

# Rankings and other transparency tools

**Case Study : The French HE&R system**

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# Impacts of Rankings

# Impact of Global Rankings so far (1)

- ◆ Institutions:
  - ◆ Do not recognize rankings as such, but want to be 'in'
  - ◆ International reputation : Nobel Prize recruitments
  - ◆ Use the rankings to choose international partners, to set up networks..
  - ◆ Global rankings contradicted by differentiated national perceptions of institutional strength (two institutions are very close at national level, but in international rankings 80 place apart)
  - ◆ Merging

# Impact of Global Rankings so far (2)

- ◆ National governments and EU:
  - ◆ Reputation: push National Gvts to take initiative that place their universities in the Top hundred
  - ◆ Benchmarking for international competitiveness
  - ◆ Restructuration and “excellence initiatives” (Germany, France..)
- ◆ Policy Implications :
  - ◆ Immigration issues (Netherland, Denmark..)
  - ◆ Eligibility of partner institutions (India, Brazil..)
  - ◆ Recognition of qualifications (RF)

# Impact of Global Rankings so far (3)

- ◆ General public:
  - ◆ Relevance of national institutions against a global backdrop (but: not all European countries are positioned), easy benchmark etc.

# Impact of Global Rankings so far (4)

- ◆ Students:
  - ◆ impact on first study destination? Tends to be proximity & attractiveness
  - ◆ Value for money not yet an issue
  - ◆ But rankings more important for international study destinations



**HE & R in France : evolution and  
impact of rankings**





**French HE & R : a brief History**



# Birth, death and resurrection (1)

- 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)

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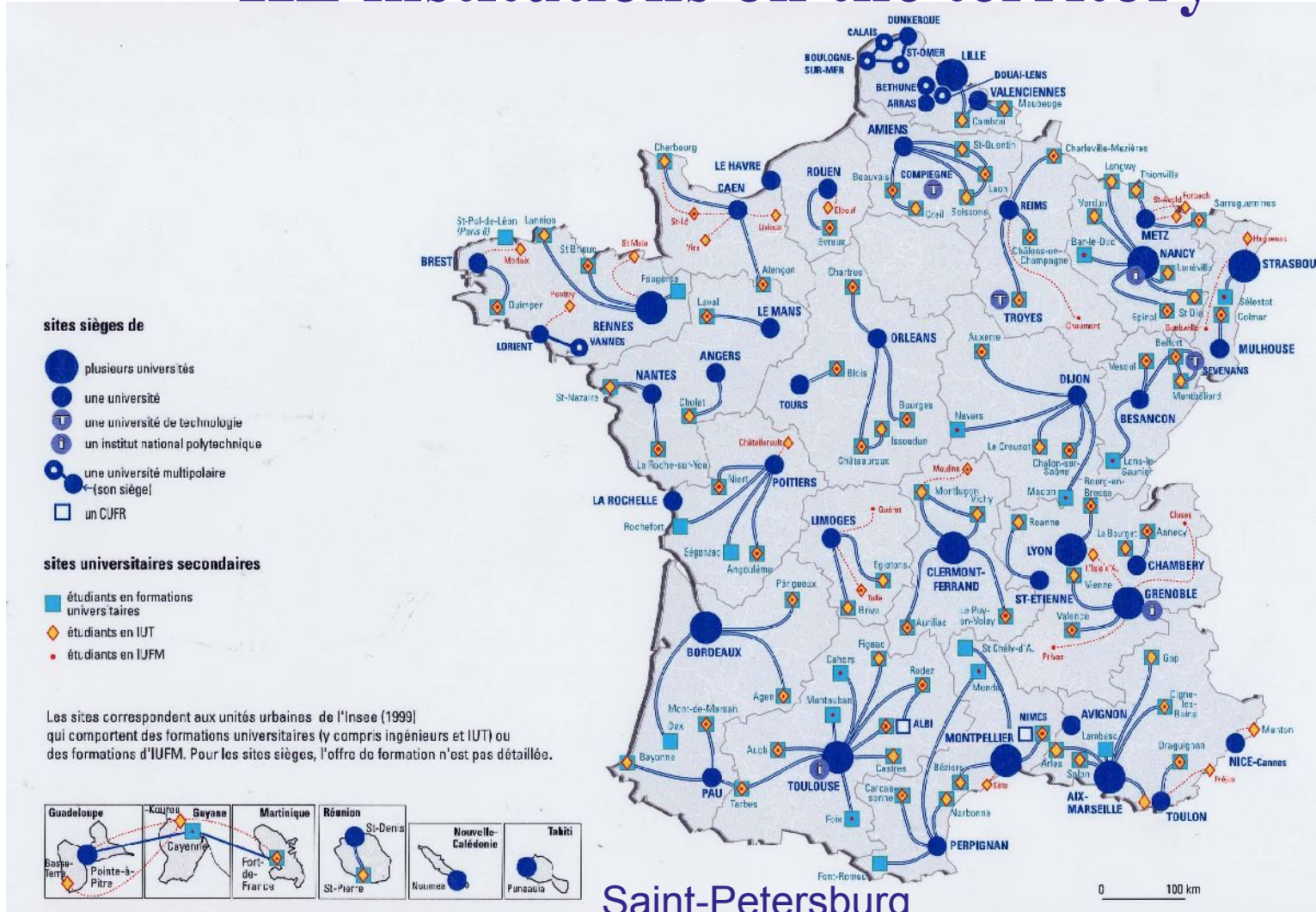
# The “Republic” of Faculties and Écoles:

- ◆ 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 State 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



# Context evolution (1)

- ◆ Massification (from 600 000 students in 1965 to 2,2 millions today)
- ◆ New needs and new hopes (society, students, business, companies)
- ◆ “De facto” competition between universities : not easy to be managed with a vision of public service
- ◆ Laws of decentralization : new roles of other stakeholders (regions, other local collectivities) ?
- ◆ Europe : Bologna process, knowledge triangle



## Context evolution (2)

- ◆ International Rankings, ARWU : Thunderbolt in the French Universities Sky
  - ◆ High Schools are too small to have a visible research
  - ◆ Research in universities quite invisible due to the role of the National research organization (CNRS, INSERM..)

# France has still to face many questions to improve his HE system

- ◆ Origin of funding and main question of sustainability ?
- ◆ How to improve the attractiveness and the visibility of the French universities ?
- ◆ How to enhance the capacity of initiative and the efficiency of the universities ?
- ◆ What kind of autonomy for the French universities ?
- ◆ **How to reorganize the university sites, and more generally the HE&R landscape ?**

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# **French HE & R system : Trends and Actions**

# Main actions developed over the last 25 years (1)

- ◆ Enhancement of the capacity to design and monitor institutional strategy, notably in research : Four-year contracts between each university and the State
- ◆ Implementation of the Bologna process (Three cycle system, Bachelor, Master, Doctorate)
- ◆ Creation of doctoral schools at site level (~ 300)

# Main actions developed over the last 25 years (2)

## ◆ Research development :

- ◆ Shared labs with the national research organizations
- ◆ Creation of the National research funding agency : the National Agency for Research (ANR)

## ◆ Research transfer :

- ◆ incubators to support innovative start-ups...
- ◆ poles of competitiveness/ Clusters

# Main actions developed over the last 25 years (3)

- ◆ Enhancement of autonomy and quality :
  - ◆ Statutory changes : governance
  - ◆ HR & financial autonomy
  - ◆ National Agency for University Evaluation (AERES)

## **Main actions developed over the last 25 years (4)**

- ◆ Enhancement of the visibility and of the efficiency at a site level :
  - ◆ The PRES in 2007
  - ◆ The COMUEs in 2013
- Strategic approach to avoid useless competition
  - ◆ To avoid useless competition □ a forum for building consensus and regulation
  - ◆ To reinforce visibility □ identification and communication
  - ◆ To reach critical mass and increase scientific impact

## Three main Laws for HE&R in France

- ◆ LRU : law on autonomy and accountability of the universities (august 2007), law of decentralization :
  - ◆ Funding increased by € 1Billion per year during 5 years (in fact from 2008 to 2009, less in the following 3 years due to the crisis)
- ◆ Law on research (2006) and law on HE&R (2013) with, in particular, the capacity to develop cooperation between universities and between universities and “grandes ecoles” through the PRES and COMUEs.

## **PRES and COMUEs : A large diversity**

- ◆ Various size of territory :
  - ◆ City
  - ◆ Region
  - ◆ Inter Region
- ◆ 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 COMUEs Today

ROPE

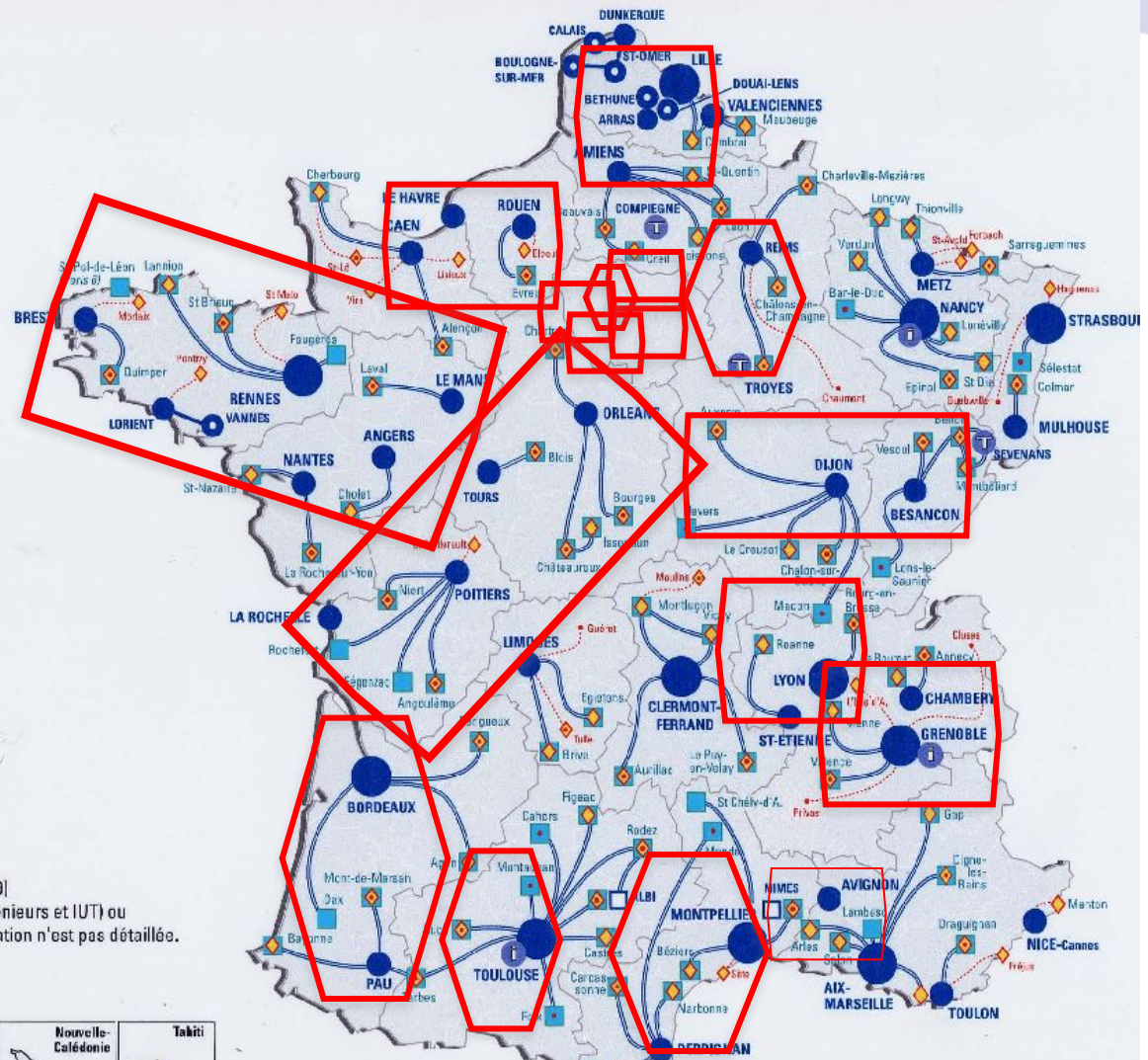
### sites sièges de

- plusieurs universités
- une université
- une université de technologie
- un institut national polytechnique
- une université multipolaire (son siège)
- un CUFR

### sites universitaires secondaires

- étudiants en formations universitaires
- étudiants en IUT
- étudiants en IJFM

Les sites correspondent aux unités urbaines de l'Insee (1999) qui comportent des formations universitaires (y compris ingénieurs et IUT) ou des formations d'IJFM. Pour les sites sièges, l'offre de formation n'est pas détaillée.



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0 100 km

# Beyond the PRES : Universities Merging

- ◆ 4 cases in France today :
  - ◆ Strasbourg (2009)
  - ◆ Aix Marseille (2012)
  - ◆ Lorraine (2012)
  - ◆ Bordeaux (2014)
- ◆ And now ?
  - ◆ New projects (Clermont ..)

# Two important initiatives of the government (1)

- ◆ Main objectives :
  - ◆ To promote “world champions” at international level
  - ◆ To enhance the scientific quality and the understanding of the French HE&R system

The international rankings are not completely  
stranger to this decisions

# Two important initiatives of the government (2)

- ◆ Campus Operation :
  - ◆ Distinguish 12 “campus of excellence”
  - ◆ 5 B€ mobilized for real estate and site architecture operations
- ◆ Investments for the Future :
  - ◆ 32 B€ mobilized, including 22 B€ for HE&R
  - ◆ Many calls for projects :
    - ◆ Excellence laboratories
    - ◆ Excellence research equipment
    - ◆ Technological Research Institutes
    - ◆ Excellence initiative

## Other initiatives in France

- ◆ CERES : associated to U-Multirank but at national level, considered as a tool helping students in their choices of orientation





**Thank You  
Questions and comments ?**