

Research Article

Pseudomorphosis of schools' system and the fiction of its regulatory processes: A study of educational narratives

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The inconsistencies between agents of the educational system, where it reigns tensions and disjointed mechanisms that express failures of multidisciplinary action, make schools behave like pseudomorphic systems. This article examines interactions between autonomy and control, resorting to a qualitative study with a quantitative approach to schools' strategic documents and inspectorate reports using NVivo. It provides a multiperspective cross-analysis of school narratives regarding (i) principals' vision, (ii) school strategic orientation, and (iii) internal and external evaluation reports. This article exposes how schools demand an organised, intentional, and planned way of using self-knowledge to enhance teaching and learning. It uncovers that innovation is an undervalued facet in the school organisation and a marginal element of the school evaluation. Additionally, it reveals system inconsistencies regarding external evaluation and school organisation. The difficulty of school change asserts that educational systems need to deepen interconnections to prevent schools from keeping a traditional functional structure masked by modern educational discourses, meaning pseudomorphic guidance.

Keywords: Accountability; Innovation; Decisional capital; Organisational capital; Transformational capital

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1. Introduction

The sustainability of competitive economies challenges governments and schools to concentrate on developing competencies and lifelong learning to ensure a response to high-demanding societal problems. Creating human capital means constituting skills as a capacity to act in situations rather than stockpile knowledge (Paltrinieri, 2017). In the more successful systems, there is a greater emphasis on building the individual and especially the collective capacity of educators to increase performance, using internal and external accountability (Fullan et al., 2015). However, evidence of whether and which accountability practices affect equity and performance in academic achievement has been challenging to isolate and establish (Torres, 2021). Combining control- and improvement-oriented evaluation systems may promote school development and enhance education quality (Hanberger et al., 2016). The importance of a supportive school evaluation and innovation is highlighted by the European Inspectorate (Donaldson, 2013; Simeonova et al., 2020)

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and by scholars (Brown et al., 2018; Hanberger et al., 2016; Küçükbere & Balkar, 2021; Kurum & Cinkir, 2019; McNamara & O'Hara, 2008; Monarca & Fernández-González, 2016). Pursuing a culture of permanent improvement is about knowing which factors induce teachers' innovative behaviour to support the school's transformation. "Innovation is not a single act in the sense that you do it and then it is done but instead better viewed as a process of supporting teachers' learning that needs to be monitored, analysed and revised" (Maass et al., 2019, p.304).

Considering that schools are passing through organisational adjustments, altering teachers' ways of working with each other and students, and experiencing changes in school grammar, it is crucial to understand the role of the school vision and evaluation in school improvement. This paper presents comparative empirical research concerning nine Portuguese school clusters' narratives and the Inspectorate accounts. Misaligned perceptions may produce vertical fragmentation, with a potential impact on the way schools function. The study explores interconnections between autonomy and control, innovation and school transformation by examining a three-dimensional analytical construct translated in the following research questions:

RQ 1) The *modus faciendi* of autonomy - *How is school autonomy/agency exercised in schools?*

RQ 2) The *modus faciendi* of control - *How is autonomy regulated? How do the agents of control - external evaluation and self-evaluation - exercise their agency?*

RQ 3) The combined *modus faciendi* of autonomy and control for school transformation - *Is the autonomy/control exercised to induce innovation and school transformation? What are the drivers and obstacles to school innovation perceived in educational narratives?*

2. Theoretical Framework

Improving the school organisation to transform teachers' practices and promote better learning is the primary responsibility of the educational systems and the teaching profession. Neoliberalism and dynamics focus on sustainable economic growth demand for a more responsive school. Hence, comparability became a tool for political persuasion and criteria for conceiving judgment about the quality and efficacy of the schools and even educational systems in different countries (Barroso, 2018). During the last two decades, accountability has become a powerful policy tool for improving education (Cochran-Smith, 2021) in contexts of state decentralisation, managerialism, and increasing autonomy. In times of demand for a responsive school, discussing a 'new accountability' for the schools, a supportive and desirable to whole the school community accountability, and a 'new leadership' to play in such accountable systems is imperious.

2.1. A 'New' Supportive and Welcome Accountability

Accountability is understood as responsibility (Fullan et al., 2015) and an intelligent professional mechanism (Cochran-Smith, 2021; Lillejord, 2020), respectively, because it should support students' learning and generate intelligible knowledge to improve the schools' purposes. Regulation appears as a core process for improving schools. Thus, the post-bureaucratic model established led to mechanisms of posterior control that combined transnational educational systems evaluation, national students' assessments, inspections' action, and school self-evaluation. However, the virtue or vice of any accountability scheme, initiative, or system depends on the more comprehensive policy and political agendas it is attached to, how it is used, and the goals, values, and purposes it serves (Cochran-Smith, 2021).

Internal accountability should precede external accountability (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012), and policymakers should prioritise creating internal accountability because it is more effective in achieving greater overall accountability (Fullan et al., 2015). Portz (2021) considers that educational accountability is in transition once: goals are shifting from a relatively narrow focus on academic achievement to broader conceptions of students' learning that include the attendant environment; metrics are going from standardised tests to multiple metrics that capture a more comprehensive understanding of students' learning; consequences are moving from sanctions tied to performance to include support for continuous schools' improvement. This perspective of supportive external accountability and a more robust self-evaluation are sustained by studies that enounce positive or

negative impacts due to external evaluation. These controversial effects are well described in the literature, namely: promotion of practices focused on quantitative results such as teaching to the test (Dahler-larsen, 2014); teachers' anxiety due to difficulty of control pupils' results (Hutt & Lewis, 2021); frustration due to fixation on poor results and problems (Schillemans & Bovens, 2011); a culture of silence and stress that reduces the time available for reflection, and erodes creativity, and work satisfaction due to strong audit culture of evaluation (Hanberger et al., 2016); feelings of mistrust are impoverishing the teaching profession and damaging teacher motivation by questioned their professional competence and authority (Hanberger et al., 2016); little or no value in helping teachers improve their practice (Hanberger et al., 2016); eroding an authentic and organic commitment to professional responsibility (Matteucci et al., 2017); principals perceptions of the results generate performativity-focused effects that constrains and inhibits professional practice (Walker & Ko, 2011); reduce trust, inhibit discussion of difficulties, and diminish honest self-evaluation (Hopkins et al., 2016). Additionally, Ehren and Visscher (2006) report the lack of congruence between the inspectorates' goals and schools' goals, signalling several effects: (i) 'tunnel vision' due to emphasis on quantified phenomena; (ii) 'myopia' related to the pursuit of short-term targets at the expense of long-term objectives; (iii) 'measure fixation' due to emphasising measures of success rather than the underlying objectives; (iv) 'ossification' related with the rigid use of a framework for inspection.

Controversially, McCrone et al. (2009) found a positive impact on the student's performance, quantifying a statistically significant effect of ten per cent improvement one year after the inspection and significantly higher two years after. Also, Ehren and Visscher (2006) report that ten per cent of schools can change independently, but the other 90 per cent need some support or external impulse to change.

Thus, "the most effective way to evaluate the teaching practice is to use a balanced approach of external inspection and internal review" (Brady, 2019, p.605). A 'multiple lens' viewpoint that includes the school's self-evaluation findings complementary to the external evaluation (Hopkins et al., 2016) conduces into a desirable balance between control and autonomy. The Association of National and Regional Inspectorates of Education in Europe, in Bratislava Memo (Donaldson, 2013), established that the balance between school self-evaluation and external evaluation is central to triggering school improvement. Giving autonomy to the schools to evaluate their performance against standards or criteria defined by the inspectorates allows leaders and teachers to set targets for their progress (Simeonova et al., 2020). Therefore, the school transformation appears as an equation between organisational capital and decisional capital empowered by school knowledge proceeding from internal and external accountability.

2.2. A 'New' Leadership to Play in an Accountable System

If human development is the core of schools' action, meaning teachers' responsiveness to each student's learning needs, accountability is a tool to build an inclusive school. For Lillejord (2020), accountability should be about how teachers and school administrators collaboratively analyse results with the ambition to improve their practice and students' educational outcomes. The same author adds that school leaders, administrators, and teachers need two competencies: (i) knowing how to interpret data and (ii) understanding how to integrate the system-generated information into practice. Therefore, the demand for a "new leadership" is characterised by the following components: "experts in context", "engaging in joint determination throughout the process", establishing a "culture of accountability", and becoming a "system player" (Fullan, 2020b, p.140). However, schools face conflicting demands and contradictory pressures. Brunsson (2006) states that antagonistic or ambiguous perspectives manifest as disconnections and weakly articulated systems. The school may appear as organised anarchy and as an "irrational organisation that deals with the relationship between decisions, uncertainty, and action", where "conflicting ideas and demands shall be represented" and "can be met by hypocrisy" (Brunsson, 2014, pp.142-144). Barzanó (2009), in a comparative study involving Italian, English, and Portuguese principals,

signals that principals face in isolation the pressure of the contradictions and ambiguities among the political framework and assume themselves as crucial actors in the process of accountability for the school improvement.

To deal with the system disconnections and develop and sustain an organic culture, the school leaders must consider the "relevant available data an ally in the decision-making process rather than something to be feared or used to compare individuals and their achievements in critical and punitive ways" (Ezzani, 2015, p.18). Likewise, leadership goes beyond the narrow vision of the principal regarding administrative management (González-Falcón et al., 2020). The involvement of middle leaders and the community, driven shared clear vision in the school, promotion of trust within the school, inspiring teachers, and focus on teaching and learning allied to the use of information and school knowledge is conducive to effective leadership and quality of education (Andrews & Conway, 2020; Ezzani, 2015; González-Falcón et al., 2020; Rechsteiner et al., 2022; Tayag & Ayuyao, 2020; Xhomara, 2018). A new leadership arises from providing the whole community with opportunities to be more active in applying innovation and brokering strategies to build competencies for continuous improvement.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study was developed in Portugal after introducing a large-scale reform in the educational system in 2018, under the principle of granting every school curricular autonomy and flexibility. It included organised school clusters created by the Government that were evaluated in the third cycle of the schools' evaluation by the Inspectorate services. The research excluded schools from the pilot phase of the third cycle of external evaluation and professional, artistic, and private schools, focusing on the prevailing schools of Portuguese educational tissue. Hence, assuming a universe of 60 school clusters or groups [SG] from the whole country, we conducted an in-depth analysis of a *corpus* of documents from 9 groups (SG14, SG24, SG26, SG212, SG218, SG221, SG32, SG315, SG319). These schools, formally constituted clusters between 2012 and 2013, were accounted for by Inspectorate services between January and April 2020. The documental *corpus* included External Evaluation Reports [EER], Self-evaluation Schools Reports [SSR], Principal's Intervention Projects [PIP], and School Educational Projects [SEP]. The last two documents were selected for the study because they established the whole school orientation. The SSRs analysed were produced one year after the inspection process to perceive the changes induced in the schools. The availability of SGs to freely make documents available for the study was a criterion for defining the sample (see Table 1). The school performance was established using data from 2018 and 2019: alignment of internal grades with national exams, fail and dropout rate, asymmetries between students, exam grades, and results of students with the Government social support.

3.2. Data Collection

Table 2 presents the theoretical framework conceived to analyse the *corpus* documental. The thematical blocks of decisional, organisational, and transformational capital are justified once the three constructs comprise a myriad of factors and causal interactions that characterise the school systems. The floating reading of two SSRs preceded the data analysis process. It advises us that these documents were technical narratives of account provision and seemed potential and mainly analysed with the category of decisional capital. Hence, we designed a specific and subordinate analysis framework (see Table 2) to comprehend the focus and the global line of action of the process of the school's self-evaluation.

Table 1
School clusters characteristics

	SG14	SG24	SG26	SG212	SG218	SG221	SG32	SG315	SG319
N.º of Schools	19	13	7	7	18	6	7	7	4
Performance ^a	High	High	Medium	High	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low
Socioeconomic Context ^a	Low	Low	Very Low	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Very Low
Pre-inspection documents	SEP	SEP	SEP PIP	PIP	SEP	--	SEP PIP	PIP	SEP PIP
<i>External evaluation</i>									
• Self-evaluation	S	G	VG	G	G	G	G	VG	S
• Leadership & management	G	VG	VG	G	VG	VG	G	VG	VG
• Provision of educational service	G	VG	VG	VG	VG	G	G	VG	G
• Results	G	VG	G	VG	G	G	G	G	G

Note. S – Sufficient; G – Good; VG – Very Good; ^a Portuguese Ministerial Platform of Statistics of Basic and Secondary Education and External Evaluation Reports.

Table 2
 Framework for documental analysis

<i>Theme Block 1. School knowledge</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PIP, SEP, and EER 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Comprehensive self-evaluation practices 1.2. Support self-evaluation practices 1.3. Self-evaluation innovation-oriented 1.4. Culture of evaluation 1.5. Results-centred self-evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Comprehensive and supportive self-evaluation B. Self-evaluation participated process C. Self-evaluation vision and mission
<i>Theme Block 2. Organisational Capital</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. School vision 2.2. Definition of school strategic action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.2.1. Supported by school knowledge 2.2.2. Oriented by promoting and conditioning factors 2.3. Innovation strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.3.1. For organisational innovation 2.3.2. Culture of pedagogical innovation 2.4. School as a learning institution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.4.1. Mechanisms of organisational learning 2.4.2. Teachers' sharing practices 2.4.3. Formal training 2.5. Institutional articulation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.5.1. Institutional articulation practices 2.5.2. Shared management 2.5.3. Culture of Commitment 2.6. Innovation vision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.6.1. Technological innovation 2.6.2. Pedagogical innovation 2.6.3. Cultural and organisational innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. Teachers' collaborative work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1.1. Development of collective capacity 3.1.2. Promotion of teachers' agency 3.2. Classroom practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.2.1. Active methodologies and school grammar 3.2.2. Student centredness 3.3. Supervision of teachers' work 3.4. Innovation school climate 3.5. Innovative behaviour
<i>Theme Block 3. Transformational Capital</i>	

3.3. Data Analysis

A computer-assisted qualitative data analysis using NVivo (version 1.6.1) was developed after the data collection and a preliminary analysis of the documental *corpus*. Table 3 describes the methodological key stages applied in the research. The analysis, mainly qualitative, regarding mapping and data interpretation, was complemented with a study of the similarity between SGs and documents. It intends to perceive the consistency and coherency of the educational orientation defined in each SG.

Table 3

Methodological key stages of the research process

Phase 1. Data Collection	Gathering a documental <i>corpus</i> from the SG fit in the sample: 9 EER; 9 PIP; 9 SEP; 9 SSR.
Phase 2. Preliminary data analysis	Floating reading of documents; triangulation with the theoretical background information to stabilise a framework for the documental analyses.
Phase 3. Organising, managing, mapping, and interpreting data with NVivo	<p><i>Collections and sets</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organising nine sets of documents, one per group of schools. • The NVivo project included three parent nodes: decisional, organisational, and transformational capital. <p><i>Cases</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each document constituted a unit of analysis. A case node was created for each document and linked with SG's profiling information. <p><i>Classifications, attributes, and values</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The documents were classified by the attributes: performance (low, medium, or high); socioeconomic context (very low, low, medium, or high); the size of the group (large or small number of schools); external evaluation appreciation (insufficient, sufficient, good, or very good). <p><i>Codes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The documents were coded to capture units of meaning according to categories and subcategories of analyses. • Each reference unit was also coded according to sentiment (negative or positive). <p><i>Queries and data visualisation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following queries were conducted to comprehend data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frequency of words related to pedagogical innovation (innovation, improvement, transformation, change, culture, involvement, implication, motivation, participation, and commitment). - References frequency by code (categories and subcategories). <p><i>Maps, charts, and diagrams</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data were explored through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hierarchy graphs of codes that display the number of references by code. - Cluster analysis was used as an integrative approach for comparing the similarity between documents or SGs using the Jaccard coefficient. It considered the codification and sentiments.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Global Analysis of Educational Narratives

The documental analysis concerning words linked to pedagogical innovation led to the results in Table 4. It illustrates globally the speech alignment of each SG with building a culture of innovation that may lead to transformation. Additionally, it allows us to perceive the importance of innovation as a tool for school improvement. The content analysis of the narratives is summarized in Figure 1 and detailed in Appendix 1. The purpose was to gather specific

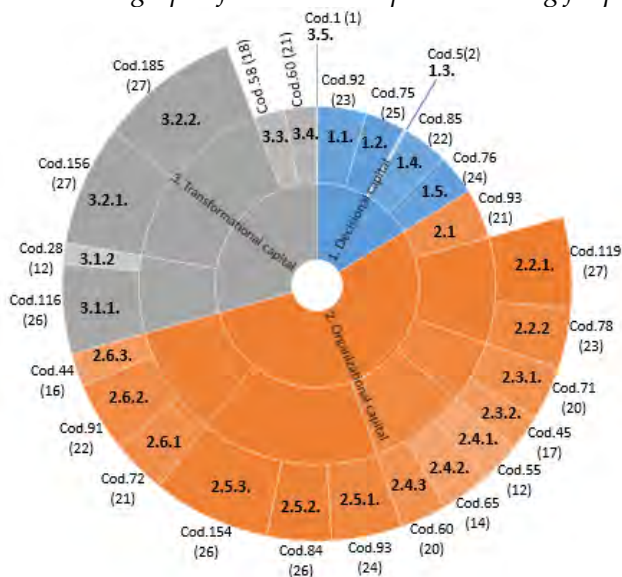
information to characterise the schools' orientation concerning decisional, organisational, and transformational capital. Regarding the frequency of words and the content coded, we proceed to an integrative approach for comparing the similarity between SGs and between documents from the same SG (PIP and SEP). The Jaccard coefficient of similarity was used as a metric to analyse the consistency and coherency of the educational orientation defined in each SG (see Table 5).

Table 4
Results of frequency of words in documental corpus related to the cycle of pedagogical innovation

	School Cultures	Mission-oriented Attitude	Innovation	School Improvement	School Transformation	Total
SG14	--; 4; 6	14; 16; 18	2; 22; 9	19; 27; 5	1; 11; 2	36; 80; 40
SG212	--; 4; 7	8; 19; 14	--; --; --	23; 53; --	--; --; 2	31; 76; 23
SG218	2; 2; --	10; 7; 17	2; 1; 6	25; 10; 12	--; --; 2	39; 20; 37
SG221	2; 1; 26	15; 20; 36	1; 2, 2	18; 13; 38	--; 4; 1	37; 40; 103
SG24	--; 1; 10	15; 10; 15	--; --; 3	22; 3; 3	--; --; 1	37; 14; 42
SG26	--; 35; 29	7; 65; 57	--; 26; 15	21; 77; 67	--; 18; 5	28; 221; 173
SG315	1; 13; 8	16; 18; 14	3; 2; 2	19; 3; 6	--; 2; 2	39; 38; 32
SG319	1; 10; 9	7; 26; 33	1; 4; 1	18; 20; 14	--; 2; --	27; 62; 57
SG32	2; 4; 13	11; 4; 9	--; 1; 2	21; 10; 19	2; 2; 1	36; 21; 44
Total (documents)	191 (22)	501 (27)	107 (19)	576 (26)	58 (16)	1383 (27)

Note. The sets of three numbers refer to the frequency of words in EER, PIP, and SEP.

Figure 1
Hierarchic graph of codes and respective coding frequency



Note. The size of areas is proportional to the number of references identified per code, corresponding to the number that follows 'Cod.'. The codes refer to categories and subcategories of analysis numbered in Table 2. The number of documents coded in the subcategory is in parentheses.

Table 5
Similarity, by codes and words, between the PIP and SEP

Jaccard Coefficient	SG26	SG221	SG315	SG24	SG32	SG319	SG218	SG14	SG212
Similarity of codes	.839	.800	.679	.667	.640	.594	.556	.483	.435
Similarity of words	.571	.248	.323	.194	.213	.300	.209	.292	.250

The word frequency analysis of the narratives reveals an evident concern with the school's improvement and the community's sense of mission (Table 4). In the opposite direction, the school

transformation and innovation have the lowest level of referencing. The external evaluation framework includes four indicators related to pedagogical and curricular innovation. However, four in nine reports did not reference it, and the reports from the other five SGs are scarce in references, between one and three. Additionally, school transformation appears only in two reports (SG14 and SG32).

Similarly, due to innovation or school transformation, PIP or SEP narratives are short in references. Only two SGs have a rich and clear orientation due to innovation and school transformation. In SG26, both structural documents (PIP and SEP) were produced before the inspection process, even though they evidence richness of speech innovation-orientated. Despite the unfavourable socioeconomic context (table 1), SG26 seems to be overcome through the inspiring vision and proactive school culture, as the following extract demonstrates.

To assure continuity and stability to innovations, they must be addressed to the entire organisation, thinking of it as the true unit of change, and not through small isolated and disconnected actions, limited to a reduced scope and 'affecting' only a part. (PIP-SG26)

Structural documents from SG26 are the ones that exhibit the higher Jaccards' coefficient of similarity of words (.571) and even higher, considering the units of meaning (.839). These results suggest a high level of organisational articulation focused on a clear vision for the school. Additionally, the higher register of words corroborates the importance given to a "mission-oriented attitude", "school culture", and "school improvement". The PIP of SG14, produced after the Inspectorate action, also shows concern with innovation and school transformation (22 and 11 references). Conversely, the SEP built before inspection action denotes less prevalence of the words innovation and school transformation, respectively, with 9 and 2 occurrences (Table 4). A less favourable external evaluation and the proposals in the report seem to lead to a rethinking process and a change in the school orientation, including a higher commitment and concern for innovation. The similarity between PIP and SEP of SG14, considering words and the coded units of meaning, is low (Jaccards' coefficient of .292 and .483, respectively - table 5). The coexistence of these disconnected visions for the school may induce incongruencies in the teachers' practices. According to Kalman et al. (2017), a positive culture is shaped where a clear vision, mission, and values greatly influence the teachers.

The similarity between words analysed in eight of the nine SGs is low, swinging between .194 and .323 of the Jaccards' coefficient (Table 5). This tendency happens either the PIP and SEP conception is posterior to the inspectorate process, or one document is prior, and the other is post-inspection. This small articulation between structural SGs' documents is probably, in part, due to semantics once the Jaccards' coefficient concerning the similarity of codes is higher, varying between .435 and .839. Low similarities of units of meaning and even smaller regarding words suggest disconnections in school narratives. In these schools, it might be challenging to nurture an aligned vision. Without a shared holistic and clear vision, the school will be handled in a vacuum rather than leading the organisation in a clear, desirable direction (Mogren et al., 2019).

There is no clear pattern among the school's socioeconomic context variables or differences in performance and external evaluation that seems to explain the coding similarities between documents. However, two clusters, SG26 and SG221, exhibit a high level of similarity in coding, respectively, .800 and .839, which suggests more articulation in designing the school action. Both have medium performances and are small clusters of schools, but they differ in context. Conversely, the SG14 and SG212 show the smaller Jaccards' coefficient of similarity concerning meaning-coded units, inferior to .500. However, both SGs exhibit high-performance rates and very different external evaluations.

The comprehensive analysis of the 27 documents allows us to identify the general and prevailing concept of the schools' organisational and pedagogical orientation. Documents that intentionally define the educational orientation of the school and external evaluation that supports schools' activity and improvement should hold the perspective of organisational and pedagogical

innovation. Most of the documents analysed do not value this perspective of innovation referred to by Tyunnikov (2017) as the practice of the innovative transformation of the pedagogical system.

The school culture is vital in how school leaders create capacity-building conditions and conduct structural changes that enable reforms and support innovations (Yakavets et al., 2017). Thus, school culture is crucial to ensure transformative social change and the reconfiguration of practices (Domanski et al., 2020). Even though the importance granted to the role of school culture for organisational learning and improvement (Baydar & Cetin, 2021; Mogren et al., 2019; Villamor et al., 2022), the construct is absent or residual in the inspection narrative. On the contrary, school culture is referred to in all school documents. It is mentioned with two connotations, one related to professional cultures and the common one as a vision for the educational service provided by the school. The latest is expressed as a desiderate for (i) an inclusive culture; (ii) a humanistic-based culture that prepares the youngest to live in a globalised world and for lifelong learning. It appears linked to the notions of promoting a collaborative culture, a culture of school evaluation and improvement, a culture based on the mission and vision of the SEP, and a culture based on a trustful environment.

Improving a school culture of building bridges among colleagues and a culture that promotes the teachers' participation in school can make teachers gradually accept more responsibility not only for their professional development but also for the school's improvement (Rechsteiner et al., 2022). This is challenging to the whole school institution and especially to leaders who must have the sensibility and responsibility to promote a trustful environment (Vermeulen et al., 2020) and inspiring leadership that might lead to teacher innovation, teacher empowerment, and team psychological safety (Zhu et al., 2019). Teachers are crucial for educational change by actively shaping the school's mission (Rechsteiner et al., 2022). The mission-oriented attitude and school improvement are highlighted both in inspectorate and school narratives, reporting that:

Leadership is essential for the proper functioning of the SG, as it influences and guides the community towards the achievement of organisational objectives, being inseparable from the clear definition of the mission and strategic principles appropriate to the creation of a climate of cooperation that fosters the sense of belonging and commitment. (PIP-SG212)

School improvement is the term consistently with a higher frequency of references in reports produced by the Inspectorate. Hence, it strengthened the idea of the importance proposed by Constantinides (2022) of accountability as part of a system-level professional expectation, enabling a culture of continuous improvement and shared responsibility for the outcomes across schools.

4.2. In-deep Analysis of Educational Narratives

To understand the articulation amongst structural schools' documents, schools' context, and external evaluation, we focus on the specific content of the documental corpus (Fig. 1; Table 4; Appendix 1). Considering capital as a broad term for characterising schools' values at different system levels of the organisation, through its analysis and the idiosyncratic features of the nine SGs, we intend to understand how autonomy and control are used to induce innovation and transformation of the schools.

4.2.1. Decisional capital

Decisional capital is the learned art of making good decisions not just about day-to-day classroom interactions but about the direction of the school, the district, and even national policy (Luger, 2013). Hence, decisional capital is about developing expertise over time (Fullan et al., 2015). Decisional capital is sustained through internal and external accountability. Still, according to Fullan (2020a), the core question is on the schools' ability to use evidence and data to undertake actions to improve learning. Many SGs evidence an incipient self-evaluation lacking scope, especially concerning the teaching-learning process and classroom practices. Simultaneously, the school narratives and practices expressed a lack of consistency, like in SG14, where external evaluation seems to have triggered the intention of changing.

The SG understands self-evaluation as a learning process at the service of organisational development, the professional development of its employees, and the consolidation and enrichment of the educational community to improve its educational processes and results. (SEP-SG14, built before the inspectorate action)

The SG has not currently implemented any whole self-evaluation model but had an external evaluation process in the last year. It is necessary to build a self-evaluation model adequately articulated with the external evaluation model and consider it the starting point for a continuous improvement process. (PIP-SG14, produced after the inspectorate action)

On the contrary, only one SG explicitly values a culture of evaluation as a pillar for improvement and expresses integrated global self-evaluation practices in their structural documents, as the following statement shows.

The diagnosis has been gradually constructed and reconstructed, supported by the self-evaluation processes, that already take several years of implementation. Self-regulation practices are consolidated [and] a self-regulatory model is implemented using a team of external consultants (a critical friend) to support the self-evaluation team and audit the entire process. (...) It is vital to consolidate and evaluate the decisions and choices to achieve greater organisational efficiency. (PIP-SG26).

Despite the Portuguese legal determination to implement a school's self-evaluation process since 2002, the narratives show that it does not shape entirely shared and participated practices by the community in some schools. Generally, all SGs invest in analysing students' academic results. Still, according to inspectors, they are scarce in providing organisational interventions or improving plans with impact, monitoring classroom practices, and fostering reflections on the outcomes. For instance, SG319 indicated that "The information produced was disseminated through the organs and structures of pedagogical coordination, lacking wider dissemination and reflection (EER-SG319)". In another statement is follow: "Data collection has a wide scope, but the domains and variables considered in the self-evaluation are too generic, making it difficult to collect relevant information for identifying improvement areas of the teaching and learning process (EER-SG218)".

Schools are exhibiting signals of an understanding of the completeness between internal and external evaluation and their importance in school improvement:

A school focused on the constant search for quality has reflective thinking and pursuits for continuous improvement and quality through evaluation. (...) The combination of external evaluation with self-evaluation is a powerful instrument, generating information on the functioning and performance, and identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the trajectory followed. (PIP-SG319)

or being pressed to accept it without understanding the process or the outcomes produced by the external evaluation:

Our SG has received an external evaluation which, although not portraying, in our view, the true reality and value of the high quality and innovative practices of this SG. However, it compels us to elaborate an improvement plan. (RAA-SG14)

The self-evaluation domain exhibits the lowest appreciation undertaken by the Inspectorate. Several PIPs refer to it as a dimension that demands attention. The Inspectorate evaluated with the standard "very good" only two SGs. The first one, SG26, has adopted a self-evaluation following the Common Assessment Framework. The second, SG315 has implemented procedures systematically and continuously according to a strategy of improvement, namely: (i) the teaching and learning process constitutes the core procedure; (ii) accounting internal and external results; (iii) gave rise to an accurate knowledge of the schools' dynamics; (iv) was a shared and participated process in the community; (v) used a strategy of diffusion and reflection among school structures. However, there are inconsistencies in the external evaluation reports. The first one involves SG32 evaluated with "good", even though the EER mirrors the description of SG315:

The self-evaluation team has developed systematic and comprehensive work (...) implemented

continuously and systematically as part of a strategy to improve the teaching and learning processes, allowing a good knowledge of the schools' dynamics and the evolution of performance. The auscultation of the community, through satisfaction questionnaires and robust analysis of the collected data, allowed an adequate diagnosis that was the basis for defining the current educational project. (...) There is a clear articulation of the evaluation within the different educational structures and working groups regarding activities and projects. The self-evaluation procedures have triggered responses to the weaknesses by creating an improvement plan. (EER-SG32)

Another contradiction in the Inspectorate narratives occurs between SG14 and SG212, respectively evaluated with "sufficient" and "good". However, the analysis written in the reports arouses ambivalence in the evaluation:

The self-evaluation process is not carried out systematically and focuses more on results than the teaching and learning process. The analysis is sustained on data collected directly from documents, and there is an inconsistent articulation with other evaluation processes. (...) The plan drawn up for 2019-2020 is more comprehensive and aims to focus on teaching and learning. (...) However, it presents scope for improvement in how results are treated, analysed, and monitored. Self-evaluation practices have impacted the school's performance, significantly contributing to the definition of strategies reinforcing the students' inclusion. However, they have been conditioned by the absence of an improvement plan that supports internal decisions and sustained development. (EER-SG212)

The self-evaluation team analyses the student's academic and social results and conceives procedures for promoting success, understanding their impact, and providing for redefinition. The SG denotes accuracy in the data analysis, including regularly monitoring student outcomes, projects, measures, and activities. (...) The strategic self-evaluation plan focuses on the teaching and learning process, provides for reformulating and optimising practices and results, and affords reflection among the educational community. However, no regular, well-planned self-evaluation cycles provided rigorous knowledge of the impact of the measures adopted and sustained an integral improvement strategy. (EER-SG14).

In the face of the results, most Portuguese schools studied lack autonomy and consistency concerning control and regulation. Self-evaluation is a process that needs to grow and go deeper in the whole school organisation to provide schools with more robust decisional capital. The school transformation depends on the school's self-evaluation becoming credible regarding improvement and accountability (Brown et al., 2018). Conversely, external evaluation exhibits inconsistencies and may become misunderstood by the schools, impairing its impact.

4.2.2. Organisational capital

Organisational capital is considered leadership for capacity building for transformation (Dimmock, 2011; Yakavets et al., 2017) and the purview of leaders to devise new and more effective forms of school organisation, enabling responsiveness and change. A shared vision is a capacity to hold a common picture of the desired future (Baydar & Cetin, 2021). Building a shared and inspiring vision boosts unity and integration into educational action, pointing out a direction and motivating middle leaders, teachers, and the whole community. Principals understand that promoting a shared vision is a means to build individual and social capital. All school documents identify a vision for the school, including the teaching and learning process and citizenship education (Figure 1). All SGs refers to a humanistic and inclusive vision of education committed to developing the students' profile that assembles the present Portuguese educational policy. SG14, SG26, SG218, and SG221 also refer to innovation as a part of the vision subscribed for schools:

I present a continuity project, a commitment to the consolidation of good practices, the improvement of procedures and practices, and the search for innovative solutions that respond to the demands and trends of current education policies. The schools are given new challenges which force them to seek new solutions, reinvent themselves, and be creative, (...) without forgetting that teachers will be the biggest drivers of change and the expected students' success. (PIP-SG221)

The school vision is a minor important aspect for the Inspectorate once the narratives only show three references. On the other hand, principals highlight the importance of generating a common vision. According to the school principal of SG319, "*vision is the unit on a path to achieve success in the*

school" once it empowers teachers and leaders, enhances teacher professionalism, and promotes the school's capacity for change (Ho & Lee, 2016).

The category school strategic action appears in all documents, and once again, those from SG26 exhibit a higher level of reference. The speech of the Inspectorate emphasises (i) the lack of centrality to the teaching and learning process, (ii) the focus of some schools mainly on results, (iii) the nonexistence of improvement plans that boost procedures for success and sustained development, (iv) the lack of impact of school self-evaluation or regular cycles of self-evaluation, (v) the short articulation, and coherence between school structural documents, (vi) the principal leadership skills and attributes for leadership, (vii) the short of communication and information diffusion, (viii) the need for deepening reflection among teachers and organisational self-regulatory mechanisms, (ix) the need of a regular redesign of teaching practices including formative assessment, (x) the need for measurable goals for monitoring purposes.

The school narratives express the need (i) to consolidate a culture of self-evaluation, (ii) for proactive and autonomous middle leadership, (iii) to develop regular practices of analysis of school outcomes, (iv) for improvement plans, implying the middle leaders and departments, (v) for a more participated school self-evaluation, (vi) to reshape the teaching and learning process, (vii) for a culture of evaluation focus on the analysis of internal and external outcomes, (viii) to implement active methodologies of teaching that respond to the student's diversity, (ix) to change school grammar to make a more inclusive school, (x) to create tools for monitoring and evaluating management and leadership, (xi) to reflect on the strategic vision for the school.

The narratives reveal the richness of strategic proposals for improving and changing schools. Scholars defend cooperative approaches, including flexible government orientations easily implemented by the schools (Straub & Vilsmaier, 2020) once they are operationalisable in context and according to the specificities of the organisation. However, considering that the adopted innovation has been superficial and without changes in teaching practices (Pacheco, 2019, p.132), the transformation will have to come from (i) changes in school culture (Fullan, 2007), (ii) transformation of school grammar (Alves & Cabral, 2021; Fullan, 2020a; Machado, 2018), (iii) transformation of teachers' beliefs and personal missions (Goodson, 2014), (iv) making use of schools professional capital (Fullan et al., 2015), (v) transforming leadership considering its influence in school climate, teachers learning, and innovative teacher behaviour (Pan & Chen, 2021; Shirley et al., 2020; Tayag & Ayuyao, 2020).

The innovation strategy is analysed according to the practices of promoting innovative organisational solutions for the teaching and learning process and a culture of promotion, support, and diffusion of pedagogical experiences. Regarding the sustainability of the school transformation, the former is almost absent in the Inspectorate speech and is punctually considered in the schools' narratives. The school documents show superficial concerns with the promotion and diffusion practices seeming more circumstantial observations and expected discursive considerations. SG26 is an exception, being aware that the failure of diffusion processes is due to organisational features. The principal identifies this problem as a "*way made of small steps that must get a corpus on the organisational reflection, starting with the looking for a direction*" and depicts the problem of the failure of innovations and the obstacles to innovation:

Interventions must be operated by addressing the whole organisation intended as the unit of change to assure that innovations have continuity and stability. Small, isolated, and disconnected actions should be avoided, limited to a reduced scope, and 'affecting' only a part. The failure of these innovations seems to depend mainly on organisational variables, such as planning, decision-making, conflict resolution, compliance with guidelines, commitment to the organisation, work methodology, collaboration, leadership, and participation. (PIP-SG26)

The principal of the SG221 points out several obstacles aligned with the difficulty of conducting school transformations and diffuse innovations. These weaknesses included (i) inactivity among teachers, (ii) resistance to change, (iii) little availability to share pedagogical practices, (iv) resistance to pedagogical supervision, (v) number of students per class, and (vi) overload of

teachers' schedules.

School learning orientation is generally considered in Inspectorate and schools' narratives under the perspective of training plans that contribute to teachers' professional development. Promoting organisational learning through teachers' teamwork and active strategies of sharing experiences between teachers appears in EERs concerning only three and two SGs, respectively. Concerning the schools' narratives, the same constructs are considered in at least one of the structural documents of all SGs. However, the importance of teamwork and teachers' sharing practices are only consistently and deeply referenced by SG26 and SG221. Some schools identified difficulties in promoting individual and social capital, referring to the geographical dispersion of the SG, the complexity of management of teachers' schedules, teachers' resistance to changes, and superficial teamwork.

Collaborative work among teachers, work in practical learning communities, and sharing experiences are considered opportunities to build personal and interpersonal capacity that increases professional capital and improves teaching and learning (Rechsteiner et al., 2022; Yakavets et al., 2017). "Collaboration focused on the improvement of teaching and learning is one of the highest-yielding strategies to boost student, school, and system performance" (Fullan et al., 2015, p.8). Collaboration is also a determinant for improving school innovativeness (Blömeke et al., 2021; French et al., 2022; Straub & Vilsmaier, 2020) and helping teachers respond to educational change (Seabra et al., 2022). Despite teachers' collaboration being understood by principals as a critical element for generating a school culture and improving individual and social capital, they deal with difficulties in enabling it. A study by Lee et al. (2020) found direct relations between perceived principals' learning support and organisational commitment and change-oriented work behaviour. Nurturing a culture of school commitment is referred to in 26 documents, representing 154 units of meaning (fig. 1). Both school and Inspectorate narratives express the importance of consolidating interventions supported by trust, proximity, and motivational processes. These attitudes are crucial for mobilising the schools' actors to fulfil educational objectives and goals. However, the consciousness and reflection processes are residual about the difficulty of achieving this desideratum. The problem is critically expressed only by two school principals:

Consolidating a group's culture is still challenging for all its members. Despite the efforts of top and middle leaders to streamline internal communication, engage people in schools' achievements, stimulate proximity contact, and support decision-making, this is the most justified challenge to continue betting. Indeed, organisational culture and the sense of belonging are far from consolidated. (PIP-SG26)

The category of institutional articulation allows us to analyse how the schools implement and foster articulation practices, the existence of participated and shared management practices, and a school culture of commitment to institutional improvement. Generally, there is an evident concern with this theme. Institutional articulation is considered in terms of (i) curricular horizontal and vertical articulation, (ii) communication to improve dynamism and concertation among departments, (iii) planning and implementation of interdisciplinary teaching and learning activities, (iv) articulation between different schools from the group, (v) articulation between psychology, social services, therapeutics, and teachers to assure equity and adequacy of responses to learning difficulties, (vi) identifying constraints and design improvement plans in pluralistic approaches, (vii) building annual plans of activities, (viii) articulation among structural documents, (ix) planning and developing school projects. Despite several authors warning about a democratic participation erosion in Portuguese law (Lima, 2021) and school life (Neto & Cabral, 2021), the prerogative to operate those features expressed in the school narratives is participation, sharing, decentralization, and distributed leadership.

Schools' vision of innovation is a category created to comprehend how innovation is integrated into the transformational processes at three levels. The first one is technological innovation, a first-order obstacle that conditioned pedagogical innovation and all systemic approaches thought and planned at the organisational level. The references to technological innovation in EERs are brief,

reporting only to three SGs. Conversely, it is a theme more consensual in schools' documents, and the narratives drift from satisfactory to lack of (i) digital resources, including classroom labs, (ii) access to digital resources by all students, (iii) teachers' digital literacy or digital empowerment for technological transformation, (iv) communication for information diffusion and teamwork, and (v) operationalisation of digital platforms to support teachers teamwork and the interaction with students. The speech is about the capacity-building of teachers, meaning developing individual, social, leadership, and organisational capital. The subject of pedagogical innovation is cited in EER as needing schools' attention or generalisation and rarely as a synergic interaction between pedagogical innovation and organisational orientation towards innovation:

Dynamic leaders develop and encourage strategies to promote challenging learning environments. The teachers evidence an action strongly oriented to overcome students' difficulties and to create dynamic classroom environments favourable to learning. (EER-SG26).

A vision of innovation as a systemic process that is thought and planned at the organisational level appears short-range and shallow. However, in pursuing a culture of innovation, schools' narratives refer to (i) collaborative work, (ii) the deepening of supervision practices, (iii) the mobilisation of middle leadership, (iv) the deepening of reflection on classroom practices, curriculum development, and the school organisation, (v) the need for classroom changes and teaching methods' innovation, (vi) the need for teachers' training, and (vii) the importance of the investigation, experimentation, and questioning.

4.2.3. Transformational capital

Transformational capital is a systemic, sustainable, and driven mission process that happens in schools, leading to its transformation. It is how professional capital and organisational capital are used to transform the teaching and learning process. School transformational capital is shaped by a collaborative work culture that sustains individual and social capital development. The documental analysis of the teachers' collaborative work category reveals that teachers' isolation practices or superficial collaboration are a reality:

There are no structured and formal mechanisms of collaborative work among teachers or self-regulation of school practice, but a departmental initiative promoting pedagogical supervision is planned. (EER-SG14)

Despite the collaborative work among teachers, it still focuses on long-term planning and constructing materials and evaluation instruments. Hence, it is not effective regarding the sequentiality of learning and interdisciplinary learning. (EER-SG221)

Even when collaborative work exists in schools, it mainly shapes teachers' sharing of pedagogical materials. Conceiving pedagogical materials and implementing classroom activities together are scarce. Autonomy and curricular flexibility is an organisational solution legislated by the Portuguese Government for promoting curricular articulation. Hence, it is generally emphasised in the narratives of all SGs and by the Inspectorate. Additionally, the school narratives evidence that the principals are struggling to improve cultures of collaboration and with the resolution of organisational solutions that may act as drivers for teamwork among teachers: "The geographical dispersion of the SG hinders the coordination of activities and collaborative work among teachers (PIP-SG26)" and "The common work time defined in the weekly schedules of teachers and middle leaders did not produce the expected results (PIP-SG32)."

Furthermore, SEP, which aims to define the school orientation, merely institutes or validates superficial teamwork or solutions for increment collaborative work. When put into practice, this may arise into imposed collegiality even though the existence of one-off attempts to change school grammar and induce collaborative work. The problem of systematicity, generalisation, and sustainability of collaborative teachers' practices is documented: "Collaborative work among teachers, without defined schedules, assumes relevance in planning activities, elaborating evaluation instruments and pedagogical materials, and defining strategies to promote school success. However, these practices lack systematicity among teaching groups (EER-SG212)."

Classroom practices reveal a rich speech concerning pedagogical action focused on active methodologies, curricular articulation practices, changes in school grammar, and student-centredness. All 27 documents refer to it, representing the category with a higher frequency of references (see Figure 1). The school narratives express the intention of changing from a paradigm centred exclusively on knowledge to another that values the development of competencies. They also align with a more inclusive school and value creativity, criticism, communication skills, collaboration, citizenship, diversification of teaching practices, and digitalisation.

The category supervision of teachers' practices focuses on regulatory mechanisms of teachers' work by middle leaders and colleagues. This construct is absent in the principals' narratives from SG212, SG24, SG315, and SG319. It is also nonexistent in the SG14, SG212, SG218, SG221, and SG32 educational projects. The remaining documents point out (i) to regulation dynamised by middle leaders through the fulfilment of teaching and learning plans, reflection on students' assessments, and, more rarely, on classroom practices, (ii) to the absence or insipient mechanism of collaborative observation of classes between teachers. The principal from SG221 refers to the resistance of teachers to supervision processes. An exception to this portrait is the SG26, where a supervision process emerged as a consolidation area identified in the SEP, recognised by the Inspectorate as a good practice.

Finally, innovative behaviour is not a construct valued in the narratives analysed, existing a single reference to it in a context that also considers the school climate.

If the teacher feels fulfilled, he believes that it is worth continuing, (...) develops diverse, more innovative, and creative strategies to instil in students a passion for learning and the discovery of knowledge - he dares and dreams, he makes dare and dream (PIP-SG319)."

An open climate is supportive, fosters innovations and creativity, and is the most likely to bring about organisational change (Pathak & Mishra, 2019). Hence, the existence of a school environment that encourages learning and potentiates innovation is recognised through (i) valuing merit and effort, (ii) providing motivation, (iii) valuing and diffusing new practices and experiences, (iv) acting with tolerance for solving conflicts, (v) nurturing open-mind for establishing consensus, (vi) nurturing trust, (vii) boosting participation, (viii) keeping a challenging environment, and (ix) assuring inspiring leadership.

4.3. Cluster Analysis of the Educational Narratives

An integrative cross-analysis was driven by themed blocks concerning codes (Figure 2) and led to the determination of similarities between the SGs, resorting to Jaccard's coefficient (Figure 3, 4, and 5).

Globally, the documents' qualitative analysis reveals that SG26 is (i) more structured, (ii) exhibits intentionality, (iii) identifies the strengths and weaknesses, (iv) establishes an orientation for the community, (v) expresses an action-oriented to build a school culture, and (vi) assures high articulation between the PIP and the SEP. SG26 exhibits the most unfavourable context but a favourable external evaluation and a medium performance (Table 1). Additionally, SG26 presents higher decisional, organisational, and transformational capital levels (Figure 2). This evidence of good use of autonomy may justify the group's performance. Taking SG26 as a basis for comparing and considering Jaccard's coefficient as a metric, the cluster analysis of PIP reveals that the similarity between SG26 and SG14 is .90 (Figure 3). This high similarity value is due to the registers of analogous coding categories in both documents with slight frequency variations (Appendix 1). SG221 diverges from these two SGs because the PIP does not consider teachers' training for improving professionalism, cultural and organisational innovation, and the promotion of teachers' agency. The divergence increases with SG315, which omits supervision processes of teachers' work, and SG319, which does not consider teachers' training. SG212 is the most divergent group of schools in the cluster once the PIP additionally does not refer to the school as a learning institution. The set constituted by SG32, SG24, and SG218 shows higher similarity among them than the other clusters. PIPs from these schools lack orientation on organisational learning mechanisms, sharing

practices among teachers, planning for teachers' training, a vision of innovation as a systemic process in the organisation, a strategy for social capital development, and an innovative school climate.

Figure 2

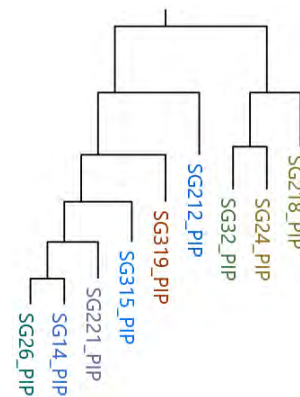
Cross-analysis of coding results of decisional, organisational, and transformational capitals



Figure 3

Cluster analysis of PIP according to the Jaccard coefficient

	SG 14	SG 24	SG 26	SG 212	SG 218	SG 221	SG 32	SG 315	SG 319
SG14	-								
SG24	.66	-							
SG26	.90	.68	-						
SG212	.48	.52	.50	-					
SG218	.57	.56	.53	.42	-				
SG221	.80	.59	.77	.46	.61	-			
SG32	.62	.70	.64	.55	.58	.67	-		
SG315	.79	.57	.76	.50	.43	.72	.54	-	
SG319	.71	.61	.73	.48	.52	.65	.52	.69	-



The PIP provides an orientation for the school's action and a strategic record for building a culture that may support and lead to an improving school. PIP's purpose is to expose the principals' vision for the school cluster and to guide the community on a mission, acting as a unifier of wills. Several PIPs lack scope, enounce weakly articulated action and global desideratum, and may lead to insufficient use of school autonomy.

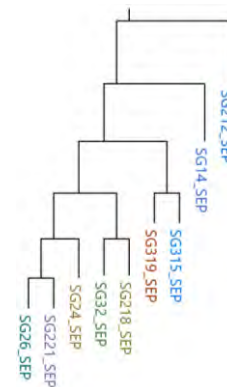
The similarity between SEP of the nine SGs, considering Jaccard's coefficient, reveals three main clusters of schools (Figure 4). The first one includes SG26, SG221, and SG24, with a coefficient of similarity of .87 and .77 associated with the branches. Dissimilarity is due to variations in coding frequencies and, at SG24, to the absence of references about supervision of teachers' work and profiling a culture of evaluation. The second cluster includes SG32 and SG218, which share a school orientation that does not consider factors like the promotion of teacher's agency, action-oriented towards social capital development, a clear commitment with a culture of evaluation, and organisational learning mechanisms. The third cluster includes SG315 and SG319, which evidence a high similarity with each other. The divergences with the other clusters concern aspects related mainly to organisational capital. SG14 and SG212 appear isolated due to several gaps in decisional, organisational, and transformational capital. Despite the disarticulation observed in both school clusters, they evidence high performance and evaluations assigned by the Inspectorate of "good" and "very good" concerning results (Table 1).

The orientation provided by the school documents is not the only factor contributing to school success and well-providing school service. The data suggest that PIP and SEP articulation leads to a higher capability to deal with less favourable contexts. However, the facts gathered exhibit

contradictions: only SG218 and SG319 evidence low performance but favourable and unfavourable school contexts, respectively; SG212 has a medium context but is a high-performance SG.

Figure 4
Cluster analysis of SEP according to the Jaccard coefficient

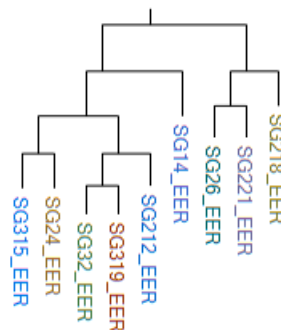
	SG 14	SG 24	SG 26	SG 212	SG 218	SG 221	SG 32	SG 315	SG 319
SG14	-								
SG24	.54	-							
SG26	.45	.77	-						
SG212	.38	.54	.55	-					
SG218	.52	.71	.71	.58	-				
SG221	.48	.77	.87	.59	.76	-			
SG32	.48	.68	.68	.48	.73	.72	-		
SG315	.46	.71	.71	.52	.64	.70	.61	-	
SG319	.46	.70	.80	.52	.63	.74	.66	.81	-



The similarity between EERs of the nine SGs, according to Jaccards' coefficient, reveals three clusters. The cluster formed by SG26 and SG221, with a similarity of .81 (Figure 5), is analogous to data obtained with PIP and SEP. Besides small divergences related to coding frequencies, the Inspectorate does not make observations on the following aspects of the organisational capital: culture of pedagogical innovation, school as a learning institution, and technological innovation. Additionally, the Inspectorate does not present considerations concerning SG26 on institutional articulation practices, promotion of teachers' agency, and action-oriented toward social capital development. The external evaluations of both institutions differed considerably (see Table 1).

Figure 5
Cluster analysis of EER according to the Jaccard coefficient

	SG 14	SG 24	SG 26	SG 212	SG 218	SG 221	SG 32	SG 315	SG 319
SG14	-								
SG24	.68	-							
SG26	.70	.68	-						
SG212	.67	.77	.73	-					
SG218	.67	.64	.80	.69	-				
SG221	.62	.66	.81	.70	.77	-			
SG32	.71	.75	.78	.81	.74	.75	-		
SG315	.67	.77	.73	.76	.69	.70	.74	-	
SG319	.64	.81	.77	.80	.73	.74	.85	.73	-



The second cluster includes SG315 and SG24, which share a Jaccards' coefficient of similarity of .77 and have in common the lack of observations due to supervision of teachers' work and school vision. The third cluster combines SG32, SG319, and SG212 due to Jaccards' coefficient drifting between .80 and .85. The similarity between these organisations follows mainly the absence of considerations on the school vision, teachers' sharing practices of pedagogical experiences for assuring knowledge diffusion, technological innovation, and actions oriented toward social capital development.

The comparative analysis of figures 3 to 5 expresses differences in clustering the groups of schools. It evidences disharmonies among schools' orientation in structural documents and suggests that the practices observed by the Inspectorate are not aligned with the school's narratives. About the range of variations among documents considering Jaccards' coefficient: EERs display the lowest range, drifting from .62 to .81; PIPs exhibit a variation between .42 to .90; SEPs vary between .38 to .87. These data suggest a mechanism of regulation *a priori* and *a posteriori* of

inspection services, variations among the SGs' contexts, and organisational divergences.

The cross-analysis between coding results of decisional, organisational, and transformational capitals and the SGs' characteristics suggests that a higher decisional capital leads to an evident higher organisational capital, and both may also assure a higher transformational capital (Figure 2). We hypothesise that schools with unfavourable contexts tend to develop a higher capital transformational, which is the case of SG26 and SG319 and less expressive within SG14 and SG24. The context appears as a variable that seems to impact the decisional, organisational, and transformational capital. In this study, it is not evident that the size and performance of the groups influence the school capital. So, we hypothesise that the characteristics of the principal and the leadership style may have a higher impact on the school organisation. This hypothesis is supported by other studies that connect leadership style and action with (i) innovative behaviour or innovation (Bak et al., 2022; Chen et al., 2016; Gil et al., 2018; Khaola & Oni, 2020; Vermeulen et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2019), (ii) teachers' involvement (Rechsteiner et al., 2022), (iii) teachers' learning (Pan & Chen, 2021; Tayag & Ayuyao, 2020; Tian & Zhang, 2020), (iv) capacity building (Sujudi et al., 2020; Yakavets et al., 2017), (v) improvement-oriented school culture (Andrews & Conway, 2020), (vi) impact in performance (Yuan et al., 2018), job satisfaction and teacher empowerment (Atik & Celik, 2020).

4.4. Self-evaluation Reports Analysis

Finally, Table 6 presents the content analysis conducted with the SSRs from the nine SGs, focusing on the themed block decisional capital. This analysis is expected to shed some light on the impact of external evaluation on schools one year after being developed.

Table 6

Results of the content analyses of SSR regarding decisional capital

Subcategory and Focus	SG 14	SG 24	SG 26	SG 212	SG 218	SG 221	SG 32	SG 315	SG 319
<i>Comprehensive and supportive self-evaluation</i>									
Academic results	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Classroom	E	NE	E	E	E	E	E	NE	E
SEP Goals	NE	NE	E	E	NE	NE	E	NE	NE
Annual Activity Plan	E	E	E	E	NE	NE	E	NE	E
Leadership action	NE	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Educational structures action	E	E	E	E	E	NE	E	E	E
Teachers' training plan	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Teachers' collective practices	NE	NE	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Discipline	NE	NE	E	E	E	E	E	NE	E
School projects and stakeholders	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Learning support processes	E	NE	E	E	NE	E	E	E	E
Inclusion	E	NE	E	NE	E	E	E	E	E
School services	NE	NE	E	E	E	NE	NE	E	NE
<i>Participation in the school self-evaluation process</i>									
Leaders	E	E	E	E	E	NE	E	NE	E
Teachers	E	E	E	E	E	NE	E	NE	E
Auxiliary staff	NE	E	E	E	E	NE	E	NE	E
Students	NE	E	E	E	E	NE	E	NE	E
Parents	NE	E	E	E	E	NE	E	NE	E
<i>Self-evaluation vision and mission</i>									
School self-evaluation strategy	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Improving plan	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Articulation with external evaluation	E	E	E	NE	NE	E	E	NE	E
The strategy of communication and diffusion	E	E	E	E	E	NE	NE	NE	NE
Innovation-oriented self-evaluation	NE	NE	E	NE	NE	NE	E	NE	NE

Note. E - Evident; NE - Non-Evident

The SSRs show changes aligned with the considerations written in the EERs. All schools have conceived a plan or strategy that orientates the school self-evaluation. However, SG221, SG32, SG315, and SG319 did not formally design a strategy for communication and diffusion of school knowledge provided by the school self-evaluation. It could consubstantiate impoverishment of the decisional capital of the schools and reduce community involvement. The impoverishment may also occur in the schools that did not implement a participated self-evaluation process, namely SG14, SG221, SG315, and SG319.

In six SGs, the SSR also evokes the orientations provided in the EER or external evaluation framework. Generally, all SGs are amplifying the process of monitoring students' results, monitoring the school training plan, evaluating the projects and actions developed with stakeholders, and producing improvement plans. The last was a regular consideration expressed by the Inspectorate because the improvement plans did not exist or lacked impact. The teaching and learning-centredness process of self-evaluation was also often considered an area of improvement in the EERs. Schools are making a way to better monitor classroom practices, except SG24 and SG315, and teachers' collaborative practices, except SG14 and SG24.

Leadership and department action constitute areas of self-evaluation in expansion, except for SG14 and SG221, respectively. A comprehensive self-evaluation that considers the school's structural documents is not a shred of evidence in six SGs. The effectiveness of school services, discipline, learning support mechanisms, and inclusion are also items that are not generally considered.

The school self-evaluation is growing at different velocities, becoming a more participated process, and the scope of its action is expanding. Two interrogations rest on this process, first concerning its sustainability and second, the adaptability and flexibility of the strategies designed by the schools to respond to the changes. This interrogation is supported by the fact that only SG26 and SG32 have a self-evaluation strategy that also considers innovation and new organisational and pedagogical experiences taken by the school to promote success and improve learning. This risk of ossification may emerge in the schools studied due to a rigid use of an evaluation framework that condemns innovation and changes to oblivion.

SG14 demonstrates undesirable side effects arising from external evaluation. As the citations above document, the external evaluation was not clearly understood by the school community, including the self-evaluation team. The SSR expresses a balkanized activity involving departments and other schools' structures. The evaluation is made by themselves, without common indicators, referents, or a line for conducting it. The self-evaluation is split, untuned, and lacks consistency among the school structures. However, the school achieves a high performance despite the unfavourable context, the high dispersion, and the number of schools characterising it. These pieces of evidence suggest two of the consequences of Inspectorate in schools identified by Ehren and Visscher (2006): (i) myopia by the pursuit of short-term targets, and (ii) measured fixation due to emphasising results rather than underlying objectives. This situation suggests the importance of supporting continuous school improvement (Portz, 2021) and a multi-lens perspective by balancing external evaluation and schools' self-evaluation (Hopkins et al., 2016).

On the opposite, the analyses of the SSRs confirm an organised and oriented sense of vision and mission in SG26, previously observed in the structural documents and corroborated by the external evaluation. SG26 evidences the leader's high degree of autonomy and clairvoyance for generating a culture of improvement, a mission- and vision-based culture, participation and sharing practices, organisational learning, collaboration culture, and a focus on innovation (Table 6). The school agency is operated through a substantial investment in building decisional capital that overflows to organisational and transformational capital (Figure 2). This school appears to be able to change by its means and, according to Ehren and Visscher (2006), is part of a small group that does not need inspections to change.

5. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study provides directions for policymakers, inspectors, principals, schools' middle leaders, and teachers regarding obstacles in generating organisational interdependency that can diminish the educational service provided by the schools. However, it has some limitations. First, this study was limited to nine non-randomness SGs, so the conclusions are restricted to this context. The study deeply analysed 36 guiding documents but did not include other documents, like annual activities plans or improvement plans. A wide-open analysis of school documents might enrich the research purposes. Due to the sample's dimension, the data obtained did not provide clear relations between the school's features and capital. The results point out tendencies and directions for further investigation. More study is needed to deepen this line of research in a generalisation approach. Additionally, a new line of research emerges regarding whether (i) the leadership style and purview are related to decisional, organisational, and transformational capital and (ii) exists consistency between the school narratives and the school practices.

6. Conclusions

Schools should be places of agency where actions and interventions are collectively and creatively planned and implemented through self-knowledge and intentional and reflective awareness to meet their context. The current study reveals that most of the SGs investigated are pseudomorphic systems once they tend to maintain their original weakly articulated modes of action, even though they evidence a modern speech. Additionally, the self-evaluation process settled one cycle post-external evaluation, despite being improved, reveals (i) weaknesses in developing a widely participated school self-evaluation process, (ii) vulnerabilities in using external and internal evaluation outcomes and diffusion and reflection on those outcomes, (iii) lack of innovation oriented-self-evaluation practices. Hence, without the tools for generating impactful school self-knowledge, there stands the interrogation: if an adequate decisional capital exists or if it is a need fiction leading to a small or no impact on the school transformation. Arrangements sensitive to the context, robust knowledge systems, and constructive accountability (Tintore et al., 2022) are needed to build a more responsive school.

The findings concerning schools' autonomy include (i) lack of articulation due to disconnections between school guiding documents, (ii) insipidness of innovation, innovative behaviour, and climate for innovation, (iii) school cultures aligned with an inclusive and humanist values, the vision of the SEP, and with collaboration and commitment, (iv) cultures oriented to school evaluation and improvement are weak, (v) self-evaluation appears as an improvement area due to lack of scope at pedagogical and organisational levels, (vi) value teachers learning through training and peer collaboration despite the organisational difficulties to its implementation and the teachers' resistance to it, (vii) awareness of the challenge related to fostering an environment of trust, proximity, and motivation as well as a culture of reflection, (viii) difficulties in improving commitment and fighting teachers' practices of isolation and superficial collaboration, (ix) need to deepen changes in school grammar and pursuit more active, interdisciplinary, and digital supported teaching and learning process, (x) absenteeism, superficial, or disconnected practices of teachers' supervision. Inconsistencies observed suggest that pseudomorphosis is again a school's facet. Divergence in narratives due to the desired school vision and on-the-field organisational disengagements demands a profound transformation of the *modus* of the school operation. The Portuguese educational system faces a transformational process and struggles to embrace the whole school's complexity and build a more organic culture.

The findings concerning the school control reveal that the Inspectorate narratives marginally refer to innovation and school learning orientation. Globally, the main areas of improvement are related to the self-evaluation process and consider (i) the requirement for more comprehensive practices that may support the school's decisions and actions, (ii) the importance of constituting a participated and shared process by all the community, (iii) lack of self-evaluation practices teaching and learning centredness, (iv) the need of developing a school culture of evaluation that

invest in improvement plans and diffusion strategies that may induce reflection, commitment, and responsibility. Additionally, the generalisation of teachers' good practices and the need for better processes of teachers' supervision are problematic. Despite the differences between the schools' cultures and dynamics of transformation, schools have become more performance-oriented after external evaluation. Lack of accountability and control is a factor that leads to low-performing schools (Küçükbere & Balkar, 2021). However, the self-evaluation process post-external evaluation still reveals weaknesses regarding (i) the evaluation of goals fulfilment of guiding documents, (ii) the evaluation of school services, (iii) monitoring of discipline, (iv) participation by the community, (iv) the use, diffusion, and reflection of external and internal evaluation data, (v) innovation oriented-self-evaluation practices. The changes observed are related to (i) monitoring classroom practices, teachers' collective practices, and leadership practices; (ii) supportive assessment of the student's learning and mechanisms of inclusion; and (iii) investing in building annual improvement plans. The balance between external and internal accountability is essential for increasing performance (Fullan et al., 2015) and should be about teachers and school administrators collaboratively analysing results and improving practices (Lillejord, 2020). This author defends the need for intelligent accountability that formatively aims for improvement. Still, we found clues pointing out the lack of effective accountability due to inconsistencies between schools, the rejection of school inspection outcomes, and minor involvement of the community. Accountability needs to generate decisional capital that may serve the school improvement purposes by reinforcing organisational capital that may lead to a higher transformational capital. We identify that an unfavourable school context tend to lead to a higher decisional capital and concurrently to higher organisational and transformational capital.

Finally, about how school autonomy and control influence innovation and school transformation, we identified in the narratives factors that, depending on the connotation, may positively or negatively conduce to more organic institutions. The factors include:

- *At the cultural level:* (i) innovation as part of the school vision; (ii) building a school culture and reflection on the strategic vision; (iii) consolidation of a culture of self-evaluation; (iv) promotion of cooperative approaches; (v) fostering teachers' agency in opposition to inactivity and resistance to change, shared pedagogical practices, and pedagogical supervision; (vi) promotion of investigation, experimentation, and questioning; (vii) valuing merit and effort.

- *At the organisational level:* (i) proactive middle leadership; (ii) inspiring, structured, and intentional leadership; (iii) schools' structural documents articulation; (iv) fostering curricular horizontal and vertical articulation; (v) identification of constraints and design of improvement plans in pluralistic approaches; (vi) developing school projects; (vii) strategy for information diffusion; (viii) teachers' training; (ix) valuing and diffusing of new practices and experiences; (x) fostering a trustful climate; (xii) providing motivation and boosting participation; (xiii) keeping a challenging environment; (xiv) identification of strengths and weaknesses; (xv) pursuit of short-term targets.

- *At the technological level:* (i) digital resources; (ii) teachers' digital literacy; (iii) operationalisation of digital platforms to support teachers' teamwork and with students.

- *At the pedagogical level:* (i) reshaping the teaching and learning process through active and interdisciplinary methodologies; (ii) promotion of collaborative work and supervision practices; (iii) reflection on classroom practices and agentic curricular development; (iv) fostering solutions through changes in school grammar.

The school's transformational capital must be nurtured through powerful organisational capital and accountability that fosters solid decisional capital. Through this, schools will be able to develop a growth-enabling innovation narrative that will act as an organic growth strategy in opposition to the pseudomorphic systems - characterised by modern speech but weakly articulated, aligned intentions but fragmented actions, innovation-orientated but with a lack of transformative reality.

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Appendix 1. Results of frequency and percentage of occurrence of codes per SG and document

Codes	1	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	2	2.1	2.2.1	2.2.2
SG14	10; 19; 6	--; 1; 2	5; 6; 1	--; --; --	3; 5; --	2; 7; 3	17; 77; 23	--; 12; 6	2; 10; 3	5; 7; --
SG212	13; --; 3	6; --; --	1; --; --	--; --; --	2; --; 1	4; --; 2	17; 24; 18	--; 3; 2	3; 1; 1	2; --; 1
SG18	11; 4; 13	3; 1; 3	3; 1; 2	--; --; --	1; --; 4	4; 2; 4	21; 14; 24	1; 1; 4	4; 1; 1	1; --; 1
SG221	10; 11; 29	1; 1; 9	5; 2; 4	--; --; --	1; 7; 11	3; 1; 5	17; 40; 116	1; 7; 8	1; 7; 4	1; 4; 3
SG24	11; 7; 6	3; 1; 3	2; 2; 2	--; --; --	2; 3; --	4; 1; 1	21; 39; 51	--; 1; 4	5; 4; 1	4; 2; 3
SG26	10; 23; 35	3; 9; 15	2; 5; 8	--; --; 4	1; 6; 6	4; 3; 2	24; 129; 133	1; 5; 7	2; 13; 14	3; 7; 14
SG315	16; 5; 9	3; --; 5	5; 2; 3	--; --; --	4; 2; --	4; 1; 1	18; 36; 38	--; 4; 3	4; 2; 3	2; 2; 5
SG319	8; 12; 28	1; 3; 6	1; 1; 5	--; --; 1	2; 4; 10	4; 4; 6	15; 55; 64	--; 4; 11	5; 6; 7	1; --; 2
SG32	11; 4; 19	2; 2; 9	3; 1; 3	--; --; --	2; 1; 7	4; --; --	27; 30; 43	--; 4; 5	5; 2; 8	1; 2; 5

Codes	2.3.1	2.3.2	2.4.1	2.4.2	2.4.3	2.5.1	2.5.2	2.5.3	2.6.1	2.6.2	2.6.3
SG14	--; 4; 3	--; 3; --	1; 6; --	1; 4; --	1; 1; --	--; 8; 3	1; 4; 1	1; 5; --	1; 8; 3	3; 2; 2	1; 3; 3
SG212	3; 1; --	--; 1; 1	1; --; 1	--; --; 1	1; --; --	3; 8; 4	1; 2; 1	3; 4; 4	--; 3; 2	--; 1; --	--; --; --
SG218	--; 5; --	--; --; 1	--; --; --	--; --; 1	1; 1; 2	2; 1; 4	1; --; 2	4; 2; 5	--; 1; 1	5; 2; 1	2; --; 1
SG221	2; 1; 5	--; 2; 3	--; 2; 14	--; 3; 20	--; --; 16	2; 2; 7	2; 2; 6	4; 3; 21	--; 1; 3	2; 6; 2	2; --; 4
SG24	1; 3; 5	1; 2; 1	--; --; 8	1; --; 5	1; 3; 1	1; 3; 11	2; 5; 4	3; 4; 4	2; 4; 4	--; --; 5	--; --; 1
SG26	3; 14; 7	--; 10; 9	--; 4; 9	--; 2; 8	1; 8; 10	--; 3; 7	4; 8; 3	3; 20; 13	--; 13; 12	7; 7; 14	1; 5; 6
SG315	1; --; --	--; 4; --	--; 3; --	--; 5; 3	1; --; 2	3; 1; 3	1; 3; 3	3; 8; 8	1; 2; 1	--; 2; 7	2; 2; --
SG319	2; --; 5	1; 1; --	--; 4; --	--; --; 8	1; 2; 3	1; 8; 4	1; 11; 7	2; 8; 7	--; 1; 4	1; 8; 6	--; 2; --
SG32	2; 1; 3	3; 1; 1	2; --; --	--; --; 3	2; --; 2	1; 1; --	1; 7; 1	2; 6; 7	--; 3; 2	3; 3; 2	5; --; 4

Codes	3	3.1.1	3.1.2	3.2.1	3.2.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	Sentiment (negative)
SG14	17; 52; 5	1; 5; --	--; 4; --	4; 20; 3	8; 13; 2	2; 9; --	2; 1; --	--; --; --	8; 1; --
SG212	22; 12; 15	5; 3; 5	--; 1; --	4; 4; 4	8; 3; 6	2; --; --	3; 1; --	--; --; --	9; --; 1
SG218	13; 10; 14	2; 2; 4	--; --; --	6; 3; 3	4; 3; 5	1; 2; --	--; --; --	--; --; --	7; 3; 1
SG221	16; 12; 35	4; 3; 7	1; --; 2	1; 3; 12	5; 3; 12	4; 2; --	2; 1; 2	--; --; --	13; 6; 9
SG24	18; 18; 32	1; 4; 7	--; 1; 3	7; 8; 9	5; 5; 6	3; --; 3	2; --; 4	--; --; --	10; --; --
SG26	16; 55; 50	1; 12; 7	--; 4; 4	9; 10; 4	3; 13; 19	2; 8; 11	1; 8; 5	--; --; --	6; --; 3
SG315	18; 19; 21	4; 4; 9	--; 2; 1	5; 4; 3	4; 6; 6	2; --; 1	3; 3; 1	--; --; --	4; 1; 4
SG319	14; 30; 54	2; 5; 12	--; 4; 1	4; 8; 9	6; 7; 26	1; --; 2	1; 5; 4	--; 1; --	10; 1; 4
SG32	19; 5; 11	4; 2; 1	--; --; --	5; 1; 3	2; 1; 4	2; 1; 1	6; --; 3	--; --; --	7; --; --

Note. The sets of three numbers refer to the frequency of words in EER, PIP and SEP.