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French-Language Public Administration Research on Social Equity: A Systematic Literature Review

Gino Biaou - École nationale d'administration publique

Étienne Charbonneau - École nationale d'administration publique

Despite the availability of freely accessible translation tools, research conducted in languages other than English is often overlooked. Findings from foreign contexts are lost, undermining the boundary conditions of theories. This systematic literature review takes stock of methods, theories, and practical recommendations developed in French-language social equity research. Overall, the results suggest that French-language social equity research offers relevant but not in-depth practical recommendations, encompasses a small proportion of papers referring to theories, and is more qualitative method-oriented than quantitative. Our results complement previous findings suggesting the dominance of the quantitative approach to social equity research by bringing to light many qualitative studies. Crucially, unlike English-language social equity research, this study suggests that French-language social equity research rarely focuses on race and ethnicity. Inter-organizational equity, along with regional, intergenerational, and gender equity are frequent loci. The finding of this study bridges a heeded segment of Public Administration scholarship, fostering knowledge sharing across languages and scholarly communities.

Keywords: Systematic Literature Review, Social Equity, Knowledge Sharing, French

Half in jest, linguists call America the graveyard of languages, as languages are lost early by kids of immigrants, and as native Americans fail to acquire a second language in large proportions (Collins, 2016, p. 79). “Only 18 percent of American school children are enrolled in foreign language courses, while 94 percent of European high-school students are studying English” (Collins, p. 79). In American universities, French remains the second most taught language, after Spanish, despite a gradual decline since 1958 (Lusin et al. 2023, p. 5, p. 7). Scholars, even those who have English as a second language, limit themselves to English-language research while conducting systematic literature reviews. This could be explained by the dominance of English in all social sciences, including Public Administration. Nevertheless, a puzzle endures: In an age of easily available digital tools providing effortless translations, why are linguistic research communities still siloed? Although this exclusion of research written in languages other than English could be considered a rational choice for an individual project, this tendency impedes the comprehensiveness of systematic literature reviews – hence, consolidated knowledge. For instance, McDonald and colleagues (2022, p. 59) argued that comparative studies in Public

Administration are crucial since this allows to share knowledge, and moreover, “because the trials of one community are likely to be similar to those of another” (McDonald et al., p. 62), on many topics, including social equity.

At least two options can weave together linguistic scholarly communities. One way is to minimize research in any languages other than English (Candler, 2008, p. 335); another way is to translate research into various languages so that scholars become aware of findings from other communities. This study favors the latter approach. The main research question driving this synthesis is: In Public Administration, what are the theories, methods, and practical recommendations present in French-language social equity research?

There are those who believe that the primary objective of research in the field of Public Administration should be to provide actionable insights for practitioners. This view, as argued by McDonald et al. (2022, p. 7), is based on the idea that such research can and should be used to directly inform the practices of those working in the field. This can be achieved through a variety of means, most notably by offering recommendations for both policy implementation and management strategies (Bushhouse & Sowa, 2012, p. 511). However, there is a growing concern that, in recent years, the focus of research in Public Administration has shifted away from these practical applications. Instead, it appears to be moving in a direction that may not necessarily align with the needs and interests of practitioners. This sentiment is echoed by Pollitt (2017, p.564), who argues that this trend has been ongoing for several decades now and represents a significant departure from the field’s initial aims and objectives.

This study is not the first attempt to use French-language research to conduct a systematic literature review written in English. For instance, with a more onto-epistemological lens, Candler (2014) and (2010) conducted a content analysis of *Revista de Administracao Publica*, *Administration publique du Canada*, *Revista de Administracao e Politicas Publicas*, and *Revue Française d'Administration Publique*, and found that there is a complex tension between global theory and local practice (Candler, 2014, p. 1079-1082) and that scholars from English-speaking countries barely engage with non-English literature (Candler, 2010, p. 843). Compared to Candler, this systematic literature review stands out because it adopts a topic-oriented approach. By focusing on French-language social equity research, we aim to systematically present the scope, methods, theories, and practical recommendations. Practical recommendations provide actionable suggestions based on the results of the researchers’ analyses. In fact, social equity has been studied over the last 100 years (Aoki et al., 2021, p. 46; McCandless et al., 2022, p. 129). Yet, Public Administration scholars continue to urge a greater focus on the social equity dimensions of public affairs (Blessett et al., 2019, p. 284; McDonald et al., 2022, p. 59). A handful of recent systematic literature reviews have focused on social equity (for instance, Blessett et al., 2019; Cepiku & Mastrodascio, 2021; Rivera & Knox, 2022, Ruijter et al., 2023, Shen et al., 2023). Rivera and Knox (2022) conducted a systematic review of social equity using 68 articles from emergency management journals published between 2006 and 2021, and proposed the following definition for social equity:

“The active, culturally competent, and equal provision of services to every social group across all phases of emergency management and the continuing reduction of all groups’ social vulnerability that contributes to desperate physical and social damages associated with natural, technological, and dna-tech hazards.” (Rivera & Knox, 2022, p. 10)

Cepiku and Mastrodascio (2021), systematically selected 145 articles to provide a synopsis of the determinants of equity in public service. In their 2023 study, Shen and colleagues reviewed 127 public administration and policy articles from 2009 to 2019. They aimed to inventory the themes, methods, and measures used. They noted that equity was a frequently mentioned topic, albeit

often treated superficially. Ruijet and colleagues (2023) used 190 systematically selected articles focused on the relationship between data-driven public service and social equity. In short, these authors found that representative bureaucracy and vertical decentralization have a positive impact on equity whereas administrative burden and red tape, privatization, competition, and performance management overlook equity (Cepiku & Mastrodascio, 2021, p. 1026), and data-driven public service delivery have a mixed impact on social equity (Ruijer et al. 2023, p. 321). Blessett and colleagues (2019) systematically reviewed 238 social equity papers, from 1968 to 2018, in three journals, noticing a plurality of methodological and theoretical approaches (p. 292).

However, all those systematic literature reviews on social equity did not include articles that were not written in English. This study aims to fill this void and contribute to knowledge sharing among Public Administration scholars as well as shed light on French-language social equity research. French is one of the official languages for many international organizations. It is also an official language in countries in the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia. To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first to systematically review French-language social equity research to present to scholars who do not read French, the scope and description of the theories, methods, and practical recommendations. While analyzing practical recommendations offered in French-language social equity research, we leverage the coding grids including the framework of Russo and colleagues (2023, p. 1,624) to present who is identified in these recommendations.

Overall, the results suggest that French-language social equity research offers relevant but not in-depth practical recommendations, encompasses a small proportion of papers referring to theories, and is more qualitative method-oriented than quantitative. Two major takeaways from the recommendations of French-speaking social equity scholars are the fact that practical recommendations are quite often unclear on who is responsible for the implantation of the recommendations and where actions should be taken. On the how of the recommendations, the results suggest that Francophone social equity scholars tend to couch their practical recommendations in an obligation manner. Readers may discover individual peer-reviewed articles that could have been missed using English keywords. Moreover, unlike English-language social equity research, this study suggests that French-language social equity research rarely focuses on race and ethnicity. This could be perplexing, particularly for U.S. scholars.

Literature Review

The dominance of English in scholarly publications is recognized as a fact in many academic fields (Blais, 2018, p. 337; Imbeau & Ouimet, 2012, p. 60; Kraus, 2018, p. 341; Larivière, 2018, p. 357; Moloney et al., 2022, p. 261; Marcoux, 2018, p. 437), including Public Administration (Candler, 2006, p. 335; Candler, 2008, p. 295). However, this dominance varies across countries and fields (Rocher, 2017, p. 97), with consequences in terms of ontologies, preferred themes, and contextual settings (Blais, 2018, p. 338; Candler, 2014, p. 1075; Kraus, 2018, p. 341; Laslier, 2018, p. 349; Nisar & Masood, 2023, pp. 335, 341; Nisar, 2023, p. 147). Among the claimed consequences of ghettoed research are a weakened disciplinary potential and relevance (Blais, 2018, p. 338; Moloney et al., 2022, p. 262), a hampered accumulation of knowledge (Laslier, 2018, p. 350), epistemic nihilism (Candler, 2014, pp. 1075, 1085), epistemic colonialism (Candler, 2014, p. 1083; Candler et al., 2010, p. 837; Nisar, 2023, p. 147), epistemic nationalism, and epistemic parochialism (Candler, 2010, p. 837).ⁱ Against this background, researchers recommend an epistemological and multilingual ethos (Kraus, 2018, pp. 340, 347-348; Moloney et al., 2022, p. 262), fostering an integrated community of scholars (Blais, 2018, p. 338; Candler et al., 2010, p. 836), looking inwards at disciplinary exclusions and rethinking the global application of Public Administration (Nisar, 2023, pp. 335, 341). Conversely, a multilingual stance may limit communication and knowledge sharing since using a sole language facilitates the exchange of

ideas (Lublin, 2018, p. 358) within a specific intellectual community sharing that language. Consequently, developing a method to facilitate knowledge sharing across countries and cultures can benefit the global scholarly community who do not read French.

Equity in the Public Administration literature is often traced back to the work of Dwight Waldo and George Frederickson from the Minnowbrook Conference held in 1968 (Cepiku & Mastrodascio 2021, p. 1019-20). Following this conference, Frederickson (1971, p. 294-5) proposed social equity as a response to efficiency and political responsiveness dichotomy (see also Chitwood 1974, p. 30; Frederickson 2010, p. 11-13). The efficiency-political responsiveness dichotomy resembled a zero-sum game in that when governments seek to increase efficiency (i.e., reduce costs), this is done to the detriment of political responsiveness, which decreases since financial resources are needed to ensure this responsiveness, and conversely, increasing political responsiveness requires the sacrifice of efficiency (Frederickson, 1971, pp. 294-295). The findings of decades of research on social equity in English are outside of our scope (Pandey et al., 2022; Riccucci, 2021; Stivers et al., 2023; Strader et al., 2023; Trochmann & Guy, 2022), including the contributions of the Social Equity section of this very journal. Yet, a comparison between French-language social equity research and the Anglophone one is carried out in the discussion section of the paper. Traditionally, horizontal equity refers to the equal treatment applied across all societal layers, regardless of the gap between social strata. On the other hand, vertical equity refers to the unequal treatment applied to different societal strata with the aim of closing existing gaps and bringing all strata back to a similar status (Cepiku & Mastrodascio 2021, p. 1025; Chitwood, 1974, pp. 33-4; Frederickson, 2010, pp. 46-7).

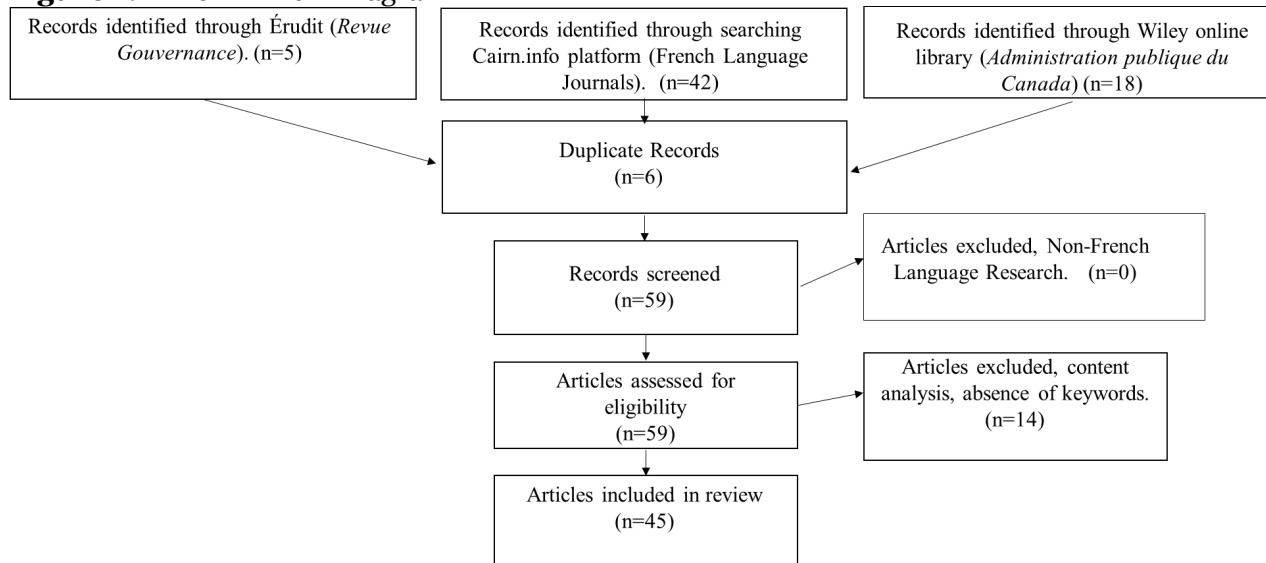
Data and Methods

A systematic literature review follows a structured identification and selection of papers for inclusion with the aim of synthesizing and analyzing knowledge in any given field, sub-field, or a specific topic (Aguinis et al., 2023, p. 54; Kuckertz & Block, 2021, p. 520; Lim et al., 2022, p. 482). George and colleagues (2023, p. 1,525) expressed concern about the risk of “only integrative or systematic reviews using PRISMA to become the hammer that makes us treat all public administration questions as the same nails.” Despite this, like Thomann and colleagues (2024), we used the PRISMA protocol (Moher et al., 2009) to transparently report the identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion of articles in our analysis pool. We chose a journal approach (See Blessett et al., 2019; Candler, 2014, 2010) to increase the likelihood of gathering enough studies and adhere to high-quality systematic literature principles such as transparency, clarity, and thoroughness (Aguinis et al., 2023, p. 48; Kuckertz & Block, 2021, pp. 520-522; Lim et al., 2022, p. 498; Simsek et al., 2023, p. 295), connectedness, and coherence (Simsek et al., 2023, pp. 295-296). Similarly to Farazmand and colleagues (2019) who selected research portals for journals in Farsi, we selected portals for specialized journals in French. We selected seven Public Administration French-Language journals by identifying public sector management journals in the Wiley online library and two wide-encompassing francophone portals for journals, CAIRN and Érudit: *Gestion et management public*, *Politiques et management public*, *Revue Française d'Administration Publique*, *Gestion et Finances publiques*, *Gouvernement et action publique*, *revue Gouvernance*, and *Administration publique du Canada*. Although *Administration publique du Canada* (Canadian Public Administration) and *revue Gouvernance* (Governance Review) offer publication both in French and English, the search solely focuses on French-language social equity research. We did not include *Revue internationale des sciences administratives*, where all articles are available in English – often in their original form – in the *International Review of Administrative Sciences*.

“Équité sociale” is not a coined expression, the way social equity is. Our search was conducted in May 2023 using the terms “*équité*”, “*égalité*”, or “*inégalité*”, equivalent to equity and inequality in Cepiku and Mastrodascio’s (2021) systematic review. We searched these terms in titles, keywords, and abstracts on various journal platforms without any publication year restrictions. This search yielded 65 articles. After eliminating duplicates (n=6), we were left with 59 articles. For quality assurance and control, we further reviewed the content of these articles. It was found that only 45 of them actually included the terms *égalité*, *inégalité*, or *équité*.

Figure 1 illustrates the triage process model.

Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram



As for the coding of the selected articles we used Goertz and Mahoney’s (2012, appendix) coding grid – which has been enhanced with Ospina and colleagues (2018, p. 599) and Groeneveld and colleagues (2015, p. 74). These grids are granular and exhaustive to cover methodological choices. The coding grid on management themes categories (Osborne, 2017, p. 110) includes a typology to categorize multiple years of articles along public policy; public management reform; NPM contracting, competition and privatization; performance management and accountability; collaboration and partnerships; network and governance; innovation and change; strategic management and marketing; human resources management; citizen involvement and co-production; and other topics. The coding grid on levels of analysis (Moon et al., 2014, p. 159) includes program and policy; individuals; artifacts; systems; organizations, and groups of individuals. Following the extensive set of criteria presented by Russo and colleagues (2023, p. 1,625), we searched for practical recommendations in abstracts, introductions, discussions, and conclusion sections of articles for the sake of standardizing the process. We use the “why, what, when and where, who, and how” grid proposed by Russo and colleagues (2023, pp.1,630-1,631) to code the practical implications for practitioners. This grid is valuable because it clarifies why a recommendation should be followed, its purpose, when and where to implement it, its target audience, and the method of implementation. The five dimensions are parsed out in a total of 22 sub-dimensions. For example, recommendations are coded for who is targeted by the recommendation: HR professionals, organizations, managers, employees, clients (users), if ‘who’ is not mentioned, and if ‘who’ is vague. It goes beyond who is accountable.

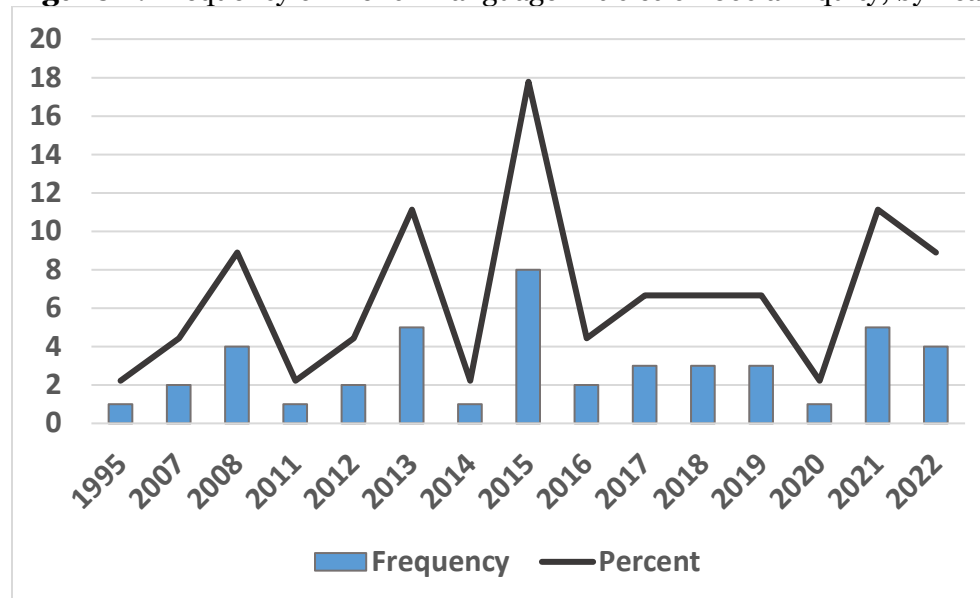
The first phase of the coding process was handled by the first author. After this initial round, another coder independently reviewed a randomly selected subset of 10% of the studies already coded. Any codes that were unclear or debatable were discussed among the authors. This led to a collective agreement, making sure all team members were on the same page regarding the coding scheme, especially with respect to practical recommendations. After reaching a consensus, the coding scheme was updated to include any necessary revisions.

Results

Generalities

This comprehensive and systematic literature review, which covers a timespan extending from 1995 to the end part of 2022, focuses on the work of Public Administration scholars who have written their research in French. As depicted in figure 2, the trend of this scholarship has not been static or linear but has instead shown considerable fluctuation over the years. The most significant peak in this trend was reached in the year 2015. This spike in research output was primarily due to the simultaneous release of seven out of eight articles in the same issue of the renowned journal, *Revue Française d'Administration Publique*.

Figure 2. Frequency of French-Language Articles on Social Equity, by Year

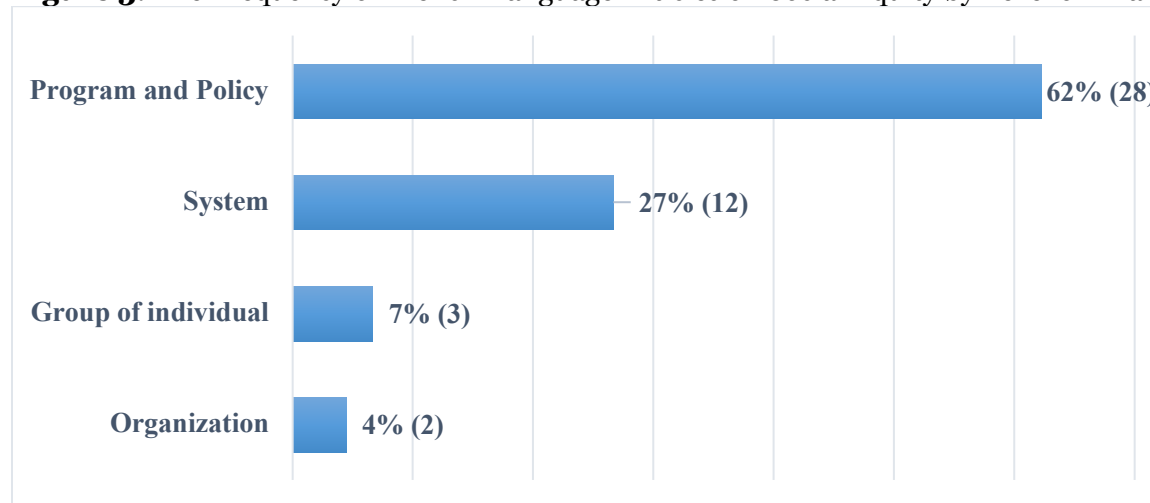


Twenty-seven out of 45 articles (60%) were published in *Revue Française d'Administration Publique*, three articles (6.67%) in *Administration publique du Canada*, two articles (4.44%) in *Gestion et management public*, eight articles (17.78%) in *Gouvernement et Action Publique*, and five articles (11.11%) in *revue Gouvernance*.

By applying Moon and colleagues' (2014, p. 159) categorization of levels of analysis, we found that the more common level of analysis in French-language social equity research is at the program and policy level (see figure 3). In fact, out of the 45 articles, 28 (62%) stood at the program and policy level, 12 (27%) at the system level or government-wide, three (7%) at the group or individual level such as executive public servant women (Rouban, 2013; Sam-Giao, 2015) and Public

Administration students (Larat, 2015; Magnier & Marchal, 2015), and two (4%) at the organization level such as local public organizations (Brochu & Proulx, 1995) and judiciary organization (Jeuland, 2008). Equity is examined from various perspectives, whether it is to address intra-organizational challenges or inter-organizational financial solidarity (Bouvier, 2007; Itçaina, 2021; Prouteau & Tchernonog, 2017) and regional equity (Brochu & Proulx, 1995; Diaz, 2021; Pissaloux & Supplisson, 2015), or to discuss gender equity issues (Blanchard, 2018; Edel, 2013; Marry et al., 2015; Pigeyre & Sabatier, 2012; Rouban, 2013; Sam-Giao, 2015) like gender budgeting (Edel, 2016) and gender income equity (Côté, 2008), or to discuss intergenerational social equity (Sterdyniak, 2022), discrimination (Borrillo & Chappe, 2011; Desage, 2016; Prauthois & Biland, 2022; Toubon, 2015), diversity and inclusion (Edel, 2015; Foulleux, 2013; Larat, 2015; Magnier & Marchal, 2015), and equity as a right (Amrani-Mekki, 2008; Bronsard, 2008; Deville, 2018; Jeuland, 2008; Jobidon, 2021; Luchaire, 2007; Michaud, 2015; Perrou, 2013). Intra-organizational challenges discussed include but are not limited to, public job access (Edel, 2012; Edel 2013; Marry et al., 2015; Rouban, 2013; Sam-Giao, 2015; Toubon, 2015), public service value and provision (Ayed, 2017; Bronsard, 2008; Collin et al., 2022; Dauchez, 2020; Deville, 2018; Honta & Illivi, 2017; Huron & Spieth, 2013; Ledoux, 2021; Nzobonimpa, 2022; Perroud, 2013) in online service and technology (Dauchez, 2020; Perroud, 2013; Nzobonimpa, 2022), in education (Ayed, 2017; Ledoux, 2021), in the public health system (Bronsard, 2008; Collin et al., 2022), and in even in sports (Honta & Illivi, 2017). It is noteworthy that, unlike English-language social equity research, often from the United States, the main focus of French-language social equity research is neither race nor ethnicity. Thomann and colleagues (2024) found that close to half of the fifty-three articles on the programs to limit discrimination were about race and ethnicity, even if 22 of the 53 articles were not from North America. Only two out of 45 articles solely discussed race and ethnicity (Desage, 2016; Nzobonimpa, 2022), whereas Blessett and colleagues (2019, p. 289) documented 63 out of 238 articles for English-language social equity research.

Figure 3. The Frequency of French-Language Articles on Social Equity by Level of Analysis



Out of those 45 articles, 35 (77.78%) are epistemic community-oriented, meaning that the country of analysis is the same as the country hosting the journal. More precisely, ten articles (22.22%) set their aim on foreignⁱⁱ countries (Balsiger et al., 2019; Côté, 2008; Foulleux, 2013; Itçaina, 2021; Jobidon, 2021; Ledoux, 2021; Nzobonimpa, 2022; Tissone et al., 2019; Vairel, 2019, Vairel, 2021). For instance, scholars studied Spain, Albania, Italy, Greece, Switzerland, and Germany (Balsiger et al., 2019; Ledoux, 2021; Tissone et al., 2019) and published in *Revue Française*

d'Administration Publique, *Gestion et management public*, and *Gouvernement et Action Publique* which are hosted in France. Other examples are those of Variel (2019, 2021) who studied Morocco, Nzobonimpa (2022) who studied (in part) the USA, and Itçaina (2021) who studied France and published in *revue Gouvernance* which is hosted in Canada.

Theories and methods

It is also worth mentioning that although most of those systematically selected articles explicitly discussed equity (34 out of 45, 75.56%), there are 11 articles (24.44%) that discussed equity implicitly. This implies that scholars did not delve deeply into the subject, or that social equity is implied in their analysis. In addition to that, out of the 45 articles, only 11 (24.44%) articles clearly identified a theory from which nearly half are intrinsically linked to equity. Equity-related theories are couched in New Public Service (Perroud, 2013, p. 420), New Public Management (Blanchard, 2018, p.41; Edel, 2016, p. 1174), Rights Theory (Bronsard, 2008, p. 87), and Merit Theory (Michaud, 2015, pp. 19-20). The other theories that have been used are the Sociological Approach to Translation (Fouilleux, 2013, p. 94; Huron & Spieth, 2013, p. 34), Neo-institutionalism (Tissone et al., 2019, p. 32), a Functional Theory of Public Finance (Sterdyniak, 2022, p. 415), a Theory of Three Representations (Balme, 2014, p. 415), and Crozier and Friedberg's Organisational Framework (Collin et al., 2022, p. 3).

To borrow from Osborne's (2017) typology, French-language social equity research is more frequently conducted with *public policy* locus (42.22%), *human resource management* (22.22%), *public management reforms* (20%), *performance management and accountability* (20%), *contracting* (13.33%), *networking and governance* (11.11%), and less frequently with *collaboration and partnerships* (6.67%), *innovation and change* (6.67%), *strategic management* (4.44%), *citizen involvement* (4.44%), and *public finance* (2.22%).ⁱⁱⁱ This indicates that *public policy* is the dominant stream (19 out of 45 articles) used by francophone scholars while taking on research toward social equity. French-speaking researchers seem to take for granted that broad public policies are the most secure way to tackle social inequity. A correlation analysis even reveals a positive and significant relationship ($p < 0.05$) between management themes with respect to their co-occurrence or co-appearance within a single article tackling social equity. *Public management reforms* and *citizen involvement* tend to co-appear (0.4313, $p < 0.05$). *Strategic management* and *innovation and change* tend to co-appear (0.3737, $p < 0.05$). *Innovation and change* and *citizen involvement* tend to co-appear (0.3747, $p < 0.05$). *Performance management and accountability* and *public finance* (0.3015, $p < 0.05$) are more likely to co-appear, same for *collaboration and partnership*, and *citizen involvement* (0.3747, $p < 0.05$). However, *public policy* and *network and governance* have a significant and negative association (-0.3022, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that when the former is discussed in a paper, the latter is less likely to be invoked, and vice versa. Other relationships between management themes that we have not mentioned do not have a significant association. This indicates that there is no known significant relationship between those management themes. The initiatives French-speaking researchers studied tend to reveal that public management reforms and citizen involvement were the paths chosen by governments as possibly effective co-production tools to tackle social inequity.

As for the research methods, French-language social equity research is more empirical (27 out of 45 papers, 60%) as opposed to narrative (18 out of 45 papers, 40%), like in an essay. However, from an empirical standpoint, only four articles (14.81%) employed quantitative methods, two articles (7.41%) employed mixed methods, and 21 articles (77.78 %) employed qualitative methods.^{iv} By adding essay articles to those using qualitative and mixed methods, the overall count for non-quantitative methods is 41 articles. Table 1 presents the detailed figures from which

we can see that, considering essay articles, there are 46.67% (21 out of 45) qualitative methods articles, 40% (18 out of 45) essay articles, 8.89% (4 out of 45) quantitative methods articles, and 4.44% (2 out of 45) mixed-methods articles, suggesting that francophone scholars more frequently conducted social equity research with a qualitative lens rather than a quantitative locus. French-language social equity articles employed empirical qualitative methods quite frequently using interviews (15 out of 23, 65.22%) and content analysis (15 out of 23, 65.22%). Interviews and content analysis were commonly used compared to focus groups (3 out of 23, 13.04%) (Fouilleux, 2013, p. 94; Itçaina, 2021, p. 65; Tissone et al., 2019, p. 35), observation (3 out of 23, 13.04%) (Blanchard, 2018, p. 42; Deville, 2018, p. 86; Tissone et al., 2019, p. 35), and archives (2 out of 23, 8.70%) (Aust et al., 2018, p. 13; Brochu & Proulx, 1995, p. 100). Furthermore, two out of 23 empirical qualitative papers (8.70%) adopted ethnography (Côté, 2008, p. 579; Deville, 2018, p. 86), 4.35% (1 article) adopted a typology approach (Huron & Spieth, 2013, p. 31), and none of these studies employed process tracing, equifinality, Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and counterfactual analysis. Additionally, nearly half of the empirical qualitative method articles (10 out of 23 papers, 43.48%) embedded two or more instruments for collecting data (Aust et al. 2018, p. 13; Blanchard, 2018, p. 42; Brochu & Proulx, 1995, pp. 100-101; Deville, 2018, p. 86; Fouilleux, 2013, p. 94; Honta & Illivi, 2017, p. 875; Itçaina, 2021, p. 65; Marry et al., 2015, pp. 50-54; Tissone et al., 2019, p. 35; Vairel, 2019, p. 63). Also, there are two comparative analyses (Edel, 2015, p. 141; Marry et al., 2015, p. 50), eight clearly stated single cases, seven small-N qualitative studies, and two qualitative articles using descriptive statistics to convey perspectives (Balme, 2014, p. 313; Brochu & Proulx, 1995, p. 111).

French-speaking social equity scholars who used quantitative methods, employed descriptive statistics (6 out of 6, 100%) alongside only one article (1 out of 6, 16.67%) employing logit regression (Pigeyre & Sabatier, 2012, p. 411) and another article (1 out of 6, 16.67%) using factor analysis (Larat, 2015, p. 111), and none of those used Ordinary Least Squares regression, bivariate correlation, interaction terms, and experiment design research. Furthermore, French-speaking social equity scholars used mixed methods (Pigeyre & Sabatier, 2012; Rouban, 2013) either with an explanatory sequential design (Rouban, 2013, p. 107) or with a convergent parallel design (Pigeyre & Sabatier, 2012, p. 401). Lastly, we noticed that there is a diversity of approaches to data collection used by French-speaking social equity scholars who gathered administrative data (Pigeyre & Sabatier, 2012, p. 405), used existing survey data from authoritative public organizations (Larat, 2015, p. 105; Prouteau & Tchernonog, 2017, p. 533; Sterdyniak, 2022, p. 408), as well as original surveys (Magnier & Marchal, 2015, p. 127; Rouban, 2013, p. 95).

That is quite different from the methodological breakout from the 53 articles on initiatives to curb discrimination analyzed by Thomann and colleagues (2024, supplementary tables and figures). Until now, research in the francophonie has produced far more essays, fewer quantitative studies, and no randomized surveys, or laboratory or field experiments. These are obvious next steps for

these researchers to expand the boundaries of theories and postulates mostly set by English-language research.

Practical recommendations

In French-language social equity research, practical recommendations are found in one-third of the papers (15 out of 45 articles, 33.33%). Analysis of these recommendations reveals that francophone equity scholars often address their suggestions to managers (4 out of 45 articles, 8.89%), elected officials (2 out of 45 articles, 4.44%), and employees (1 out of 45 articles, 2.22%).

Table 1. Summary of Methodological Descriptive Statistics

	Methods	Frequency	%
Research methods			
	Empirical	27	60
	Essays	18	40
	Total	45	100
	Quantitative method (exclude MM)	4	8.89
	Qualitative method (exclude MM)	21	46.67
	Mixed method (MM)	2	4.44
	Essays	18	40
	Total	45	100
Qualitative methods (Total = 41)			
	Comparative case study	2	4.88
	Single case study	8	19.51
	Small N study (2 to 9)	7	17.07
	Medium N study (10+)	0	0
	Other	24	58.54
	Total	41	100
Empirical qualitative methods (Total = 23)			
	Interview	15	65.22
	Content analysis	11	47.83
	Focus group	3	13.04
	Observation	3	13.04
	Archives	2	8.7
	Ethnography	2	8.7
	Typology	1	4.35
	Process tracing	0	0
	Equifinality	0	0
	Counterfactual	0	0
	QCA Fuzzy	0	0
Quantitative methods (Total = 6)			
	Descriptive statistics	6	100
	OLS regression	0	0
	Logit/Probit	1	16.67
	Bicorrelation	0	0
	Comparison means Chi2 test	0	0
	Interaction terms	0	0
	Factor analysis	1	16.67
	Experiment	0	0

MM = Mixed Method; OLS = Ordinary Least Square; QCA = Qualitative Comparative Analysis

These recommendations typically focus on national level (10 out of 45 articles, 22.22%) and public sector (11 out of 45 articles, 24.44%) interventions for effecting change. They are most often presented as obligations (8 out of 45 articles, 17.78%), less frequently as possibilities (4 out of 45 articles, 8.89%), and sometimes in a neutral tone (3 out of 45 articles, 6.67%). However, French-speaking social equity scholars are more likely to adopt a stringent posture when their recommendation includes the national or provincial level as to where actions should be taken (correlation of 0.7559, $p < 0.05$, see Table 2).

Table 2. Summary of Association between the Subdimensions of Recommendations, with the topic at hand.

	<i>WHO</i>		<i>HOW</i>		
	Elected	Managerial	Employee	Obligation	Possibility Neutral
<i>Public management reforms</i>	0.7845				
<i>Contracting</i>	0.6814				0.5345
<i>Collaboration and partnership</i>	0.6814				0.5345
<i>Citizen involvement</i>	0.6814				0.5345
<i>Human resource management</i>		0.6504			0.6504
<i>Network and governance</i>			0.6814		
<i>WHERE – National or Provincial</i>				0.7559	-0.7071

Note: Only includes t-tests significance at the 5 percent-level.

Additionally, we examined the potential associations between the granularity of recommendations and the topic in which social equity is studied. The correlation analysis between the management themes and ‘WHO’ is identified in the recommendations, summarized in table 2, suggests that elected officials are more likely to be identified in social equity research focusing on *public management reforms* (0.7845, $p < 0.05$), *contracting* (0.6814, $p < 0.05$), *collaboration and partnership* (0.6814, $p < 0.05$), and *citizen involvement* (0.6814, $p < 0.05$). On the other hand, while managers are more likely to be identified as targets of recommendations for social equity research focusing on *human resource management* (0.6504, $p < 0.05$), employees are considered as actors than can shape social equity in public programs on *network and governance* (0.6814, $p < 0.05$). These results reveal that elected officials are seen as the main actors for all aspects of the public administration ecosystem related to social equity. This differs from the long tradition of engaged public servants as having the discretion and the agency to protect social equity.

By extrapolating the correlation between the identities recommended in the management themes and how scholars articulated the recommendations (table 2), the results suggest that francophone social equity scholars typically present their practical suggestions in a diplomatic or hesitant manner. This is especially true when managers are portrayed as the ones to take action, particularly in human resource management matters. They tend not to use obligation words like “must” and “should” significantly (see Russo et al., 2023, p. 1,639). When elected officials are depicted as the shapers of social equity, the results indicate that these scholars often present their recommendations neutrally. They do not significantly use words that express obligation or

possibility, regardless of whether the topic is contracting, collaboration and partnership, or citizen involvement. Finally, the correlation analysis between management themes and the provision of practical recommendations by scholars (not reported in table 2) indicates no significant association. In other words, the decision of French social equity scholars to provide practical suggestions does not seem to be influenced by the management themes.

Two major takeaways from the recommendations of French-speaking social equity scholars (table 3) are the fact that practical recommendations are quite often unclear on who (9 out of 45) is identified as having enough agency to enhance social equity and on where actions (4 out of 45) should be taken.

Table 3. Summary of Practical Recommendations on Social Equity, Translated from French

Recommendation	WHO	WHERE	HOW
“In the final analysis, equalization must be seen in the context of good governance of a complex local and national public financial system. (...) This is why, from the point of view of steering public finances, it seems essential to set up joint State/local authority bodies to regulate, in time and space, and through consultation, on the one hand, the evolution of public resources and expenditure, and on the other hand the equalization schemes to be set up at the different levels of authority (regions, départements, groupings).” (Bouvier, 2007, p. 78)	Unclear	National and Local	Obligation
“The flexibility of the system is not without risk of arbitrariness (rare but not impossible) and/or privilege for certain parties. The new reference to the principle of impartiality in the first articles of the code of judicial organization could gradually lead to greater transparency in the distribution of cases. Judicial organization should therefore take greater account of fundamental principles without losing its flexibility.” (Jeuland, 2008, p. 33)	Unclear	National	Obligation
“Speed must not be so attractive as to upset the balance of power within the trial or negate the guarantees of a fair trial. It must be pursued with restraint, in concreto, so that the time saved does not translate into a loss of quality. More than celerity in the strict sense of the word, it is a different perception and acceptance of judicial time that must be sought.” (Amrani-Mekki, 2008, p. 43)	Unclear	National	Obligation
“More broadly, within the profession of teacher-researchers in management itself, it would be a matter of rethinking, in the context of universities made more autonomous, career management, in the short and medium term, which also presupposes rethinking the	Managerial	National	Possibility

relevance of this type of competitive examination.” (Pigeyre and Sabatier, 2012, p. 416)			
“Diversification also relies on the profiles of future managers having heterogeneous cultural references and singular experiences. What the jury will be looking for is the degree to which these experiences have been appropriated, analyzed and formalized, enabling them to be transferred to the local civil service context. (...) This is an imperative of social justice and equal opportunity, but also of efficient public management; the senior territorial civil service will gain by attracting all the talents of society in all its diversity.” (Magnier and Marchal, 2015, p. 138)	Managerial	Local	Possibility
“To be truly able to respond, the CPÉNA’s intervention should amount to a final push. It should be the final link in an integrated set of educational, social and economic equality policies.” (Edel, 2015, p. 162)	Managerial	National	Obligation
“Public actors would perhaps benefit from reconsidering the problem of socio-spatial segregation in this way, apprehended less as a set of concentrations of undesirable population(s) that should be warded off, than as the result of a multitude of obstacles to their social and residential mobility, some of which are akin to discrimination.” (Desage, 2016, p. 83)	Unclear	Unclear	Possibility
“The case of Seine-Saint-Denis shows how far we still have to go to achieve de facto equality between pupils in this department and those in more affluent ones. We also need to examine the sustainability of the State’s commitment, as the history of priority education is above all one of instability, with phases of lesser commitment likely to produce an accumulation of inequalities pushing back the prospect of equality even further.” (Ben Ayed, 2017, p. 382)	Unclear	National	Obligation

“This new order produces new inequalities that benefit sites with the strongest collective action capacities, but also institutional characteristics that meet new hierarchical criteria. To be understood, these transformations must be seen as the product of the articulation between different registers of instrument mobilization - conformation, appropriation, resistance - and ongoing interactions between governors and governed.” (Aust et al., 2018, p. 9)	Managerial and Employee	National	Obligation
“Finally, this study suggests avenues for future research, given the purpose of the institutional work in progress: to mitigate and adapt the institutional field to ecological and climatic changes. Indeed, practices, which arise in reaction to the negative externalities of the globalized food system, very often aim to integrate more circularity into it to limit the impact on territories and natural resources.” (Tissone et al., 2019, p. 49)	Unclear	Unclear	Neutral
“This observation leads us to call for greater consistency in public policies towards the notarial profession, which has been ‘badly treated’ since the law of August 6, 2015 for growth, activity and equal economic opportunity, known as the ‘Growth Law’.” (Dauchez, 2020, p. 181)	Elected-Official	Unclear	Neutral
“In the implementation phase that is now taking shape, the regions will have to assert their role as leaders and mobilize the bodies for dialogue with the territories and the State to bring the advances made in these documents to life.” (Diaz, 2021, p. 607)	Unclear	National and Local	Obligation
“From then on and beyond the case restituted here, it would be a matter for future research to deepen comparisons between the relationships to politics revealed by the different dynamics of the constitution of territorial SSE clusters.” (Itçaina, 2021, p. 81)	Unclear	Unclear	Neutral
“Our ambition to shed light on the French case, as yet little apprehended from this perspective, as well as the global reach of Western categorizations, due first to colonization and now to international institutions, have justified the focus of this article on this context, echoing Anglo-Saxon research. In the future, this focus will merit a dialogue with those on other configurations, particularly non-Western ones, in which the processes of institutionalization of	Unclear	National	Possibility

gender and sexuality relations.” (Prauthois & Biland, 2022, p. 31)			
“The results show that, on the one hand, the provision of services in the language of citizens’ choice, which is conditioned by the legal framework on language rights, drives actors to mobilize strategies focused on quality and security. On the other hand, access has a symbolic dimension, as it is associated with notions of equity and governance. Access to French-language healthcare services is a sensitive issue for the state, which remains on the sidelines. In order to better respond to the health needs of citizens, this actor needs to foster bonds of trust and formulate clear objectives.” (Collin et al., 2022, p. 1)	Elected-Official	National	Obligation

Out of 45 articles, two articles (4.44%) expressed that the national and local government levels (Bouvier, 2007, p. 78; Diaz, 2021, p. 607) are the ones that matters related to public finance (Bouvier, 2007, p. 78) and governance (Diaz, 2021, p. 607), and one article (2.22%) expressed joint responsibility for managers and employees on matters related to network and governance (Aust et al., 2018, p. 9). Future research could explore our suggestion that bureaucratic accountability plays a major role in network and governance matters, while democratic accountability is more prevalent in matters related to public finance and governance.

However, as presented in Table 3, the limited number of practical recommendations masks the quality of these recommendations to bring about change. Out of those 15 papers offering practical recommendations, we find that some articles offer precise and concrete actions (Aust et al., 2018, p. 9; Bouvier, 2007, p. 78; Dauchez, 2020, p. 181; Diaz, 2021, p. 607), precise but less concrete actions (Amrani-Mekki, 2008, p. 43; Collin et al., 2022, p. 1; Edel, 2015, p. 162; Magnier & Marchal, 2015, p. 138; Pigeyre & Sabatier, 2012, p. 416) and a few that remain vague (Ben Ayed, 2017, p. 382; Desage, 2016, p. 83; Itçaina, 2021, p. 81; Jeuland, 2008, p. 33; Prauthois & Biland, 2022, p. 31; Tissone et al., 2019, p. 49). For instance, Bouvier (2007, p. 78) suggested revamping the governance of the financial system and launching joint committees at the national and local government levels. Aust and colleagues (2018, p. 9) suggested strengthening the interaction between rulers and ruled, whereas Dauchez (2020, p. 181) proposed focusing more attention on public policy coherence. Diaz (2021, p. 607) emphasized the role of leadership of regions, and Collin and colleagues (2022, p. 1) indicated clear goal setting and citizen trust as part of the solution to social inequity. In essence, while some articles offered concrete practical recommendations, most authors did not connect their recommendations to their findings, which would make them more actionable for practitioners.

Discussion

Social equity in Public Administration is a fundamental public value along with efficiency and effectiveness (Frederickson, 1971, p. 295; Frederickson, 2010, pp. 28-31) and as a response to the efficiency and political responsiveness dichotomy acting as a zero-sum game (Chitwood, 1974, p. 30; Frederickson, 2010, pp. 11-13; Frederickson, 2010, pp. 11-13). From then on, social equity has been studied in Public Administration (Aoki et al., 2022, p. 46; McCandless, et al., 2022, p. 129) and there are still calls from scholars to deepen the understanding of equity (Blessett et al., 2019, p. 284; McDonald et al., 2022, p. 59) and to conduct comparative administration research (McDonald et al., 2022, p. 59). Yu and colleagues (2023) called for “(...) widening the scope of equity calls for a widening view of diverse groups as definitions and criteria are also continually changing” (p. 446). In this study, we respond to calls from scholars by conducting a comprehensive literature review of French-language social equity research. Our focus is on the methodology, theories, and practical recommendations.

The descriptive results reveal that practical recommendations in French-language social equity research are present in only one-third of the papers (15 out of 45 articles, 33.33%). Is this enough? From a descriptive statistical standpoint, our assessment is no, this is not enough since most of the papers do not provide practical recommendations. The low percentage of papers offering practical recommendations could be due to the lack of incentives for scholars. Elected officials might prefer exploring newspaper articles over academic journal articles. Alternatively, Francophone social equity scholars might focus more on advancing knowledge among their peers than suggesting concrete actions for decision-makers to implement change.

From an empirical and methodological standpoint, only four articles out of 45 (14.81%) employed quantitative methods, two articles (7.41%) employed mixed methods, and 21 articles (77.78 %) employed qualitative methods. These results contrast with the findings of Blessett and colleagues (2019, p. 291) who conducted a content analysis of social equity articles in the *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *Public Administration Review*, and *Administrative Theory and Praxis*, from 1968 to 2018. Blessett and colleagues (2019, p. 291) found that the articles were mostly quantitative (104 out of 238), less qualitative (72 out of 238), and less theory-oriented (48 out of 238), and few were mixed methods (3 out of 238) and essays (11 out of 238). This also contrasts with Shen and colleagues’ (2023, pp. 403-404) findings, which indicated that over half of the 127 articles they analyzed utilized quantitative methods. This is an interesting comparative finding that suggests that the dominance of the quantitative approach to social equity found by Blessett and colleagues (2019, p. 291) is not shared across the board. In short, the high proportion of quantitative methods in social equity research does not only depend on the nature (theory-focused or not) of the journal (Blessett et al., 2019, p. 291), but not policy or Public Administration journals (Shen et al., 2023, p. 404), but is also contingent on the language and cultures used to disseminate the results.

Conceptually and theoretically, French and English social equity research share commonalities in how social equity is depicted and, in the theories, referenced. Both French and English language research conceptualize social equity as equal service provision to all social groups, as well as a right (Blanchard, 2018, pp. 48-49; Cepiku & Mastrodascio 2021, p. 1025; Edel, 2013, pp. 110-11; Marry et al., 2015, p. 48; Rivera & Knox, 2022, p. 10). Furthermore, the notion of social equity as proportionality is featured in two French-language papers included in this systematic literature review (Bronsard, 2008, p. 86; Michaud, 2015, p.15). Both authors argued that individuals should receive rewards (e.g., wages) proportional to their actions and contributions. They suggested that while equal access signifies fairness, it should also be complemented by proportionality. While it could be argued that French-language research emphasizes equity as proportionality, English-language research also discusses this to some extent. For instance, Haidt (2012) – an American

scholar – characterizes fairness (equity) as proportionality, using political ideology as a contrasting point.

On the left, concerns about equality and social justice are based in part on the Fairness foundation. (...) Everyone cares about fairness, but there are two major kinds. On the left, fairness often implies equality, but on the right, it means proportionality—people should be rewarded in proportion to what they contribute, even if that guarantees unequal outcomes. (Haidt, 2012, pp. 160-161)

Haidt's (2012) analysis points out the fact that the conceptualization of equity varies based on political ideology, cultural and religious background, and society (pp. 160-161).

French and English language social equity research referred to similar frames such as New Public Service and New Public Management (Blanchard, 2018, p.41; Cepiku & Mastrodascio 2021, p. 1025; Edel, 2016, p. 1174; Perroud, 2013, p. 420). However, it is important to mention two theories highlighted by Bronsard (2008) and Michaud (2015). These theories discuss equity as proportionality, the theory of rights, and Merit theory. The theory of rights introduces a proportionality aspect by questioning how to ensure everyone receives their fair share (Bronsard, 2008, p. 86). As a central aspect related to proportionality is knowing what the “right to” entitles you to, the theory of rights goes beyond the “right to” to the detriment of procedural rights. The procedural rights consist of assessing the appropriate fair treatment and then determining the mechanisms and procedures to make this happen (Bronsard, p. 89). Procedural rights imply the institutionalization of dialogue between the administration and the citizen (Bronsard, p. 89) in the quest for equity. As for the Merit theory, merit refers to the notion of virtue, that is to say, a disposition to act well (Michaud, 2015, p. 15). Merit theorists argue that an individual who performs excellently at work should be eligible for a corresponding salary (Michaud, p. 17). However, they also add a caveat, noting that individuals are not necessarily equal in and of themselves (Michaud, p. 20). More specifically, they suggest that greater merit should be awarded for achieving results despite having a disability (e.g. physical, psychological, belonging to a disadvantaged minority) compared to achieving the same results without any disability (Michaud, pp. 18-20). Thus, merit theorists see equity as proportionality in rewards and sanctions, while also considering the nuances of proportionality in relation to an individual's overall capacity, such as in public affairs.

Informed by the French-social equity literature, scholars should consider neglected research questions or goals along with suggested methods, theories, and articles or books, listed in the following table (table 4) to enhance the mainstream English-language literature.

Due to word limit constraints, we will not delve into the details of the table's content. However, the first four questions are inspired by Lee and Ospina (2022) and pertain to collaborative governance and accountability. For instance, should researchers choose to pursue the first (1) research question, they can use descriptive analysis along Lee and Ospina's (2022) Framework for Assessing Accountability in Collaborative Governance, and to confirm the best approach to fill the gaps, they can undertake experimental research through surveys. For question (4), process tracing can be used for theory-testing – is hypothesized causal mechanism present and does it function as theorized? – (Beach & Pedersen, 2019, pp. 9, 145, 248, 254, 257) and theory-building – what is the causal mechanism between the cause and outcome? – (Beach & Pedersen, 2019, pp. 9, 269, 272) As for the suggestion to develop and test an Accountability and Control Framework with respect to social inequity dealing, Scholars can combine Narrative Policy Framework (Dunlop et al., 2021; Jones et al., 2014; Kuenzler & Stauffer, 2023; Shanahan et al., 2018) and Agency Theory (Kamuzinzi & Rubyutsa, 2019) which can be applied to a predefined social problem.

Table 4. Research Agenda

Topic	Research questions/goals	Suggested Methods	Suitable Theories	Suggested Articles/books
Governance and Accountability	(1) What are the dilemmas in collaborative governance linked to social inequity dealing?	Grounded Theory; Ethnography	Resource Dependence Theory; Institutional Theory	Mele and Cappellaro, 2018; Conteh and Harding, 2021; Siciliano et al., 2021; van Popering-Verkerk et al., 2022; Lee and Hung, 2021; Lee and Ospina, 2022; Wang and Ran, 2023; Creswell and Poth, 2018
	(2) With respect to social inequity dealing, what is the most dominant accountability deficit, and how to fill the gaps?	Descriptive analysis; Environmental Intervention	Lee and Ospina (2022)'s Framework for Assessing Accountability in Collaborative Governance; Felt Accountability Theory	Lee and Ospina, 2022; Overman et Schillemans, 2022; Jacobs et al., 2021; Kamuzinzi and Rubyutsa, 2019; Bertelli and Busuioc, 2021; James et al. 2017
Accountability and Network	(3) With respect to social inequity dealing, how do network actors manage the tensions between vertical and horizontal accountability? (Lee and Ospina, 2022, p. 72)	Narrative approach	Felt Accountability Theory; Network Theory	Siciliano et al., 2021; Overman and Schillemans, 2022; Jacobs et al., 2021; Kamuzinzi and Rubyutsa, 2019; Bertelli and Busuioc, 2021; Wang and Ran, 2023; Provan et al. 2014
	(4) Do strong versus weak ties in networks impact information transmission, and how? (Lee and Ospina, 2022, p. 72)	Pathway analysis; Process tracing	Network Theory	Siciliano et al., 2021; Borgatti and Halgin, 2011; Weller and Barnes, 2014; Beach and Pedersen, 2019

Social Policy Analysis	(5) Develop and assess an Accountability and Control Framework with respect to social inequity dealing.	Theory Development	Narrative Policy Framework and Agency Theory	Kamuzinzi and Rubyutsa, 2019; Jones et al., 2014; Shanahan et al., 2018; Dunlop et al., 2021; Kuenzler and Stauffer, 2023; Jacob and Schiffino, 2021
Equity in Public Budgeting and Finance	(6) To what extent does Intergenerational Inequity Impact Public Finance Management (and vice versa), and how?	Causal mechanism; Historical Comparison	Public Choice; Compound Theory of Social Equity	Sterdyniak, 2022; Angrist and Pischke, 2014; Frederickson, 2010; James et al. 2017; Jaramillo, 2020; Beach and Pedersen, 2019
	(7) Equity Budgeting in OECD Countries: A Comparison Analysis	Qualitative comparative analysis	Compound Theory of Social Equity	Rubin and Bartle, 2021; Rubin and Bartle, 2023; Thiem, 2017; Quinn, 2009; Frederickson, 2010
Systematic Literature Review	(8) Develop a practical recommendation quality index	Measurement	Rational Choice Theory; Neo-institutionalism	DeVellis, 2017; Flake and Fried, 2020; Goertz, 2020; Russo et al., 2023; Simsek et al., 2023; Thiem, 2017; Quinn, 2009
	(9) What are the determinants of the presence of practical recommendations in academic research papers?	Linear regression analysis; Qualitative comparative analysis		
	(10) What are the determinants of practical recommendation quality in academic research papers?	Linear regression analysis; Qualitative comparative analysis		

This Accountability and Control Framework can help provide insights into the types and forms of control, in public administration, contingent on villains and heroes related to a specific social problem. Questions (6) and (7) are about Equity in Public Budgeting and Finance, and

Frederickson's (2010) book is relevant to tackle those questions since Frederickson (2010) provided an overview of the origins, theories, and applications of social equity. Questions (8), (9), and (10) are linked to practical recommendations and can be taken on systematically. While developing a practical recommendation quality index, scholars need to bear in mind that clarifying and generating relevant items (DeVellis, 2017, pp. 103-104; Flake & Fried, 2020, pp. 460-461; Foster et al., 2015, p. 13; Lambert & Newman, 2023; Notten & Kaplan, 2021, pp. 2-3), determining the appropriate format for measurements (DeVellis, 2017, p. 114; Flake and Fried, 2020, p. 462; Foster et al., 2015, p. 13; Notten & Kaplan, 2021, p. 5), and evaluating the items (DeVellis, 2017, p. 131; Foster et al., 2015, p. 15; Lambert & Newman, 2023) are of paramount importance.

Conclusion

This systematic literature review summarizes the methodologies, theories, and practical recommendations developed in French-language social equity research. We identified, examined, and critiqued peer-reviewed journal articles in French, a language unfamiliar to many, thus revealing an otherwise overlooked resource for non-speakers. Cultures are tied with languages. Excluding articles not written in English excludes cultures, especially in reviews and systematic reviews on social equity. Overall, the results suggest that French-language social equity research differs from mainstream English research by focusing on minority groups other than racial ones, offering relevant but not in-depth practical recommendations, encompassing a small proportion of papers referring to theories, and favoring qualitative methods.

Francophone researchers also publish their findings in English, even more frequently in English rather than in French (Larivière, 2018, p. 348). The findings would be different if French-speaking scholars were to distill their research into French-language journals instead of English. Notwithstanding English as a lingua franca (Blais, 2018, p. 337; Candler, 2006, p. 335; Candler, 2008, p. 295; Imbeau & Ouimet, 2012, p. 60; Kraus, 2018, p. 341; Larivière, 2018, p. 357; Moloney et al., 2022, p. 261; Marcoux, 2018, p. 437), systematic literature review's results highlight the critical importance of knowledge sharing across languages. The characteristics of the social equity literature presented in systematic reviews are colored by the fact that it comes from English-language research, often in the United States.

It is unrealistic for journals to copy the Babel Fish project from the Canadian Philosophical Review where articles are translated into English from the first language of international researchers to fight power imbalances along the "Barcelona Principles for a Globally Inclusive Philosophy" (Bandini & Salay, 2022, p. 199). We highly recommend future systematic literature reviews to adopt the approach used by Moon and colleagues (2014), who translated Korean Public Administration research into English.

For understandable historical reasons, race is a mainstay in the history of the United States. It is to be expected that essays presenting the past, present, and future of social equity prioritize the American past and present (Yu et al., 2023). Other countries have their own cleavage lines that are not race-based: languages in Belgium and Canada, ethnic groups in Benin, and religions and sects in Iraq, India, and Lebanon. Climate change everywhere can of course spur us to consider future generations when contemplating social equity questions, but so can fiscal issues for possibly unsustainable policies and programs that would not be offered at their current levels in the future. Including samples and contexts from different countries is a way to achieve a more global Public Administration. Bridging linguistic scholarly communities with mainstream English-speaking will enhance this process.

In an essay charting three trajectories to globalize Public Administration research and theory, Ashley and colleagues deemed that our discipline could go three ways. The first trajectory is to develop universally applicable theories; the second is to incorporate a broader range of perspectives in Public Administration studies; the third and final trajectory is to extend research beyond national governments, encompassing global governance bodies and organizations (Ashley et al., 2021, pp. 17-18). Our current effort, along with similar ones to come, by translating and synthesizing research topics from Portuguese, Spanish, Farsi, Hindi, and Arabic, into English, can answer globalize Public Administration research along Ashley and colleagues' (2021) first two trajectories. This benefits researchers who read in English and broadens the discussion in mainstream English-language Public Administration journals. This would also encompass local critiques, formulated in languages other than English, of foreign countries. As summed up by Roberts (2024), social equity and social justice are provincial vernacular; in other countries, these concepts are referred to as human rights. These critiques on human rights/social equity, which Western scholars hesitate to express, would be aimed at non-Western countries that do not prioritize social equity in their governmental operations. These criticisms, often unvoiced by Western Public Administration scholars, would be directed at non-Western countries that neglect social equity in their governmental operations. Daily, public servants from agencies, departments, and ministries responsible for immigration identify instances where asylum seekers and refugees faced discrimination and human rights abuses in their home countries. Public Administration scholars should catch up to this when studying and discussing social equity.

Notes

ⁱ Candler and colleagues (2010) define epistemic colonialism as “an uncritical adoption of administrative structures and techniques from elsewhere, especially the former colonial, or current hegemonic power” (p. 837) whereas epistemic nationalism is considered as the rejection of foreign lessons. Epistemic parochialism represents the lack of awareness of knowledge from other linguistic and cultural corners of a literature (Candler et al., 2010, p. 837).

ⁱⁱ Foreign refers to a study conducted in a country different from the country hosting the journal.

ⁱⁱⁱ The sum of the percentage exceeds 100% as there are a few articles that covered more than a management theme.

^{iv} Doubled counting mixed methods in both qualitative and quantitative methods, empirical qualitative methods count is 23 articles and quantitative methods count is 6 articles.

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Author Biographies

Gino Biauou, M.Sc. (gino.biaou@enap.ca) is a doctoral candidate at École nationale d'administration publique (ENAP) Outaouais campus, Gatineau, QC. He holds a master's degree in finance from Université Laval (Canada) and two bachelor's degrees from Université de Moncton (Canada) and Université d'Abomey-Calavi (Benin). He is interested in financial equity.

Étienne Charbonneau, Ph.D. (etienne.charbonneau@enap.ca) is Canada Research Chair in Comparative Public Management and professor at École nationale d'administration publique in Montreal, QC. His recent research delves into electronic surveillance and police management. This is his second research project on social equity since 2009.