this not contribute, as Duruy had hoped, to a fuller development of an industrial democracy in France than actually occured? The answer is uncertain, but it is worth noting that French educational institutions took shape during the first part of the nineteenth century, after the French Revolution had shaken

[34] A. TROPP, "The Changing Status of the Teacher in England and Wales," in P. W. MUSGRAVE, ed., *Sociology, History and Education* (London, 1970), 193-222. Also, R. W. RICH, *The Training of Teachers in England and Wales during the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, England, 1933), 27-30, 47.

[35] I. L. KANDEL and Thomas ALEXANDER, *The Reorganization of Education in Prussia* (New York, 1927), xxi.

[36] P. W. MUSGRAVE, *Technical Change, the Labour Force and Education, A Study of the British and German Iron and Steel Industries 1860-1964* (London, 1967), 25-70.

the social structure and before the onset of the Industrial Revolution in the 1840s. Patterns of social advancement through education had been established before industrialism, and this may well have influenced the tendency of able young men to seek access to the non-economic bourgeoisie, particularly through office jobs and teaching.

The meritocratic features of the French educational system derived originally from the changes in French society resulting from the French Revolution. A long series of socially conservative governments under the two constitutional monarchies in France were unable to undo the impact of such social changes on the educational system. For example, the framers of the Law of 1833, François Guizot, Victor Cousin and Ambroise Rendu, were social conservatives greatly influenced by German education; accordingly, they sought to perfect primary education in France the better to keep it, and its lower class clientele, away from the bourgeois preserve of secondary studies.[37] Yet they proved far less capable of insulating French education from the effects of social change and from the social ambitions of the lower middle and upper working class than their German counterparts had been. The Law of 1833 thus opened the way to a degree of social and professional advancement within the educational system well beyond what its framers had envisaged.

[37] François GUIZOT *Rapport au roi par le ministre secrétaire d'État au département de l'Instruction publique sur l'exécution de la loi du 28 juin 1833, relative à l'Instruction primaire* (Paris, 1834), 1-27, 119-120. A. RENDU, *Considérations sur les écoles normales;* and Victor COUSIN, *Rapport sur l'état de l'instruction publique dans les pays de l'Allemagne et particulièrement en Prusse* (Paris, 1831).

APPENDIX:

Normal School Directors: Origins, Education, Careers, Salaries 1830-1880.

Table I: Social Origins

	Artisans Workers	Farmers	Teachers	Clerks	Business	Liberal, Govmt.	Mili-tary	Misc.	Total
	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	
1830's 1840's	12 (25)	6 (12)	4 (8)	4 (9)	10 (20)	9 (17)	4 (8)	0	49
1850's 1860's	26 (37)	13 (19)	15 (21)	6 (9)	2 (3)	2 (3)	4 (6)	2 (3)	70
	38 (32)	19 (16)	19 (16)	10 (9)	12 (10)	11 (9)	8 (7)	2 (2)	119

Table II: Educational Background

Years	Primary	Secondary	Clergy	Total
	No. %	No. %	No. %	
1830's 1840's	50 (46)	52 (48)	7 (6)	109
1860's 1870's	72 (70)	27 (26)	4 (4)	103
	122 (58)	79 (37)	11 (5)	212

Table III: Diplomas Obtained

	Brevet Supr.	Baccal.	Higher Educ.	Clergy	Unc.	Total
	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	
1830's 1840's	41 (38)	49 (45)	6 (5.5)	7 (6)	6 (5.5)	109
1860's 1860's	59 (57)	31 (30)	8 (8)	4 (4)	1 (1)	103
	100 (47)	80 (38)	14 (7)	11 (5)	7 (3)	212

Table IV:
Income of Directors & Professors, Inspectors & Teachers.

Year	Director		Maître-adjoint	Inspector	Teacher (men)	
	Gov. scale	max.	Gov. scale	Gov. scale	Min.	Ave.
1835	1000-1500		500-1000	500-1000	200	3- 400
1845	1000-3000	(4800)	1000-1800	1000-3000	200	4- 500
1865	2400-3600	(4500)	1200-1900	1800-3200	600	7- 900
1875	2700-4000	(5000)	1400-2000	2500-3600	700	8-1000

Sources: F17 9628, 9688, 9690, 9732; the *dossiers personnels* of the directors, and the books cited in notes 18 and 27. See especially note five. In Table II, the ratio of primary to secondary is 60 to 40 when the clergy is subtracted, and these percentages have been used in the paper. In Table IV, the "maximum" category refers to the fact that some directors received supplementary grants from departments and cities (Versailles, Strasbourg). The figures are in francs.