

The Progressive Transformations of the French University System

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Brief History from 1793 to 2015

Birth, death and resurrection

- 13th Century: First universities in France
- 1793: suppression of 22 universities
- From 1793 to 1968: no real universities in France : “Grandes Ecoles” (Polytechnique, Centrale, Mines,...) and independent faculties (law, medicine, humanities, sciences)

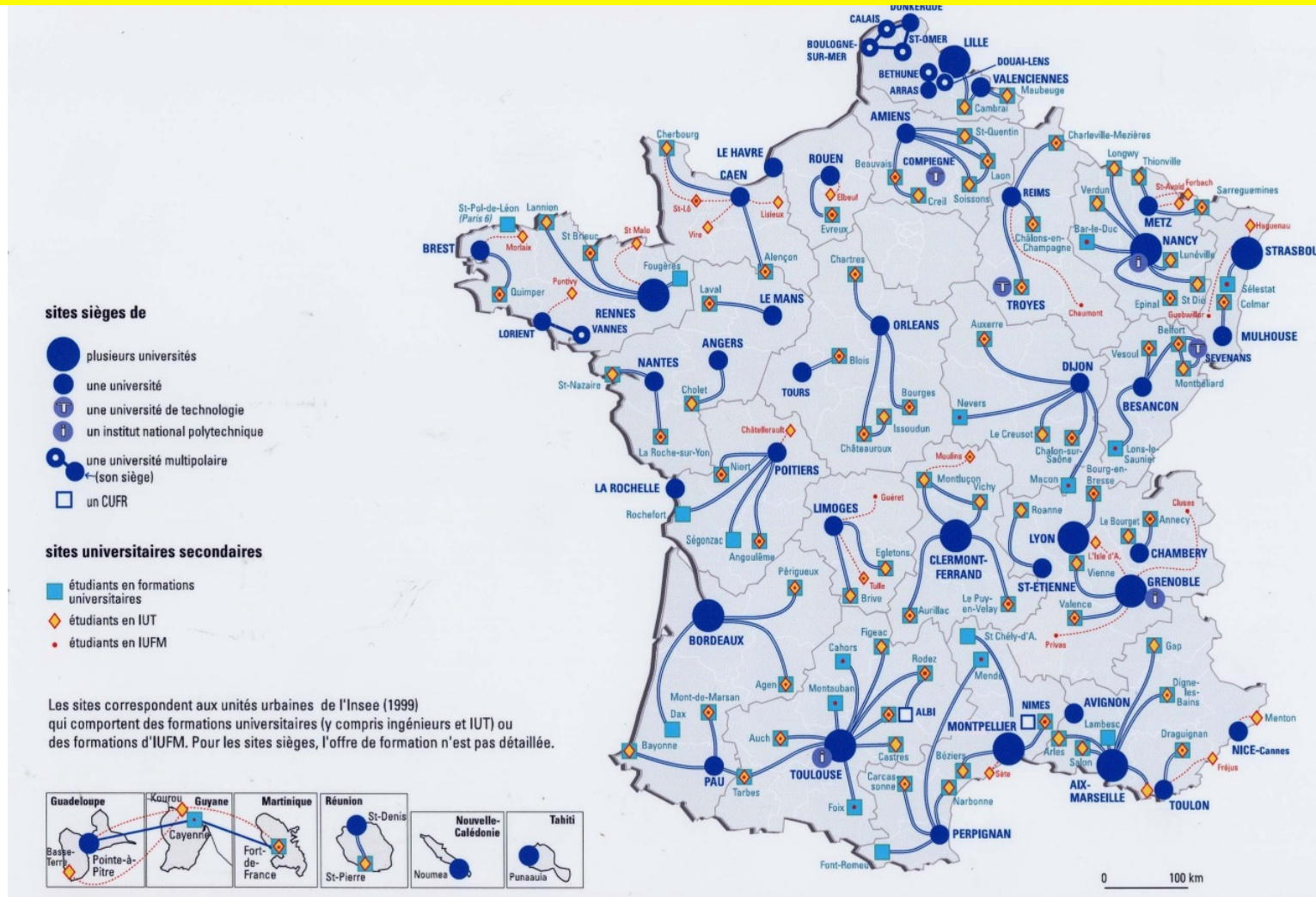
The “Republic” of Faculties and Écoles:

- ◆ Fragmentation of small structures
- ◆ Lack of critical mass to face the new challenges of research → creation of national research bodies: CNRS created in 1930, INSERM, INRA
...
- ◆ Many competitions between institutions with the Etate as single referee
- ◆ Atypical in the context of European and international trends (Humboltian university)

Birth, death and resurrection

- ◆ 1968: New law (Faure) redefines “comprehensive universities” as public institutions based on several principles including autonomy and multidisciplinary
- ◆ Strengths and weaknesses :
 - Good intentions:
 - The will to create «real universities»
 - The will to democratise (access)
 - But:
 - Over-bureaucratisation and inefficiencies, micro management by the ministry
 - Persistence of fragmentation with 3 types of institutions : universities (83), “Grandes Ecoles” outside universities (180), National research institutions (20)

A wide distribution of HE institutions on the territory (2010)



The different curricula (1)

- ◆ General education (universities) : ~ 1 290 000 students (hors IUT)
 - ◆ Licence (bachelor), ~ 830 000 students
 - ◆ Master (leading to a Phd or to direct employment),
 - ◆ ~ 395 000 students
 - ◆ Phd, ~ 65 000 « students »
- ◆ Preparatory classes : ~ 85 000 students

The different curricula (2)

- ◆ Vocational education :
 - ◆ Technical studies (short)
 - ◆ BTS (high school), ~ 270 000 students
 - ◆ IUT (in the universities), ~ 119 000 students
 - ◆ Vocational Bachelors, ~ 52 000 students
 - ◆ Professions of health (nurses, physiotherapist ..) associated to the universities, ~ 142 000 students
 - ◆ Engineering schools (50/200 in the universities) ~ 132 000 students
 - ◆ Business schools (mainly private) ~ 134 000 students
 - ◆ Other schools outside universities (Art school, architecture, etc..), ~ 117 000 students
 - ◆ EPSE (Ecoles Professionnelles Supérieures de l'Education – Higher vocational schools, leading to Master level, in the universities), ~ students
 - ◆ Health (in the universities) (médecine, pharmacy, study dentistry ..), ~ 172 000 students
 - ◆ Private paramedical : ~ 100 000 students

Some Figures

Institutions	Figures	Student figures	Academic staff figures	Staff
Universities and HE institutions	104	1 550 000	91 000 (of which 56 000 e/c)	53 000
Public Schools	230	100 000		
Post bac hors universités		345 000		
Private schools		230 000		
Other (culture, health..)		207 000		
RPOs	18		45 000	37 000
Total		2 432 000	136 000 (State)	80 000 (State)

Trends and Actions

Context evolution (1)

- ◆ **Massification (from 600 000 students in 1965 to 2,2 millions today)**
- ◆ New needs and new hopes (society, students, business, companies) :
 - ◆ Fast evolution of the jobs
 - ◆ LLL
 - ◆ Relationships between diplomas and competencies
 - ◆ Thematic and geographical mobility

Context evolution (2)

- ◆ Impact of the ICT
 - ◆ Deep evolution of the jobs and of the strategies
 - ◆ Future of the Moocs ?
- ◆ Impact of the Globalisation
 - ◆ International rankings (Shanghai, THE, Leiden, ..) → reinforcement of the concurrency between universities
 - ◆ But also new collaborations (joint diplomas, joint labs etc.)
- ◆ Europe :
 - ◆ Bologna process,
 - ◆ ERA and EHEA
 - ◆ Knowledge triangle

- ◆ Laws of decentralization : new roles of the other stakeholders (regions, other local collectivities) ?

Main challenges for the French System of Higher Education and Research (1)

- ◆ To improve the attractiveness and the visibility of the French universities : Need to reorganize and to simplify the HE&R landscape
- ◆ To keep a good balance between the importance of a geographical diversity and the need of a national framework
- ◆ To manage the balance between Competition and Cooperation in the framework of a public service ?
- ◆ To enhance the capacity of initiative and the efficiency of each university
- ◆ To enhance the autonomy of the French universities
- ◆ To keep a balance between autonomy of university and autonomy of faculty members
- ◆ To manage the partnership between universities and national research bodies

Main challenges for the French System of Higher Education and Research (2)

- ◆ Need to minimize state control and micro management
- ◆ Need to redefine the role of the state in terms of policy and global strategy
- ◆ Moving from administrative process to projects process
- ◆ Find sustainable fundings for universities.
- ◆ Need to develop pluri-disciplinarity : towards comprehensive universities
- ◆ To enhance LLL
- ◆ To develop pedagogical innovation

Main actions implemented over the
past 25 years

Various methods have been used

- ◆ Fourth laws :
 - ◆ 1999, law on innovation and research (LIR)
 - ◆ 2006, law “de Programme pour la Recherche” (LPR)
 - ◆ 2007, Law “Liberté et Responsabilité des Universités” (LRU)
 - ◆ 2013, law “Enseignement Supérieur et Recherche” (LESR)
- ◆ Many other mechanisms :
 - ◆ Regulations (decrees ..)
 - ◆ Contracts
 - ◆ Sharing of good practices and experiences
 - ◆ Financial incentives

Enhancement of autonomy (1)

- ◆ Four-year contracts between each university and State → emergence of institutional strategies, notably in research
 - ◆ Needs to develop a multi-year strategic plan and negotiate specific financial support
 - ◆ Strengthen the university governance
 - ◆ Changing role of the State
- ◆ Enhancement of quality assurance and of evaluation : setting up of a national agency for higher education and research, AERES (LPR), and later HCERES (LESR), using the ESG (European Standards Guidelines)

Enhancement of autonomy (2)

- ◆ Transfer of certain competences of the state to university, LRU, which appears as a decentralization law
 - ◆ Transfer of human resources management, with the corresponding financial amount
 - ◆ Possibility to transfer the ownership of real estates
 - ◆ Enhancement of a centralized governance of the university (smaller council, reinforcement of the competencies of the council etc.)
 - ◆ Funding increased by € 1B per year during 5 years (in fact from 2008 to 2009, less in the following 3 years due to the crisis)
- ◆ Implies a new role for the State, at a strategic level : it was a long way..
- ◆ Involvement of the other stakeholders (Regions, Cities, ..) which are invited to become real partners

Enhancement of autonomy (3)

- ◆ State founding :
 - ◆ Based on quantitative indicators, with a qualitative part (LRU)
 - ◆ A small part come from the multi-annual contract
 - ◆ Call for projects mechanisms, through a new research founding agency – ANR- (LPR)
- ◆ Other financial resources :
 - ◆ Tuition fees (very low)
 - ◆ European projects
 - ◆ Region
 - ◆ Enterprises
 - ◆ ..
- ◆ But, on the overall, between 70% and 80% of a university budget comes from the State

Enhancement of autonomy (4)

- ◆ Two important initiatives aiming :
 - ◆ To promote “world champions” at international level
 - ◆ To enhance the scientific quality of the French HE&R system”
 - ◆ Improving visibility, attractiveness and performance of French university system
- ◆ “Opération Campus”
 - ◆ Enhancing the campuses via a call for projects mechanism
 - ◆ Distinguish 12 “campus of excellence”
 - ◆ € 5 B mobilized for real estate and site architecture operations
- ◆ Programme “Investment for the Future”
 - ◆ Based on call for projects mechanisms
 - ◆ Several separate calls : Excellence initiative, Excellence laboratories, Excellence research infrastructures, Institutes for technological research, etc.
 - ◆ 22 B€ mobilized for HE&R on the 35 B€ of the whole programme
 - ◆ 2sd phase was launched in 2014

Reorganization of the university system

Reorganization of the university system (1)

- ◆ 1999 : Creation of doctoral schools (~300) encompassing all doctoral curricula)
- ◆ 1998 : Creation of joint labs between national research institutions and universities (UMR). Today, ~ 1500 UMR among 3000 labs in the French universities (70% of the researchers)

Reorganization of the university system (2)

A strategic approach for neighbouring institutions : Setting up federation (clusters) of universities, possibly including schools

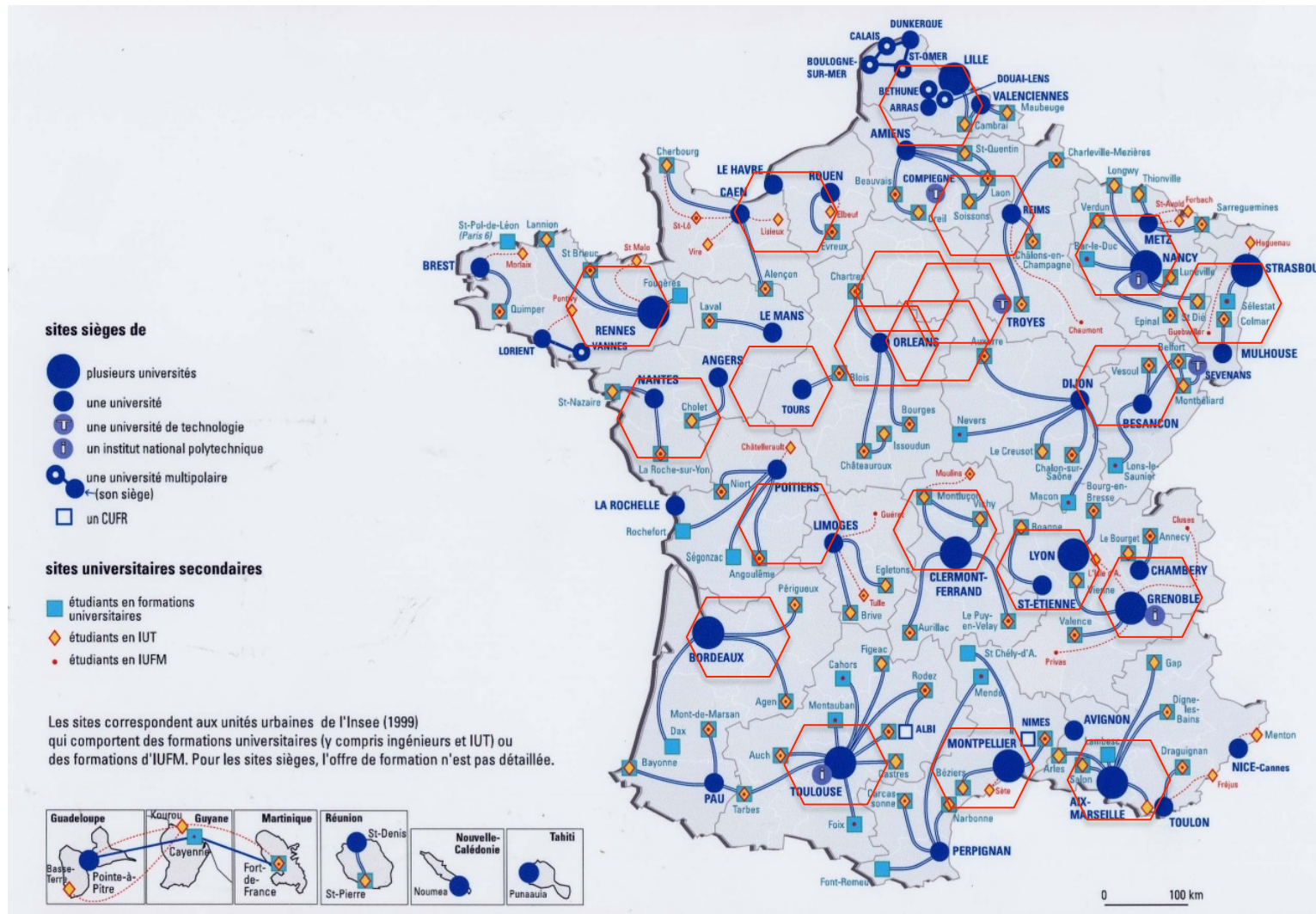
- ◆ Aims :
 - ◆ To avoid needless competition → a forum for building consensus and regulation
 - ◆ To share projects and/or operational structures
 - ◆ To reinforce visibility → identification and communication
 - ◆ To reach critical mass and increase scientific impact
- ◆ 2007, the PRES (Pôles de Recherche et d'Enseignement Supérieur) (LPR)
- ◆ 2013, the COMUEs (COMMunautés d'Universités et d'Etablissements) (LESR)

Reorganization of the university system (3)

PRES : A large diversity

- ◆ Various size of territory :
 - ◆ City
 - ◆ Region
 - ◆ Inter Region
 - ◆ Transfrontier
- ◆ Several type of missions :
 - ◆ Mutualize the best jewels (labs, doctoral school ..)
 - ◆ Organize common facilities and services
 - ◆ Support joint projects
 - ◆ Prepare the merging

The State of the PRES in 2012 (about 22)



March 1st 2010

Krasp - Łódź

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22/05/2015

Reorganization of the university system (4)

COMUEs : A top down approach

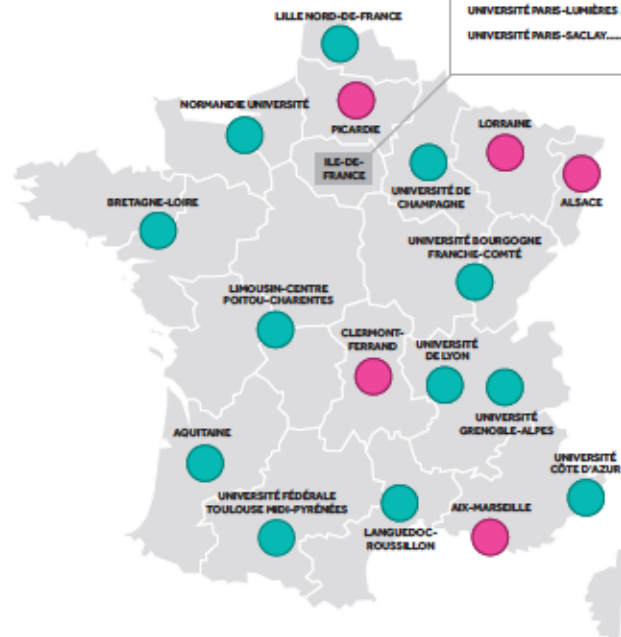
- ◆ As the PRES, the willingness to set up a federative system
- ◆ Stronger statutes (comparable with universities statutes)
- ◆ The will of the Ministry to consider the COMUE as their main interlocutor
- ◆ The need to get a balance between the competencies of the COMUE and of each member

25 regroupements universitaires et scientifiques

LÉGENDE: ● COMUE* ● Association

*Communautés d'universités et établissements

UNIVERSITÉ PARIS SEINE ●●●●●
 MESAN ●●●●●
 PARIS SCIENCES ET LETTRES ●●●●●
 SORBONNE PARIS CITÉ ●●●●●
 SORBONNE UNIVERSITÉS ●●●●●
 UNIVERSITÉ PARIS-EST ●●●●●
 UNIVERSITÉ PARIS-LUMIÈRES ●●●●●
 UNIVERSITÉ PARIS-SACLAY ●●●●●



22 juillet 2014
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Beyond the PRES and COMUEs : Universities Merging

- ◆ cases in France today :
 - ◆ Strasbourg (2009)
 - ◆ Aix Marseille and Lorraine (2012)
 - ◆ Bordeaux
 - ◆ Montpellier
- ◆ And now ?
 - ◆ New projects (Clermont, Grenoble, Lille ..)

Initiatives in the field of education

- ◆ 2003-2006: setting-up of the Bologna process (3 Cycles, ECTS..)
- ◆ 2007 (LRU) : Creation of structures dedicated to professional insertion (offices supporting professionals insertion)
- ◆ 2013 : FUN (France Université Numérique) access plate-forme to différent lectures under digitalisation format (Moocs)

Promoting innovation

- ◆ Creation of Incubators and innovative start-up (LPR) at the outskirts of the universities
- ◆ To enable the researchers to participate to the setting up of companies
- ◆ Setting up of competitiveness clusters
- ◆ Setting up of Instituts Carnots (on the same model as German Franhoffers)
- ◆ SATT (private companies for accelerating the technological transfer) to build portfolios of critical mass patents
- ◆ IRT (instituts de recherche technologique): private companies composed of both entreprises and universities
- ◆ IHU (Institut Hospitalo-Universitaire)
- ◆ ..

Conclusions

A system which remains complicated

- ◆ A complex system modelled by the history: addition of new structures more than periodic reshaping
 - ➔ Coexistence of several types of higher formations/ Education
 - ➔ Weight of organizations dedicated to research (RPOs) which hidde the university contribution
- ◆ Advantages and disadvantages of the statute of civils servant for academic staff
- ◆ In same time an undeniable scientific quality and a good education level
- ◆ Fundamental questions which remain :
 - ◆ Exemption from payment of higher education (for the students)
 - ◆ Access open to the university for any graduate

Many initiatives (1)

- ◆ A permanent will (too much) to make evolve the French system
- ◆ Changes of course when changes of political majority
- ◆ But fortunately a main direction which remains overall the same one:
 - ◆ Reinforcement of autonomy and transfer of competence
 - ◆ Development of the project approach
 - ◆ Accountability, quality, evaluation
 - ◆ Importance of the networks and the instruments of co-operation on various geographical scales

Many initiatives (2)

- ◆ Some interrogations:
 - ◆ Concern of simplifying and of structuring, but will the method of the small steps be enough?
 - ◆ Can one create federations by avoiding the conflicts of competence?
 - ◆ Are the UMR sustainable structures?
- ◆ Specific financial means (Campus, PIA) but a basic support which weakens

Thank You

Dziękuję

Merci